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Phillips Exeter Academy
Exeter, New Hampshire

The Exonian



"The oldest continuously running preparatory school newspaper in America."

Winter Term Plans Announced

By JEANNIE EOM, TARAZ LINCOLN and KRISH PATEL

The Academy announced its winter and spring term plans on Nov. 14. According to this plan, the Academy will conduct remote learning over the course of Dec. and Jan.; break for vacation from Feb. 1 to 10; and welcome on-campus students between Feb. 11 and 13. Students will remain on campus for the rest of the school year, with spring break replaced by a four-day weekend between

winter and spring term. Shorter breaks will be incorporated throughout the spring term as well.

The Academy will test students twice a week throughout both winter and spring term. Family Choice, a program allowing students to learn remotely, will remain. Those electing Family Choice may choose to be remote winter, spring or both.

During the February vacation, "students will self-quarantine at home and complete

pre-travel COVID-19 testing," Principal William Rawson said. This period will also be used by instructors to prepare midterm grades and comments.

Principal Rawson highlighted the advantages of this plan, which included extending time off-campus to reduce COVID cases in the Exeter area, a reduction in student travel, less time on-campus during the coldest months of the year, increased COVID testing and a possibility of a more flexible in-person interaction in the spring allowed by the longer

on-campus period.

Through individual emails to the student body, the Academy also announced a new schedule that will be used during the winter and spring terms. Students will be able to attend all synchronous formats of their classes, no matter the time zone.

Major changes to the schedule include merged asynchronous blocks for work deadlines and the addition of P, M, Q or T Formats, which will enable students in different time zones to participate in synchronous classes with their peers.

"While P, M, N and T are a little unusual and confusing,

the rest of the schedule is familiar and inclusive of different time zones," upper Kevin Cong said.

Some things, however, will not change—G and H Format will still meet at 8p.m. Eastern Time twice a week.

"I think that 8p.m. classes will be tough in a New England winter, but I completely understand their necessity for time zone differences," lower Blake Simpson said. "I'm hoping the Academy does as much as they can to accommodate for students in different time zones."

Senior Katie Moon also said that the on-campus return plan reasonably accommodates

WINTER, 3



Principal Rawson answers student questions about the Academy's history of sexual assault at the May 9, 2019 sit-in.

JaQ Lai/The Exonian

A Letter to the Principal

The Exonian Executive Board, the Student Council Executive Board and the Gender-Sexuality Alliance jointly endorse this letter in full:

In the fall of 2019, we sent a letter to Principal William Rawson expressing our frustrations with the school's homophobic ban on intra-dorm relationships. In spite of having to go through countless loopholes to protect our privacy, we sent a careful, measured, nicely-worded call to action. In response, we were told that the deans would be discussing the matter at the start of winter term—the winter of last year. Since then, nothing has been done, even after a flurry of people expressed our same frustrations on @QueeratExeter, and even after we subsequently republished the letter in The Exonian over the summer. Here we are, after one whole year of inaction. We are disillusioned and angry. We remember watching our hopes crushed as we pulled up our brand new-copies of the 2020-21 E Book, only to find that the rule remained. And we remember arriving to campus this fall, together with a painful reminder that we could never live openly at Exeter. At this point, we are unsure if we will ever be able to do so, because we are unsure if Exeter will ever choose to hear the increasingly frustrated voice of the queer students that its policies im-

pact. In our original letter, we noted that Rawson had been, in our view, "a firm ally of the LGBTQ+ community." But after a year of inaction, in spite of several attempts to jump start conversation, it is clear that he and the Administration have not lived up to that role. Repeal the ban on intra-dorm relationships.

Dear Principal Rawson, I have put off writing this letter, addressing a largely overlooked and deeply personal issue, for far too long, for quite a few reasons: fear of administrative repercussions, fear of being "outed" to the school community at-large, fear of innumerable consequences for both my social and academic life. Being a gay couple in general, at Exeter or in the world, is difficult. Every day, with everyone you encounter, safety is constantly on the forefront of one's mind. Will they hate me for existing? Do they not want me here? This social fear is yet further exacerbated, in Exeter and beyond, by policies that hinder our right to exist and love openly.

I am a gay student at Exeter presently in a romantic relationship with a member of my own dorm. I hope the reasons for this letter's anonymity are now somewhat more obvious. Though not the subject of this

letter, the policy I am referring to was enacted as part of the new visitations ruleset: the ban on intra-dorm relationships. Page 57 of the E-Book states that "relationships among dormitory residents and/or day student affiliates may not be intimate, sexual, or exclusive in nature." It is the only school policy restricting student relationships and is by nature targeted towards same-sex couples. I have read the text of the rule countless times by now to parse its language and figure out exactly what it means for me and my boyfriend, clinging onto some hope of an exception for our situation. But the text is pretty straightforward. It bans intra-dorm romantic relationships in all cases, putting me directly in conflict with the school I call home.

Though I understand the intent of the policy, I cannot begin to stress how demoralizing its impact has been. It feels as though the school has told me who I can and cannot love, as though it has labeled my love illegitimate. In an Academy that would be quick to affirm in words that "love is love," I feel betrayed by the asterisk. Yes, love is love, it tells us, but not your love. That is the first of many cages, all of which prevent me from embracing who I am and who I love.

I would honestly not be writing this letter, however, if the

LETTER, 11

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Reporting on Exeter and Sexual Assault

By ANNE BRANDES

Content Warning: This article involves sexual assault. Phillips Exeter has a number of resources for survivors in the Exeter community. To access these resources, please refer to the Exeter website's "Contacts and Resources" page. Additionally, if you find yourself distressed by any details, please seek confidential help at the National Sexual Assault Hotline: (800) 656-4673.

On Nov. 19, the last print edition of my tenure, I conclude reporting on the Academy just as I started in 2017. Years pass; the story remains the same. Exeter

has a culture of sexual assault. Disclaimer: I will write primarily about the articles that I have contributed to, since I hope to provide a perspective on sexual assault rooted in my experience speaking with survivors and other members of the Exeter community. There have been other articles on sexual misconduct over the past three years and a half years, too. Please refer to The Exonian's website and archives.

The first time I recognized Exeter's culture of sexual assault was in the spring of 2018, when I co-wrote "New Affirmative Consent Policy to Be Implemented." As a prep writing one of my

SEXUAL ASSAULT, 11

EARLY CUM LAUDE INDUCTEES

"Chapters shall be free to elect members who have demonstrated academic excellence in accordance with the philosophy and policies governing their individual schools. In the broadest sense, the Regents assume chapters will elect to membership only students who have demonstrated good character, honor, and integrity in all aspects of their school life." The following are the top five percent of the senior class by grade point average.

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Anne Brandes | Coral Outwater |
| Isabel Carden | Ryan Pettit |
| Yunseo Choi | Jack Puchalski |
| Thomas Gannon | William Viotor |
| Ellie Griffin | Jason Wang |
| Anna Rose Marion | Felix Yeung |
| Stephen McNulty | Honglin Zhu |

News

» WRITE FOR THE EXONIAN

The Exonian is Phillips Exeter Academy's student newspaper; join us by writing for the Editorial Board, coding or maintaining our website for the Web Board or maintaining our financial health through the Business Board. Reach out to any member of the Board, including Editor-in-Chief Anne Brandes, for more information.

Model United Nations Club Hosts PEAMUN XII



PEAMUN campus staff pose for a group photo.

Courtesy of PEAMUNXII

By OTTO DO, GRACIE KEYT, AMYLUM and ERIN SACKEY

Three hundred delegates from sixteen schools and three countries gathered virtually on Sunday, Nov. 8, for Phillips Exeter Academy's twelfth annual Model United Nations Conference (PEAMUN XII). This year, PEAMUN featured Obama administration cabinet member and former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations (UN) Samantha Power as the keynote speaker.

Due to the pandemic, the typically in-person conference was conducted over Zoom. This shift, however, provided unique opportunities. MUN conferences typically charge up to a hundred dollars per delegate; the virtual platform allowed Exeter to charge only five dollars per delegate, with fee waivers available. Due to this cost factor and the elimination of travel, more schools were able to participate.

Unlike other years, the MUN Board elected to donate all proceeds to charities and organizations, such as the Jimmy Fund (community-based fundraising events that aid the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston), Lebanese Red Cross, Uyghur Human Rights Project, Equal Justice Initiative

(a non-profit that provides free legal aid to wrongly convicted prisoners) and Children International (a global non-profit that helps impoverished children through early intervention). The Lebanese Red Cross was chosen in light of the Beirut bombing and political instability in the country.

During the remote spring term, co-heads Noah James, Stephen McNulty, Alana Yang, Phil Horrigan and Nahla Owens hosted mock committees with club members to prepare delegates for the conference, using a combination of Zoom and Discord for these sessions.

The MUN Board also met weekly for the duration of the summer to outline initiatives to make the conference a "more inclusive, safe space for students of all backgrounds," James said. "One such step was creating a comprehensive PEAMUN Code of Conduct, with input from the OMA Team and Dr. Bramlett." These steps followed up on racist incidents reported on the Instagram page @BlackatExeter.

The Code of Conduct prohibited attacks on personhood or acts of cultural appropriation including but not limited to adoption of accents, appropriative use

of cultural attire and use of slurs. Prior to starting committee sessions, students read and agreed to these rules. The document also contained reporting mechanisms for microaggressions, personal attacks and other rules violations that staff members were familiarized with during a diversity, equity and inclusion training session before the conference.

Attending delegates were divided into five Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Committees and five Crisis Committees. In ECOSOC Committees, delegates discussed issues of global importance, while in Crisis Committees, they dealt with evolving situations. ECOSOC Committees discussed the Yemen crisis, artificial intelligence rights, incarceration during the coronavirus pandemic, Latin American Spring and 2030: The Next Frontier. The Crisis Committees were The Five Families (mafia), 1988 Mexican Elections, Post-Apartheid South Africa, Avatar: The Last Airbender (ATLA) and the Lion King.

During the two committee sessions, which lasted for three hours each, delegates utilized breakout rooms for unmoderated caucuses (unsupervised sessions for informal

discussion) and Zoom's "raise hand" function before speaking during the main session.

Students held various opinions about this year's conference; some suffered from Zoom fatigue and missed meeting participants in-person, while others appreciated the less crowded atmosphere, increased speaking opportunities and ability to move between committees efficiently.

Many students noted that keynote speaker Power was a highlight of the event. "Most Model UN conferences don't bother with getting great keynote speakers, but with our conference fully online amid the pandemic, we felt that we needed someone to draw students into participating in a day-long online event," James said.

"Not even HMUN or BOSMUN or DARTMUN, incredible conferences run by college MUN clubs with far more resources and people than we have, were able to get Samantha Power," McNulty said.

Her appearance at the conference's opening ceremonies consisted of a brief reading from her Pulitzer Prize-winning memoir, *The Education of an Idealist*, as well as a half-hour long question

and answer session with James. James' interview touched on a variety of topics, including the role of activism in national security, the leadership of the United States in upholding human rights, Power's work as a war correspondent and her experience as one of just thirty-seven female ambassadors to the UN.

McNulty elaborated on the contents of Power's reading. "[Power] talked a lot about her relationship with Vitaly Churkin, [who was] at the time the Russian Ambassador," McNulty said. "Her reading focused on what it means to have personal relationships with those who don't share your values—after all, Power had to confront Churkin plenty of times at the UN herself."

"Especially in the political climate that we're in right now, we don't think about compromise all that much," senior and The Bromfield School delegate Olivia Lindo said. "I imagine [that] within the caucus they had many disagreements, but to show that they ultimately had a really friendly relationship... was nice to hear and think about."

"[Power] considered and took seriously each question that was posed to her," Club Adviser and German Instructor Marianne Zwicker said. "She seemed to give answers that demonstrated deep self-reflection and, at the same time, an ability to relate to her audience—primarily high school students interested in international relations and the UN."

Upper William Park agreed. "It made our Model UN conference feel rooted in realism," Park said. Park appreciated "seeing the world we were about to pretend to be in in its actuality."

James was grateful that Power donated her time to appear at the event. "Interviewing her that morning was probably the highlight of my year," James said. "They say meeting our heroes doesn't always live up to our expectations, but speaking with Ambassador Power was everything I hoped it would be and more."

Despite the compromises of holding an online conference, Lindo said she enjoyed the experience. "PEAMUN did a great job integrating technology, especially with the implementation of Discord. PEAMUN should set a precedent [for other schools] because the whole event functioned really smoothly."

Stand-Up Comedy Scripts Reviewed for Sensitivity

By LINA HUANG, TINA HUANG, TUCKER GIBBS, ELLA BRADY and ANVI BHATE

Once every term, the Exeter Standup Comedy Club hosts a showcase exhibiting the talents of student comedians. This year, both the club adviser, Japanese Instructor Kyoko Tazawa, and Student Activities Office reviewed scripts prior to the show to avoid insensitive and inappropriate content.

Previously, the club facilitated a "open-mic" event, in which anyone could tell jokes without prior approval. Last year, a student told several inappropriate jokes in the open format, which prompted the Academy to respond with the instatement of a formal review process in the weeks before the show.

First, the comedians submit their sets to a co-head, Adith Reddi this year, who then passes the scripts on to Tazawa and Assistant Director of Student Activities Kelly McGahie. For difficult decisions, other adults, including Director of Student Activities Joanne Lembo, are sometimes called upon.

Most scripts come back unchanged. "It's not an unusual thing, and it's not something we think is unfair or that we'd rather not happen," co-head Blake Simpson said.

For instance, Tazawa and McGahie decided not to include jokes about this year's presidential election, since the show was set for Nov. 7, four days after the presidential election. "Making jokes about the election, especially so soon after the projections were finalized, may have (1) just been not funny at all and (2) insensitive to anyone (including other comedians!) who may feel threatened or intimidated by the election and Trump or Biden," co-head Sava Thurber said.

McGahie also noted that given Exeter's tumultuous experience of the 2016 election, these jokes would not be appropriate. "In comedy, sometimes a comedian will say a joke, and people won't laugh. The comedian will respond, 'too soon?' As in, give it a year, let people stop marching in the streets, let's see if we can get COVID-19 under control," McGahie said. "Then we can maybe make some jokes

that right now feel very tender."

"I understand why some of the political jokes were taken out," co-head Jack Quinn said. "However, our political commentary comedy is something that's not really related to anyone here so we're not making fun of anybody who's actually going to be listening to our show."

Jokes pertaining to Dining Services were also edited from a script. "I think [Ms. Tazawa and I] were on the same page [when we removed the] Dining Hall jokes," McGahie said. "We're in the middle of a pandemic. These people are working under very difficult circumstances."

Jokes centered around topics of divorce and cancer were also banned. "Maybe there are kids whose parents are divorced or divorcing, or kids who know someone with cancer. And that could be a traumatic trigger for them," Tazawa said.

This review process is not unique to Standup Comedy; other student events have been checked for appropriate material before. "It's part of the normal course of business. DJs don't get to get up on stage and perform unedited music. Ad-

visers for clubs are expected to manage that, with help available from Student Activities," McGahie said. "It isn't about stifling anyone's creativity; we just want to make sure that it's appropriate for the audience."

The Academy also has a "vetting" process for Assembly comedians, according to Assembly Coordinator Alex Myers. Myers described the preparations for comedian Negin Farsad, who had an Assembly in October. "I was familiar with [Farsad's] presentations at other schools, and I had talked to her agent about the audience and tone I hoped to achieve," Myers said. "I wanted Negin to talk about 'difficult conversations' and the importance of humor in those conversations. I suggested not a formal lecture and not a stand-up, but something in between, which I think she mostly did."

Many students are happy with the current review process. "As students, we must reflect the morals of the school," Thurber said. "[Having] the adults double-check our scripts is the most efficient way to do that."

Additionally, several students noted that presenting

inappropriate material is not the goal of the club. "We're not really looking to subvert the school's administration," co-head and performer Pedro Coelho said. "Our goal is just to make something that's funny and inviting to all and something that everyone can laugh at."

"I do think that having a second set of eyes look at a presentation before it is presented in front of the entire school is a good practice no matter what. With that come suggestions like 'You may not want to say that, or at least in that particular way' or 'Maybe don't bring that up,' Thurber said. "My experience with this and the Standup Comedy Club has been very helpful as it has made me more mindful of how my actions affect others... Sometimes, just like everything else, it is impossible to know everyone's situation, which is why we find it important to be careful by submitting our scripts to the co-heads and then to an adult. This is because as comedians, making people uncomfortable is the opposite of what we want to do, so avoiding that at all costs is optimal."

New Indoor Spaces Opened



Jasmine Xi eats lunch indoors.

Joy Chi/*The Exonian*

By MOKSHA AKIL, ANNA KIM, TENLEY NELSON, ELLIE ANA SPERANTSAS and HANSIZHU

Due to the onset of cold New Hampshire weather as winter approaches, the Academy opened up a selection of previously off-limits indoor spaces for students to gather during meals and free time.

Dean of Students Brooks Moriarty sent a schoolwide email on Oct. 28 announcing that Elm Street Dining Hall would begin to accommodate indoor seating and that the Elting Room, Elizabeth Phillips Academy Center and Phelps Commons would also be available for students to gather during dining hours.

Moriarty sent an additional email

to ensure that students are abiding by guidelines. Buildings are also clearly marked by arrows to enforce a one-way traffic pattern.

Moriarty explained why some spaces could not be made available to students. “We’re not making use of the Academy Building right now because it’s an old building,” he said. “It doesn’t have good ventilation. That’s the reason why [students] can’t be in that building.”

Technical Director Jacob Josef, who assisted with the development of the Goel Center becoming a designated indoor space for students, elaborated on the decision to open the building. “The Theater and Dance Department hope that opening the lobbies for gathering during

ensure that students are abiding by guidelines. Buildings are also clearly marked by arrows to enforce a one-way traffic pattern.

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Technical Director Jacob Josef, who assisted with the development of the Goel Center becoming a designated indoor space for students, elaborated on the decision to open the building. “The Theater and Dance Department hope that opening the lobbies for gathering during

the colder months will give the students an alternative to being outside or in their dorms,” he said. “The Goel Center is beautiful, and we hope it provides a sense of calm and serenity during these challenging times.”

In order for Phillips Church to be available to students, Reverend Bonnie-Jeanne Casey said that changes needed to be made to the building. “Many of the leaded glass windows have been repaired or replaced to allow for windows to open more easily. The ventilation system throughout the building has been serviced and we have been told the air flow meets COVID compliance standards,” she said.

Casey also expressed her desire for the Church to open more of its spaces in the future. “We hope to open the basement again. It is unclear if we will be able to safely use the kitchen space there to prep food, but our hope is to be able to allow students to bring meals into the basement or have a vendor deliver food,” she said. “Sharing a meal is central to many religious traditions, and it has been a loss for some groups not to be able to ‘break bread’ together in the same way, but these are not normal times.”

Head Strength and Conditioning Coach Shawn Fishel noted that COVID regulations have made the Downer Family Fitness Center less accessible to students. “All our students seem to enjoy being able to come in, [but] with all the guidelines for COVID, it makes it really difficult,” he said. “We have to have time in between sessions to allow the air change when we’re cleaning... And then with the scheduling too, because of classes and sports, there’s just so much stuff that overlaps.”

Fischel noted that the reopening, though limited, has been successful. “I think it’s a good idea because everyone’s going to be on campus, and

they need to have a place to exercise... I do feel comfortable because of the testing rate, how well that’s been, and I feel like students have done really good jobs wearing their masks and washing their hands.”

As a result of this early success, Fischel hoped that the Downer Fitness Center would expand its hours. “I feel like it would be awesome just having a space that’s indoors, warm and [where] everyone can hang out, and [the Fitness Center] a perfect space to do that. So I would like to see if there’s a way to make it available four times throughout the week,” he said.

Many new students expressed excitement at the opening of the new spaces, noting that it helped them discover what was lost during the pandemic. “It has been very nice to see how things would have been if it were in normal times. As a prep, I haven’t really seen Goel before, so it is nice to experience how it should be more or less,” prep Andrea Nystedt said.

Some questioned the safety of congregating in indoor spaces. “I want things opened up, but a lot of people aren’t social distancing, and I think that if we want to be able to do more, the COVID-19 regulations need to be strictly enforced,” prep Natalie Welling said.

Others noted that the rigidity of the opening times made it difficult to make use of the indoor spaces. Senior Ozzy Gomez-Santana said, “I haven’t been able to find time in the day to utilize these public spaces. I’ve also found that I can interact with my friends outside under the tents just as well.”

Despite mixed student reactions, Moriarty noted efforts to further open up campus. “We will continue to work on opening up more spaces for socializing and will be in touch with information soon.”

Anti-Racist Sessions to Continue

By MOKSHA AKIL, ANNA KIM, TENLEY NELSON, ELLIE ANA SPERANTSAS and HANSIZHU

Racial Residential Segregation, Queer History and Anti-Racism, Beyond Black and White: The Social Construction of Race in the United States. These are a few of the courses designed by faculty and students for the upcoming anti-racist blocks in the winter and spring terms.

The administration premiered a mandatory anti-racism curriculum this fall to “provide opportunities for sustained conversation about race, racism, and anti-racism and the ways they operate in our school community and beyond,” according to a student-wide email.

In the Winter and Spring, the Academy will continue to facilitate such sessions in smaller groups with the help of a student design team. The anti-racist curriculum currently offers thirteen topics for students to choose from based on their interests each month, and will be conducted in cohorts.

The anti-racist seminars are intended to center student input. “We really prioritize student choice in this planning so that you can learn more about topics and talk about topics that are of interest to you,” Director of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Stephanie Bramlett said during the anti-racist block on November 12. To promote different workshops, the student and faculty leaders of the Anti-Racism Design Team (ADRT)

gave overviews of their workshops.

The anti-racist course signup features a section for students to include personal requests for courses or topics, and was sent along a student facilitator signup form for facilitating anti-racist meetings. The facilitator form has since then closed, but anti-racist course signups are still open.

Students will be assigned to groups based on expressed interest, which is recorded through the course sign-up form featuring options for students to select five different anti-racist courses they would like to take. Bramlett explained that groups will be formed to contain a mixture of students from all grades, and will maintain group sizes similar to other course sizes. “We are trying to keep [groups] as Harkness-like as possi-

ble. No more than 20 is the goal. We want to make sure everybody has an opportunity to talk,” Bramlett said.

These conversations will build off of fall blocks, which included “The Vision for Anti-Racism at Exeter,” “Office of Multicultural Affairs,” “Student Council,” “Counseling and Psychological Services,” “Student Clubs and Organizations,” “Athletics,” “Academy Life” and “Anti-Racism and the Town of Exeter.”

Reflecting on this fall’s curriculum, Afro Latinx Exonian Society (ALES) and La Alianza Latina (LAL) Board Member Janessa Vargas noted the lack of community accountability in prior anti-racism blocks. “Sometimes, I’ve felt that the anti-racist blocks prioritize white comfort rather than discomfort,” Vargas said. “As a part of someone on a few boards, some being ALES and LAL, we’ve felt left out of the picture.”

Affinity leadership should be consulted during anti-racism planning, Vargas expressed. “I know that many of us said we do not want people of color to carry the burden of representation, but it feels that not consulting the very leaders that pushed for this change looks a bit exclusionary,” she said.

Vargas emphasized that although this term’s curriculum has been focused on listening, there is a need for a redesign to facilitate more discussion between students. “I think the redesign of the curriculum is absolutely necessary in order to have more productive anti-racist programming, so far, most of the webinars haven’t been vetted and a bit too freeform in order for people to truly grow,” Vargas said.

The fall term anti-racism blocks will conclude with a “Conversation with the Principal” on Nov. 19.

Winter Term Plans Announced Cont.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:00-8:55 AM	P	A	Anti-Racist Work Group 1	A	A
9:05-9:50 AM	B	M	B	B	T
10:00-10:45 AM	D	C	C	D	C
10:55-11:40 AM	Affinity Groups	Assembly	N	Office Hours	TLC or Assembly
11:40 AM Asynchronous assignments due	A	GF	E H	C	B D
SCHEDULED LUNCH	Faculty Mtg	ADV/Lunch	PROC/Lunch	Lunch	ADV/Lunch
	Lunch	Lunch/ADV	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch/ADV
1:00-1:45 PM	E	E	F	E	Jummah
1:55-2:40 PM	F	Meditation	Anti-Racist Work Group 2	S	F 1:30-2:15
		Department Meetings 2:45-3:30			Q 2:25-3:10
				Scheduled Music 6:55 PM	
8:00-8:45 PM	G	H	G	H	

Academy releases winter schedule.

international student travel. “Travelling across the world for just four weeks of the winter term and then going back for two weeks of spring break just to come back again—that doesn’t make any sense,” she

said.

Moon is hopeful that this new plan will provide time for COVID numbers to decrease, which would allow for more freedom in the spring. “Just

Avery Lavine/*The Exonian*

the idea of being on campus for fourteen weeks—it’s just very overwhelming, but I’m hopeful that, in the spring, COVID numbers will level out or decrease, which would make my senior spring better.”

While some students supported the Academy’s plan, others felt that remote learning would be less than ideal. “I think it’s good because we get the weeks off where it is the coldest, but I don’t think I’ll like online school again because while physically going to school zaps a lot of energy out of me, I get to see my friends and talk freely. Over Zoom, it’s harder to do so,” lower Chloe Becker said. “Being alone in my room [and] not getting any exercise isn’t good for my mental or physical health either.”

Lower Alexa Wingate also noted her wish for a more in-person winter term. “I’m disappointed that most of our winter term will be online because of the pandemic—we just started in-person classes here, and they’re so much better,” Wingate said.

Students also raised questions about whether a sixteen-week period (with short breaks interspersed) between the mid-winter return and end of spring term at Exeter would be viable. “I’m also worried about how being at school for so long will affect my mental health,” upper Grace Ding said. “I hope the administration gives the students more freedom (through inter-dorm visits or later check-in) because I think that would really help give everyone something to look forward to when com-

ing back.”

Modern Languages Instructor Amadou Talla said, “I think there are a lot of aspects of this plan that we might be nervous about. However, fall term also had a lot of uncertainties.”

Despite the school year’s uncertainties, Moon was optimistic for her senior spring. “Hopefully, we can still meet in person and maintain both our Exeter traditions and senior spring traditions, like having more freedom to leave campus and just to simply hang out with friends more often because this will be our senior spring,” she said.

Rawson hosted a virtual Town Hall Webinar last night, at which families were able to ask questions about the new plan.

Rawson stated in his letter that “a continuing goal is to replicate moments of community building that are essential Exeter experiences and that bring the joy of living and learning in a residential community into the common daily experience.”

“I think it’s important to trust the school leadership and all the teams of professionals they are working with to come up with the best possible experience for students,” Talla said. “It won’t be easy, but I think we can do this!”

» EVENING PRAYER

Attend a seniors-only Evening Prayer tonight at 9:30pm on the Front Lawn.

» SENIOR OF THE WEEK

Read about Senior of the Week Julia Dobbins and her passion for the water.

» FACULTY OF THE WEEK

Read about Faculty of the Week Christine Knapp, whose warmth shines whether in Jakarta or Exeter.

Faculty of the Week: Christine Knapp

By CLARK WU and MARCO KO

A born and raised New Hampshire, English Instructor Christine Knapp grew up as an outdoors enthusiast; even now, runners can often find her skiing in the Exeter winter woodlands, her dog Indigo trailing behind her.

“My father was really interested in organic gardening, and he didn’t want us eating anything with pesticides. So we grew much of our own food when I was a child,” she said.

Her adventurous energy prompted her to travel to Jakarta, Indonesia in 1997, a city “for the passionate.” She taught at Jakarta International School until 2007, when an old college friend of hers encouraged her to apply for a teaching position at Exeter.

During her first years at the Academy, Knapp crafted the position of International Student Coordinator and excelled due to her international awareness. She empathized with her students’ parents. “I would see how nervous the parents were when they would drop off their fourteen-year olds,” she said. “This child is now taking care of themselves—and their passport.”

Knapp was often the first person to call to resolve legal complications for international students, especially regarding lost and stolen passports. Once, she helped a student who lost his passport a few days before the winter break and managed for him to come back just two weeks after break ended. She helped Exonians get approved for student work programs and internships, ensuring that they would comply with American laws. She also created the orientation program that, to this day, allows foreign students to adjust to Exeter’s new environment.

According to Director of Global Initiatives Eimer Page, Knapp “understood the cultures, backgrounds and the intercultural competencies that were needed to work with families who were coming from Asia.” That proved to be one of her greatest strengths and immensely valuable for worrying, overseas families.

Knapp found her transition into English teaching as a “natural shift”, and her students couldn’t agree more. “She struck me as especially thoughtful and charismatic,” upper Nick Chiu said. “She kept motivating us to improve the quality of our



Christine Knapp stands in front of the Academy building steps for her spotlight.

Ethan-Judd Barthelemy/*The Exonian*

Harkness discussions.”

Knapp’s work around the table feels extremely rewarding and fulfilling to her, too. “I think one thing that Exeter has allowed me to do is to continue my own independent education,” she said. “This place encourages me to be innovative. It’s partly because of the writers that we bring in. They inspire me, bring in new perspectives, and I try to make it a goal for myself to teach something every term that I’ve never taught before.”

Driven by the Academy’s autonomy, Knapp created the winter term elective *Beyond Korean Cool*, a course that studies contemporary Korean literature. Knapp was inspired by a 2016 article in the *New Yorker* about the collection of contemporary Korean literature that the Dalkey Archive Press had recently translated and published.

“I had a term off and spent that term reading and thinking,” Knapp

said. “I put it in a proposal, and I was able to create a senior elective. And that’s the kind of opportunity that I think I wouldn’t have at a lot of other schools.”

During the summer, in preparation for remote learning in the fall term, Knapp and her friends at Exeter came together, and everyone ran their own Zoom “class discussions” for some of the books they read together. “We all got to experience being Zoom students,” she said. “That was really important to me because I wanted to have a better understanding of what my students were going through to try and get the most out of the Zoom experience.”

Knapp’s willingness to reach out, to share and to learn is certainly not limited to the classroom. Physics Instructor Tatiana Waterman noted Knapp’s amazing connection with international students. “While her job was in OMA, and also later as an English teacher, she rescued me

every time I needed to help my advisees—be it tips for supporting them emotionally, ideas for a culturally-themed party or visa and travel tangles,” she said.

“She has a sixth sense for easing the challenges of the cultural shellshock which some of our foreign students experience. Her warmth, tact, compassion and wisdom transfer no matter what post she is in,” Waterman added.

To Waterman, Knapp is a casual and fun presence. “She has a wickedly smart sense of humor, and she makes me laugh at least once every time I meet with her,” she said. “She even put H-mart on the map for me!”

In normal years, the soon-approaching holiday season would be a call for Knapp’s famous parties. “I like hosting the party because then I have a role and a job,” she said. “It seems more natural to me than being a guest and having to mingle.”

Knapp’s parties are like herself. “They’re lovely, she creates this family feel,” Page added. “She’s also the most thoughtful person if anybody’s going through a hard time and is the best at reaching out and checking in on colleagues, making sure that people are okay.”

Whether she is in Jakarta or Exeter, Knapp has used her thoughtfulness, respect and empathy to cultivate close relationships with everyone around her. “I have developed a lot of close friendships at Exeter,” she said. “I think that’s good for me to have friendships that extend beyond my own age group.”

“To see the world, things dangerous to come to, to see behind walls, to draw closer, to find each other and to feel. That is the purpose of life.”

— Walter Mitty from *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*

Senior of the Week: Julia Dobbins



Julia Dobbins smiles under her mask.

Chieko Imamura/*The Exonian*

By KAYLEE CHEN, TARAZ LINCOLN and HANSI ZHU

Nine miles east of Exeter,

New Hampshire, lies Hampton Beach, the lively boardwalk waterfront where seven-year-old Julia Dobbins first followed her father into the billowing water

to surf.

Even before she had set foot in the ocean, Dobbins could recall memories of her father returning from surfing trips and

showing her how to wash his wetsuits. As she grew older, her father would begin to take her out on their Zodiac motorboat in her freetime. During subsequent

summers, she and her grandfather took boats onto the beach to fish for bluefish and striped bass, where Dobbins quickly developed an innate sense of be-

Dobbins, 5

longing within the freedom and excitement that she found at sea.

“I’ve just grown up really enjoying my memories around the water,” Dobbins said. “You can’t drive before you’re sixteen, but I’ve been driving boats since I was nine. The water gives me this sense of independence and the ability to just go wherever I want.”

Now a senior at the Academy, Dobbins applies the empowerment she found in boating to her everyday life, believing fervently in the importance of approaching every new opportunity with the confidence and open-mindedness that led her to loving the water.

It was this instinct for discovery—and her affinity for the water—that led Dobbins to join Exeter Girls’ Crew during her prep year. Four years of rowing later, she said the lessons she has accumulated are invaluable. “Erging is such an individual sport sometimes. And when you can push yourself harder than you think you can, it teaches you to be competitive with yourself in a healthy way,” she said. “I know I can always strive to do better than I have in the past without bringing myself down.”

She also explained the effect that crew had on her outlook on perseverance, a principle that she takes beyond the Saltonstall Boathouse. “I always used to think that being mentally tough meant gritting your teeth

and grinding it out. But I think the main thing crew has taught me is that being mentally tough doesn’t necessarily mean bracing yourself and getting through it,” she said. “It means the more tired you get and the more panicked you get, how, no matter how many doubts you have, you remain calm and you are able to ground yourself.”

Girls’ Crew coach Sally Morris emphasized Dobbins’ grit and enthusiasm. “There are certain athletes that I have coached over the years who cheerfully do all the required work, pay attention to directions and things are generally going well, but when you ask them to engage in a short race piece in practice, they just come alive and you can see the fire and intensity within,” she said. “Julia is one of those intense racers—she tucks her head in just a little, and I can see a slight smile as she pushes herself and her boat to go as fast as they can. She personifies the adage about when the going gets tough!”

Crew co-captain Bea Burack added that Dobbins was an integral part of her team experience. “Julia is the only reason I’ve survived crew this season,” she said. “I’ll never forget the day we got Laney’s after a grueling Wednesday practice. We were so tired but so happy, and Julia’s enthusiasm was infectious... Her hips may be out of alignment but her positive attitude

never is.”

When she’s not rowing, Dobbins sings opera and co-heads Fermatas, a female a cappella group on campus. According to Dobbins, singing at Exeter has been another way that she built up her self-assurance. “I was so scared of criticism my entire life cause I’ve been singing my entire life, but I think breaking that barrier was what has given me my greatest passion here,” she said.

As a two-year co-head of Fermata, Dobbins’ greatest joy lies in welcoming new singers to join the singing community at Exeter. “It’s really rewarding to introduce people to something that you’re so passionate about because they can develop the same love for it that you do. And that’s just so fulfilling,” she said.

Dobbins also acts as a two-year proctor in Lamont Hall, where she has become a keystone for the family-like community within the dorm.

“Julia is my home at Exeter,” senior and dormmate Sarah Pasche said. “She is very thoughtful and caring, and a really good friend. She is someone you can always rely on.”

Upper Hayley Ren agreed, adding that Dobbins was essential to her recovery from tough times when she was new. “I know that she’s always there for me. My prep year, I was going

through some tough times, and I was able to go into her room any time to talk or cry,” Ren said. “She would always give me food and was a very nurturing, motherly figure for me that has been there for my worst and supported me through it.”

Dobbins aspires to make the Lamont community feel like a family for everyone, just as the proctors in previous years did for her. “I think the most rewarding moments have been when someone has come to me for help and they trust me enough to confide in me,” Dobbins said. “I was able to create a community here. That is, one where people can come to older kids or upperclassmen if they need help. It’s not super easy to ask for help all the time, so I always appreciate people’s courage in asking for help because I’m someone who doesn’t do that enough.”

Dobbins’ uplifting personality transcends beyond her leadership roles and into her personal relationships. Senior Sam Chalmers spoke of her relentless supportiveness. “During my upper year, I had to speak at an event that was very important to me. Many of my friends couldn’t come, but when I invited Julia... she said she wouldn’t miss it for the world,” Chalmers said. “She was so supportive and happy for me. That’s when I knew that Julia was a real friend that I could count on. She is an angel fallen from heaven who

deserves the whole world.”

“She’s so genuinely kind hearted,” Ren added. “It’s the kind where you meet them, and there’s just a general charisma that comes with the person. I’m very grateful to have that sort of energy in my life.”

With only two terms at Exeter left, Dobbins said that, other than to “do your math homework,” the most valuable lessons she learned piggyback off of the foundation of knowledge she developed on the ocean as a child.

“The water’s something you have to learn to respect,” she said. “With surfing, there are big waves and with boating, there’s currents... That can be really dangerous, but having a healthy respect and taking calculated risks is something that’s a long learning curve. It’s the learning curve that happens over your entire life. But I think being able to seek things out that don’t make you one hundred percent comfortable is the most important thing I’ve learned at Exeter: just showing up and going in with a good attitude, even though it might be something that is outside of your comfort zone, and it’s helped me find the things that I’m most passionate about here.”

Evidently, Dobbins’ philosophy has helped her to create a fulfilling, adventurous Exeter experience that truly floats her boat.

What Would Happen If You Fell Into A Black Hole?



The first photograph taken of a black hole.

Courtesy of NASA

By AANYA SHAHDADPURI

Just a warning before you read this: you might never be able to eat spaghetti again.

The process of falling into a black hole is nothing like what they show in the movies. And while the closest known black hole is around 1,000 light years from Earth, it doesn’t hurt (actually, it kinda does) to know a little bit more about what would happen if you happened to find yourself close to one.

The first picture of a black hole was actually only taken recently on April 10, 2019. Since

the black hole is virtually invisible to the human eye, the only way to capture its true likeness was through technology. Scientists used the Event Horizon Telescope—a telescope that is the size of a planet, made up of eight sites around the world—to take a picture. It was able to capture the black hole by the way its intense gravitational pull bent all surrounding space matter towards it, including light. With this picture and certified evidence on how black holes operated, scientists were able to cement their understanding of what could happen inside a black hole.

Essentially, a black hole is created after a star burns out and collapses in on itself. This reaction causes an enormous amount of matter to condense into a small space, leading it to have an extremely dense gravitational pull. Black holes are strong enough to eat light and centralize entire galaxies including our Milky Way. So what would happen to you if you fell into one?

Well, first, you have to understand a couple of terms. The event horizon is the last threshold you would be able to reach before getting sucked

into the black hole, with its immense gravitational pull. In stellar black holes once you pass this line, there’s no going back. However, in supermassive black holes, you wouldn’t be ripped apart... yet.

Past this line, which is usually only made visible through gas clouds and a few stars, is a miniscule point called the singularity. This is usually the point where the laws of physics start to fold in on themselves. From here on, you wouldn’t be able to resist the pull of the black hole anymore. You would get sucked into the black hole and your body would undergo

a reaction called spaghettification (yes, that’s the technical term) since you would be stretched from head to toe. It would feel as it sounds: excruciatingly painful. Time slows down indefinitely as the light rays are manipulated, until eventually, if someone were watching you, it would seem as if you just faded into blackness. As you reach the center of the hole, where density becomes infinite, your body would get squashed, becoming one with the black hole.

So, how’s your stomach? Still craving that plate of spaghetti at dinner?

Alison Buttenheim Talks COVID-19 Vaccine



Alison Buttenheim poses for a photo.

Courtesy of Alison Buttenheim

By INDRANI BASU, MAYA COHEN AND LINA HUANG

Recently, Pfizer and Moderna announced leading vaccine candidates found to be over 90% effective at preventing symptomatic COVID-19. Amid the burdens of the COVID-19 pandemic and the excitement these vaccines bring, Alison Buttenheim '87's critical work in vaccine distribution is "our hope for a route back to life as we know it," she explained.

Buttenheim is a social scientist who studies the behavioral aspects of infectious disease prevention. After graduating from Exeter in 1987, Buttenheim became an Associate Professor of Health Policy at the University of Pennsylvania, where she has researched HIV prevention and vaccine acceptance.

In August, Buttenheim was one of eighteen experts appointed to a National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine committee to draft recommendations for equitable distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Her recommendation came from careful review of written and oral testimony by different populations, whose importance co-introducer and senior Charlotte Lisa stressed. "You can't just rely on the physician's point of view or the economist's point of view or the public policy point of view, you really need to have a lot of different voices in the room," Lisa said.

Senior Dennis Kostakoglu-Aydin agreed that multiple perspectives would be pivotal for COVID-19 work. "Just looking at this as someone who lives here who doesn't want to keep having this COVID-19 impacting society for the next couple of years—and as someone who cares a lot about ethics—I think it's important to consider different opinions, not just necessarily the scientific opinion," he said.

"We wanted this to be a very fair and transparent process, in part because we felt like the public's endorsement of it would be better if they could see our decision-making process," Buttenheim said. "We also wanted it to be evidence

based, not politically or otherwise driven. All of that was part of the ethical moral soup we were swimming in to come up with the allocation framework."

The committee ultimately advised that healthcare workers and first responders, most likely to come into contact with others and the disease, as well as those at high risk, including older adults in congregate settings, should be the first to receive any vaccine. Next should be K-12 teachers, those with moderate risk, older adults and critical industry workers, the committee said.

"Once we had guiding principles and ethical and procedural principles, we also looked at different criteria. So you were prioritized in that list to the extent you were at high risk for getting the disease or for suffering illness or death if you got it," Buttenheim said. "You were prioritized if there would be societal benefit if you could work. And finally, if you were at risk of transmitting to others, you were prioritized."

"Everybody said, 'My group should be first in line,'" Buttenheim recalled. "One thing we knew going in was that not everybody was going to love our recommendations."

To make the best decision, the committee made a plan aimed to both reduce death and viral transmission. "We aimed to give maximum benefit to the population, equal concern to everyone's life and minimize health inequities."

"With the vaccine, hopefully everyone will get it eventually—this is really just a question some number of months before it ramps up, but it's still terrible to tell one group that they're actually in phase two and not in phase one," Buttenheim said.

Senior Osiris Russell-Delano, who co-introduced Buttenheim, valued the committee's evidence-based approach. "It's good to see that in those rooms of policy decisions they actually fully consider the topic, and it's not all partisan; there's scholarship happening as well," he said.

Kostakoglu-Aydin stressed his appreciation for the com-

mittee, noting that moral questions should come first. "If we allow whoever makes the vaccine to make a profit off of it, I think that they're gambling with human lives. No amount of money is going to replace a human life," he said.

Kostakoglu-Aydin raised questions about Exeter's place within the vaccine distribution guidelines. "We at Exeter live in a community with people who aren't affiliated with the school and with students from all over the world. We travel frequently in airports, and we can potentially come from places with high COVID-19 cases," he said. "Should we get a vaccine? Is it important for us to go to school, or should we take another term fully remote so that other people can have the vaccine, other people who might need it more?"

"I think the biggest thing to learn to take out of this is that, although this pandemic can affect individuals, it's not just limited to individual impact; it affects the population. And so that's how we should see it," upper Russell Tam agreed.

"We have a really narrow window to get the COVID-19 response right, and we're at this unique moment where public trust and confidence in the CDC, in the FDA who's going to approve the vaccine and other public health authorities are quite low," Buttenheim said.

Buttenheim's career has extended beyond her pivotal work on COVID-19. "I'm just really interested in what people do and how people make decisions in ways that affect whether or not we can prevent infectious disease," she said.

"Most of my work has been around prevention and mitigation strategies. We have to ask and answer questions in a really different way," Buttenheim said. "I want to get to an answer quickly and help the most people the most quickly."

Upper Emma Finn really admired Buttenheim's behavioral economics approach to tackling problems to leadership at Exeter. "I think behavior change is a really interesting science to look at, especially for people in StuCo trying to

[make] decisions about how Exeter can be a better campus," Finn said. "How can we encourage people to make better decisions?"

Buttenheim is also one of the founders of Dear Pandemic, an organization dedicated to publishing accurate information about COVID-19. "A colleague was answering a lot of questions for friends and family, and I was answering a lot of questions from friends and family, mostly along the lines of 'Do I really have to cancel my trip?' or 'Should I go buy toilet paper?' A third colleague suggested to us that a lot of people need these answers, and we should just have a social media page," she said.

Since its founding on March 10, Dear Pandemic has grown to have almost 50,000 Facebook followers. Information, whether science news or answers to common questions, is published usually twice a day, created by twelve female scientists and about a dozen volunteers.

"All of us are scientists or clinicians. This is just a side gig that's grown to be this wonderful beast that's extremely rewarding. We really have become a trusted source for people in this time, when there's so much information flying at people and they don't know what to trust or what to believe or how to act," Buttenheim said. "It just really resonated with people; our voice saying, 'It's okay, here's what you need to know.' Our tagline is to 'Stay safe, stay smart, stay sane.'"

In the future, Buttenheim hopes that the country can move forward with prioritization of the pandemic and to place more value on keeping schools open. "There was just a paper published estimating the years of life lost, not from the pandemic, but from kids missing out on schooling; that's because there's a very strong relationship between educational attainment and life expectancy. Because people have a slightly lower life expectancy when they miss out on schooling, they actually calculated more future years of life lost from closed schools than from COVID-19

this year," she said. "We unfortunately aren't in a society that was willing to prioritize keeping the schools open at the expense of other things."

Buttenheim herself cited the critical role of formative education in her life. "I just remember really feeling at Exeter that... crackle... So many possibilities and challenges."

Mathematics Instructor Eric Bergofsky highlighted Exeter's educational philosophy as seen in Buttenheim's life. "We hope that one of the things we teach our students is that it's okay not to get the answer the very first time because, in the real world, problems don't get solved right away. Professor Buttenheim is clearly working on problems that don't have any clear, obvious solutions—how do you convince people to wear a mask? Why are people resistant to taking a vaccine?" he said. "One of the great things that underlies everything at Exeter is persistence, which you see in Professor Buttenheim's work."

Buttenheim aptly recounted the academic rigor at Exeter as the most challenging in her life—and that "includes college and grad school and [her] PhD."

Buttenheim hoped Exonians would take away a commitment to following their passions from her Assembly. "By the end of high school, especially when writing college applications, I know students feel like they need to determine what they're going to do. But I didn't study the work I'm doing now at Exeter. I didn't start my PhD till I was 32," she said. "When I was making the decision to pursue my PhD, I said to a friend, 'I'm gonna be 40 by the time I finish this PhD.' And I remember so well that she said, 'You're going to be 40 anyways, you might as well have a PhD.'"

"This is just a reminder to folks that they don't have to have it all figured out," Buttenheim said. "Your passions and the work will reveal themselves to you, and you'll just prepare for that by being an engaged, interested, compassionate and kind human being ready for anything."

Senior Superlatives

Perfect Exonian



Noah James

Class Genius



Lucy Cai

Closet Genius



Thomas Gannon

Most Changed



JaQ Lai

Preppiest



Emilio Abelman

Best Dressed



Wiley Bahr

Cutest Couple



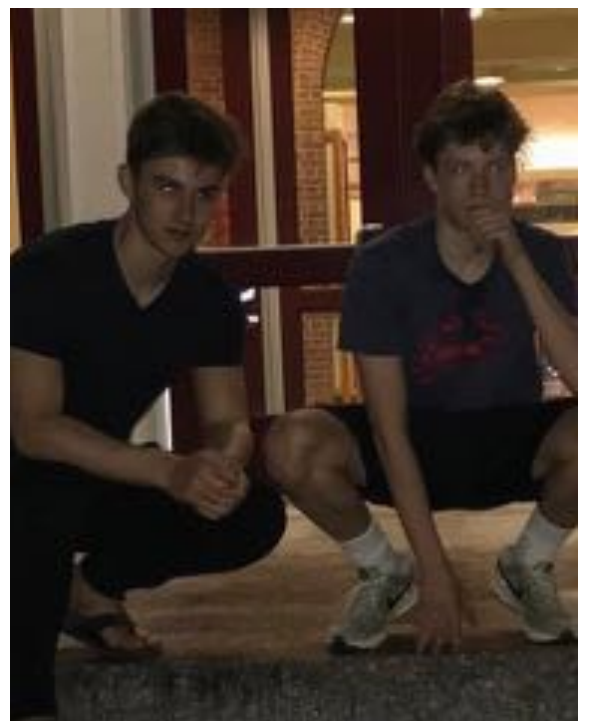
Coopsie: Cooper Walsh

Cutest Couple That Never Was



Katie Moon and Adam Tuchler

Best Bromance



Alex Fraser and Graham Guite

Best Female Friendship



Zoë Barron and Iliana Rios

Best Roommate Pairing



Phil Horrigan and Philip

Eternal Prep



Emmett Lockwood

Senior Superlatives

Class Clown



Adith Reddi

Most Studious



Ellie Griffin

Most Sibi



Felix Yeung

Most Non Sibi



Annie Smaldone

Most Intimidating



Evie Houston

Most Liberal



Maggie Wainwright

Most Conservative



Sarah Kennedy

Most Opinionated



Rosemary McIlroy

Most Quirky



Audrey Yin

Most Musical



Hoj Choi and Osiris

Most Athletic



Marymegan Wright

Biggest Harkness Warrior



Jack Puchalski

Most Likely To

Become President



Nahla Owens

Become a Bitcoin Billionaire



Nick Pham

Become an Academy Principal



Anne Brandes

Teach at the Academy



Isabel Carden

Be in the Central Intelligence Agency



Bea Burack

Become the Next Mark Zuckerberg



Jacob Feigenberg

Be On a Reality Television Show



Veronica Choulga

Be a Cult Leader



Charlie Preston

Be a Diplomat



Hassane Fiteni

Start a Movement



Senai Robinson

Win an Oscar



Claire Barbour

Win a Pulitzer Prize



Morgan Lee

Most Likely To

Peak Before Exeter



Emmanuel Tran

Sing On the Paths



Stephen McNulty

Be on Stricts After Grad



Nick Garey

Survive the Hunger Games



That Cat (Ozzy)

Join a Cult



Soule Hall

Marry Rich



Oliver Hess

Cause a World War



Jeff Cui

Be an Among Us Impostor



Maegan Paul

» HISTORIC PARALLELS

Read about healing America after Donald Trump's presidency, from Staff Writer Maxine Park, 12.

» ABLEISM IN EVERYDAY SPEECH

Read about ableism and language, from Staff Writer Otto Do, 14

A Letter to the Principal, Cont.

rule were just demoralizing. The problem is that it has sent me into deeper hiding and deeper paranoia than ever before. This year, I was beginning to take steps to embrace my own sexual identity in an outward way. I felt like I was beginning to step out of the closet. But now that I'm in a relationship, I have to walk back in. To me and to others, it feels like we are being forced back in the closet, forced to hide our identities again, forced to live a lie again, forced to be invisible again. Someone finding out about my sexuality is the first step to their finding out about my boyfriend. We do not feel safe so much as hugging in public, let alone coming out as gay. And if we were both to come out, suspicions would abound in our dorm, among students and

faculty alike. And so the closet has become our second cage.

That closet also keeps me from opening up to faculty members. There are Exeter faculty with whom I have shared just about every facet of my life, but I absolutely could never talk about my boyfriend with a teacher because it would expose my "rules violation." The truth, however, is that relationships are a natural thing that many students will experience or experiment with throughout their time here. In that process, adults are great resources in navigating them, great assets for information and great people to lean on for support.

Unfortunately, while I cannot attest to their veracity, there have at least been rumors that

students caught in an intra-dorm relationship would be separated into different dorms. That would mean losing time with all the friends I have in my own dorm, it would mean a very obvious outing to Exeter at-large, it would mean having to choose between my dorm and my partner and it would mean the involvement of my parents. Imagine not only having to explain your sexuality to your parents, but also having to explain how you got ejected from your dorm because your romance was "illegal." It is quite literally one of my worst fears, and it is my third cage.

I understand the intent of the school in crafting such a ban. However, I do not believe that an administrative ban would actually stop any intra-dorm

relationships. I, for one, accept that I live in a perpetual state of rule-breaking, if only because I genuinely love my partner. I don't think anyone who has honestly experienced romantic love would let some three-sentence school rule stop them.

Though it cannot actually prevent relationships, the rule certainly has an effect on the morale and freedom of LGBTQ+ students. The ban leaves us trapped -- unable to come out, embrace who we are, live like any other couple would, or reach out for help when we need it. This rule is not protecting anyone and only hurting the LGBTQ+ community at Exeter that has fought so hard for recognition and acceptance. It amplifies the pain and the fear that queer students live with daily and imposes an effective gag rule that prevents us from having open and honest dialogue about healthy relationships. Why then, does this hurt-

ful and outdated rule, our own "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," even exist?

I want to genuinely thank you for reading this letter. At the end of the day, I am comfortable enough to write it because you've been a firm ally of the LGBTQ+ community thus far. To that end, I feel it would be unfair for me to just drop you this letter without speaking to you directly. Both me and my boyfriend, who helped in writing this, would be happy to meet with you in person, provided that we could be assured that neither of us would be outed, have our parents contacted, be forced to move, or face administrative repercussions. If you would be willing to accept as much, feel free to reach out and schedule a time to talk by replying to the return address, who will in turn contact us. We would greatly appreciate it.

Proudly Yours.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Reporting on Exeter and Sexual Assault, Cont.

first investigative articles, I was looking for an anecdote to drive home the importance of adding affirmative consent to the standing policy on assault. This was too easy a task.

I reached out to interviewees by scrolling on Exeter Connect since I had no background knowledge to gauge the nature of Exeter's hookup culture. After all, as a prep, I knew only a handful of upperclassmen in my dormitory and on my sports teams. I was surprised by the response. In the most casual of places—in the hallway outside of the Day Student Lounge, over conversation in Elm during the lunch rush, leaning between two trees on the South Side quad—strangers told me about their stories of sexual assault at Exeter.

The next fall, I co-wrote "PEA Takes Initiative Toward Mental Health," fully intending to concentrate on the Academy's crushing workload. Instead, this article turned out to be a story about misconduct. That week, Sep. 27, 2018, half of The Exonian's front page contained articles about sexual assault. While my co-writer and I spoke with survivors about how their fear of assailants in the classroom impacted their well-being, other reporters wrote about how Phillips Exeter Alumni for Truth and Healing (PATH), an action group comprised of survivors of sexual abuse at PEA and their supporters in the alumni community, released a petition challenging the Academy's investigation practices.

Even in a third-page news article, "Alumni Community Convenes for Exeter Leadership Week-end," alumni called attention to the "Academy's past and present awareness of sexual misconduct and its relation to general media regarding sexual harassment." There's something distinctly wrong, I feel, when an article like this—The Exonian's opportunity

to spotlight alumni—turns into another call for intervention.

The next week, I co-wrote my first article on an Academy lawsuit: "Former Admissions Officer Sues PEA for Discrimination." We reported on a faculty termination due to a sexual relationship with a student and his partner's subsequent suit against the Academy. This same edition—for the second week in a row—featured a front page mostly covering sexual assault. The other article I co-wrote that week was informed by Brett Kavanaugh's nomination to the Supreme Court. "Students Note Bro-Culture Affecting PEA" covered another aspect of Exeter's culture of sexual misconduct: objectification in dormitory life. Below the fold, "Community Time Focuses on Consent" reported on an all-student body workshop with a ringing criticism that student leaders weren't given proper training.

At this point, I walked into the Sunday writers assignment meetings anticipating the inevitable sexual assault beat of the week. I wrote my articles and collected anecdotes from survivors, pretty sure that no one was going to read them. I spoke with my senior friends, who had grown in number since prep spring, about each week's article, and we talked about all the new stories we'd heard. This all felt normal.

I wish I could explain to you some of the stories that didn't make it to print.

And then, in lower spring, everything did not feel normal. The Class of 2019, seniors at the time, had had enough. Seniors, uppers, remember how it felt when over two hundred of us sat outside of J. Smith, long after The Boston Globe's exposé on Academy Instructor Rick Schubart, and listened to our peers tell strangers and friends that they had been

assaulted.

For those of you who were not there, May of 2019 felt like a turning point, at least to me. I co-wrote three articles after that protest: "Students Protest Sexual Assault Handling" and "Academy Plans to Share Sexual Assault Protocol" on the 16th and "Students Take Action After Thursday Sit-In" on the 23rd. Rereading these articles now, I note the timelines provided by adults, some of which promised cultural change in a year's time.

The next school year, I co-wrote several articles about new policies, including "Faculty Pass Misconduct Proposal" on Sept. 19 and "Academy Hosts Consent Workshops for Student Body" on Oct. 31, 2019. My first edition as Editor, we ran the article "Uppers Discuss Sexual Misconduct Prevention" after a bystander training session. Though these efforts had little to do with cultural change, I felt survivors and their allies had the ear of the adult community. Change was in their air, I told friends on The Exonian, and I was grateful to report on the Academy during this hopeful evolution.

I spoke too soon. During the spring, when we all received an email regarding Math Instructor Jerzy Kaminski's sexual assault of a student, The Exonian got hold of the case's affidavit. For all of us on the article, the document was difficult to read. It felt the same as my prep spring. Kaminski had taught most of my friends at some point.

Recently, The Exonian spoke to another survivor. The Executive Board had to tell them that, though we would normally offer our platform to a survivor, publishing an article in the paper would likely do them more harm than good. We worried that the attention their voice would receive would be fleeting and that, at some point, whatever they wrote could be used against them in court. This piece is

a response to that meeting.

I note the genuine efforts of the adult community. In April 2018, then-President of the Trustees Tony Downer unequivocally clarified the Academy's position on sexual assault in a discussion about Interim Principal candidates. The purpose of the Interim Principal role, Downer explained, is "bringing closure to the journey we have been on over the past few years, addressing our past shortcomings and flaws in the realm of sexual misconduct and endeavoring to provide support and bring comfort to those who have experienced harm."

A culture of sexual assault has persisted at the Academy, then, despite the hopes of survivors, students, parents, alumni, faculty, administrators and trustees.

This is my last print edition of The Exonian, and I believe in objectivity. Not that any reporter or editor can be objective, but that we should strive to be, in all cases. I am reluctant to write this piece, because I think editors should hold their opinions and let the story speak for itself. But what happens when the story speaks for itself and everyone hears? When everyone hears, and most people listen, and then a week later the front page focus of The Exonian is still about sexual assault?

I wanted to write this piece in the newsroom, surrounded by yellowing papers from years before I arrived at the Academy, with headlines that include "Does Exeter Have A Rape Culture?" and "Sexual Assault Galvanizes Alumni Advocacy." Those two are cherry picked—but most of these papers have a glancing, or direct, nod to sexual assault at Exeter. I can already see the 142nd Board's articles aging in the chilly newsroom air.

Dear Exeter community, the Class of 2021 will graduate too.

My experiences as a journalist at the Academy will leave with me in May, and so will the experiences of my co-writers when they go their separate ways. Survivors will leave, too, and the Exeter experience—and trauma—will hang with them. I worry for the new students we leave behind.

As Editor, I like when our articles end with some kind of gesture towards a brighter future. After all, why report on the Academy if you don't believe it can be improved?

I end with a call for transparency. Transparency, by the way, is the whole point of reporting on these cases. But our coverage is not enough. I believe, obviously, that The Exonian is a terrific platform to spur change at the Academy, but I am saddened to say that the paper is simply not enough in this case.

Transparency, possibly the most difficult objective when addressing sexual assault, is the only way I think we can face our cultural failure. I understand the intrinsic need for privacy in sexual assault cases, but I am not calling for details; I am calling for public statistics. I'd like to see how many mandated reports were made by the Director of Student Well-Being's Office and the types of reports made. I'd like to see these numbers over time. I'd like to see these numbers publicized.

As a student journalist, I know sexual assault is unlikely to be eradicated from the Academy. However, I don't think it's right that new students have to be gradually clued into, or experience, Exeter's culture of sexual assault to understand it exists.

Naming matters. Here, I've named my experience as a student and journalist at the Academy. I spent the last three years reporting on sexual assault. Remember these articles, these cases. Remember the cases that never made it into the paper. Let's set the record straight now. After we leave, as we all inevitably do, we'll then be able to return to an Academy where a straight record and a clean record are one and the same.

The Exonian

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How Do We Move Forward As a Nation?

By MAXINE PARK '22

A global pandemic. A national cry for systemic justice. A tumultuous scuffle for the American presidency. Environmental, emotional, and political uncertainties have only further divided our country in a time when we most need the opposite. In his acceptance speech last week, President-elect Joe Biden pledged to be a leader for all American people following one of the most controversial American presidential races in history. He expressed his desire to unite Americans and lead the United States with intentionality and integrity.

“We will lead not only by an example of our power,” he declared, “but by the power of our example.”

What kind of example do the American people want to be?

Over the course of his presidency, President Trump has capitalized on people’s fears and uncertainties. He draws support by offering a scapegoat—an ethnic group, a foreign country, a political leaders—towards which they can direct their anger and fear. Through deliberate and dangerous manipulation of our psychology, he brings people together by driving others further apart.

But President Trump is not solely responsible for America’s disharmony.

As election fervor burgeons on social media, so do expressions of impassioned partisan outrage. Trump supporters are “racist” and “uneducated”. Biden supporters are “elitist” and “socialist”. It is precisely this mindset on which polarization thrives. Insults do not lead to persuasion.

Accusations do not lead to reconciliation. The natural reaction to denigration is resistance.

The media industry monetizes division. It is not surprising that liberals who watch news outlets that refer to Trump supporters as “idiots” and “foolish racists” have become comfortable doing the same, or that those who watch channels calling Biden “dishonest” and our voting process “rigged” believe the election was stolen from them. In times of uncertainty and fear, we find comfort in accusation. Our country’s media and leaders have become more focused on simply affirming polarized partisan attitudes than seeking avenues of unification.

The United States has become an example of a country that is unable to responsibly address conflict. It is this how we want to lead the world?

Polarization is nothing new. But in the age of technology, the consequences of division and the ways we choose to address it are exacerbated. It is always easier to attack and complain about people who don’t agree with us than to understand their perspective.

As students at Exeter, we enjoy a position of privilege. We have the opportunity to learn from a diverse curriculum and student body. And with this privilege comes the responsibility to understand others and reconcile perspectives that we may not share—not to use our privilege to disparage people who do not have access to the same education and community.

How do we escape from our respective political echo chambers? One study published in *Nature Human Behavior* last year



Joe Biden and Kamala Harris.

Courtesy of NBC News

thors analyzed millions of edits to Wikipedia’s articles on scientific, political, and social issues, each edited by individuals on a spectrum of ideological preferences. They found that polarized teams with ideologically diverse editors not only produced higher-quality articles, but also “engage[d] in longer, more constructive, com-

posed but linguistically diverse” conversations than teams of people who shared similar views. Polarization may not be the issue, but rather the ways we choose to harness it. It is not enough to simply make yourself aware of opposing viewpoints. We need to actively seek conversations where we can disagree—we may

spectives, but such conversation will produce understanding that is civilized, constructive, and informative for all parties involved.

By what example should America lead?

A country unified in the face of uncertainty.

A democracy driven by discussion and not division.

A Crayon For Your Thoughts

By INDRANI BASU '22

When students at Phillips Exeter Academy staggered back into their dorms on Election day, they were greeted by an unassuming cardboard box in their dorm common room. Inside, snacks, play-dough, card games, nail polish and other care kit items sat upon a bed of shimmering red tinsel. These packages were intended to “relieve stress” during this year’s most consequential event in American politics. And so as America watched the election unfold, students at the nation’s most prestigious boarding school were coloring with crayons.

The fact that we received care packages highlights an important aspect of the Exeter experience, the way that our minds are shielded from the unfairness and hate perpetuating in the dark undercurrent of American society. Too often I hear of the famed

Exeter Bubble. It’s the space we all know and love, the place where we can be ourselves and bask in its diverse and accepting glow. The idea carries through to students and faculty alike. Exeter, in our minds, is a utopia where everyone accepts each other and fills out coloring books instead of worrying about you-know-what.

And yet, maybe this bubble isn’t as idyllic as we’d like to think it is. Perhaps prejudices from the outside world leak into our classrooms and dorms and athletic fields. I would argue that care packages provided distraction from issues on Exeter’s campus, not outside of it.

It must be easier for the Exeter community to write off American conflicts in terms of our own campus when the myth of our school’s complete diversity and acceptance are championed. “Look at us,” that mindset says, “the world may be

dealing with these issues, but not us!” The truth is that the Exeter Bubble is somewhat of a cop-out; it allows our community to deny the very real issues regarding race, class and gender within our own walls.

The question arises: what exactly is Exeter trying to say with these slumber party supplies?

Is it to pretend that these issues don’t exist?

Is it to distract and remove us from the anxiety that comes with the elections?

I have to say, painting our nails did not stop us from compulsively refreshing the election map on our phones every ten minutes. Playdough did not erase the worry of having to live the next four years under a failing president as we watched the election map slowly color into a divided red and blue.

I am not all against the services

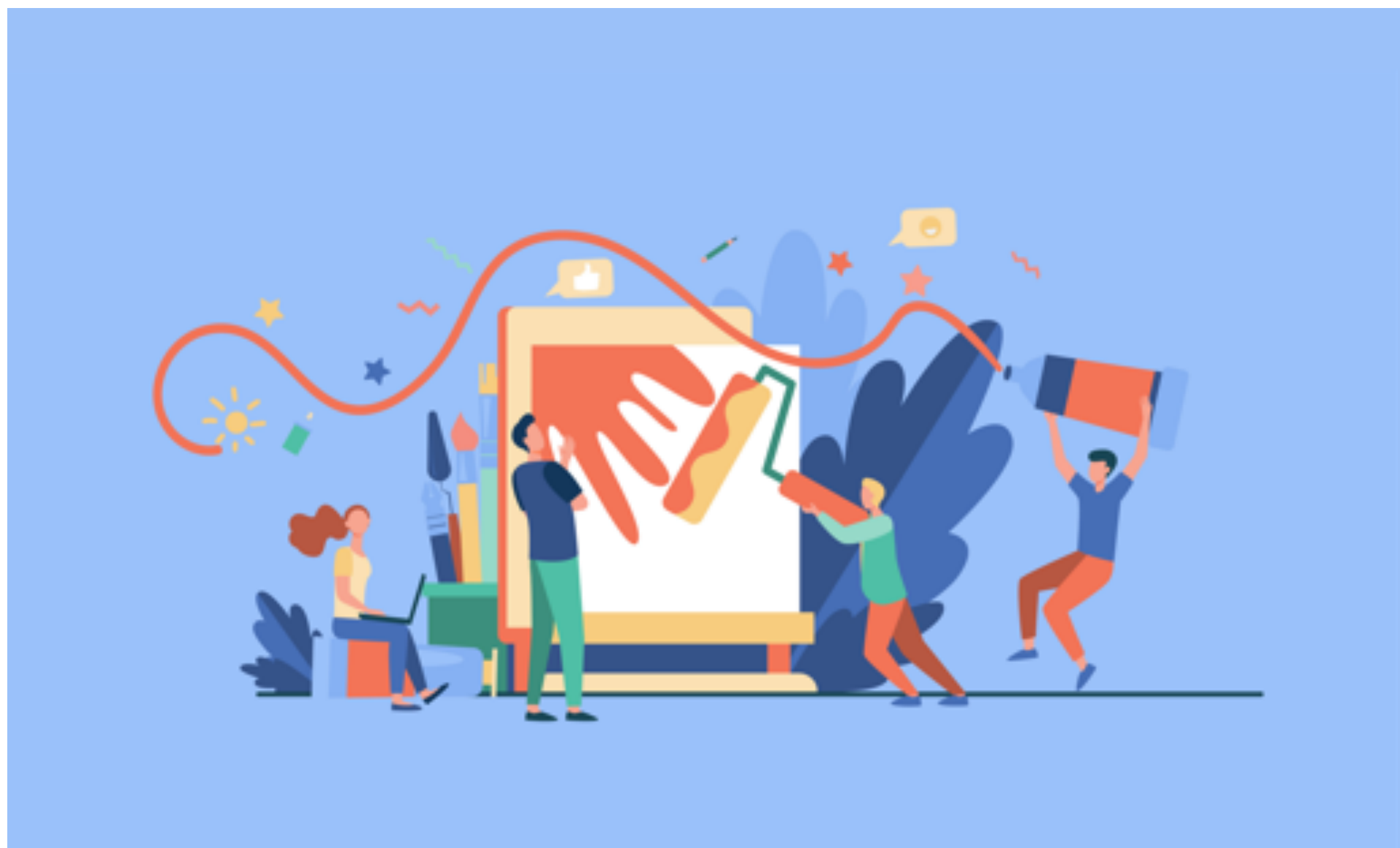
provided by Exeter. The Office of Multicultural Affairs had hours where students could seek counsel. “Politics-free” zones were set up on campus, and even treats like coffee and donuts were provided. Some classes were changed to an asynchronous block. These events allowed an ever burdened student body to take their mind off of the election and the inherent stress that comes with it.

While the respite was welcomed by students all over campus, including myself, should we really try to forget the threats of injustice that carry into the lives of so many students? Boxes filled with goodies may have been a temporary relief, but it is not enough. Protecting us from the truth is not enough to counteract outright hatred.

If Exeter wants to promote the well-being of its students, then it will enforce an unwavering commitment

to progress from all members of our community. Exeter will continue to go out of its way to hear marginalized voices, it will hold faculty members accountable for their words and actions, and it will prioritize students before anything else, equally and with respect. If Exeter wants us to be safe, it will eliminate the barriers and shortcomings in its own community, and continue to fight for these values outside Exeter as well, because our platform as a respected academic institution gives us that power.

Yes, Exonians welcome a way to have fun. But we also want an effectively progressive school administration, the elimination of racial and gender based discrimination on and off-campus, and the preservation of human rights in spite of whatever state American politics is in. In other words, actual change. We want both. We, students at Exeter, deserve both.



Courtesy of Freepik.com

Across the Aisle

By ANDREW YUAN '24

Despite President-Elect Joe Biden's promises, a bipartisan effort to reach across the aisle will be almost impossible after the long-lasting divisions caused by a Trump presidency. A probable Republican-controlled Senate with Mitch McConnell as the majority leader, along with Kevin McCarthy's increasingly ambitious agenda to take back the House in 2022, will only exacerbate the hostility between the two parties.

The American people, regardless of their political affiliation, have the necessary responsibilities to cooperate with a foreseeably difficult Biden presidency in the next four years, yet it seems impossible that such a smooth transition will take place soon. With progressives pressuring Biden to nominate Sen. Bernie Sanders and Sen. Elizabeth Warren to the cabinet, Biden will have a hard time dealing with the rising antagonism from thousands of fanatical MAGA voters, who just organized a massive "Million March" protest in D.C. this week.

Many Republican officials are willing to accept a Biden victory and seek unity, including President George W. Bush, who just congratulated Biden a few days ago, as well as Sec. Colin Powell, Cindy McCain, former Gov. John Kasich and Carly Fiorina.

However, aside from a number of former executive supporters, Biden hasn't yet received the expected approval from Senate or the House Republicans, nor does it seem likely for Republicans to contend for cabinet positions. Amongst other Republicans who are seeking a cabinet position, only Meg Whitman, CEO of Qibi, is considered a top contender for the Secretary of Commerce.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Sen. Lindsey Graham, who had both cooperated well with President-Elect Biden in the past, are showing no intention of working with a Democratic presidency. Both senators backed President Trump's legal challenges to election results, citing that it is constitutionally allowed for Trump to contest. Most other senators, following the Senate leadership, decided to either remain silent or support President Trump in his unrealistic legal appeals. So far, only four Republican senators have congratulated President-Elect Biden on his election victory but many advocated that Biden should get intelligence briefings as soon as possible.

There is still a slim chance for President-Elect Biden to reach across the aisle by persuading Republican moderates to support issues embraced by the Democratic Party. The key player in this cohesion process for our country would be the Senate, the

only branch of the Trifecta that might go to the Republicans. Again, just as we have seen in the past few years, the national landscape of American politics will be determined only by a few Republican senators from sparsely populated states.

A key moderate vital to the unity of the Congress would be the recently re-elected Sen. Susan Collins of Maine. As one of the senators who remained neutral to the rising Trumpism in the right wing, Collins won her re-election campaign this month by a stunning 9-percent margin. Maine Republicans praised her efforts to stay neutral and distance herself from the rest of the Republican party during the rise of Trumpism in the right wing.

Collins broke with her party's interest on key votes this year, voting to include witnesses in Trump's impeachment trial and voting against Amy Coney Barrett's appointment to the Supreme Court. Being the only Republican Senator in New England, her moderate views, in contrast with her challenger Sara Gideon's liberal agenda, had appealed to Maine voters for the last 23 years since she was first elected to the Senate. Notably, Collins only voted with her party only 59% since joining the Senate in 1997, making her one of the most possible GOP senators to vote for Democratic bills and slightly progressive cabinet appointments. Although she will not be up for re-election until 2026, her effective anti-Trumpist campaign strategies might motivate her to work with the

Democrats.

Senator Lisa Murkowski, a vulnerable Republican Alaskan moderate whose seat is up for grabs in 2022, has gained national attention in the past few years by voting against the "skinny repeal" and "Trumpcare" American Health Care Act. Trump vowed to campaign against her in June but with the President's defeat, Sen. Murkowski can now vote with Democrats on key issues to appeal to Alaskan moderates. Murkowski's vote to confirm Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court, however, will raise concerns for democrats who are hopeful about working with her.

As one of the harshest Republican critics of the Trump presidency, Sen. Mitt Romney of Utah called President-Elect Biden to congratulate him on his win. He has been long seen as the most Democrat-friendly senator on key votes in the past few years, including his notorious vote as the only Republican senator to convict President Trump in the impeachment trial. Yet with his affirmative vote during Barrett's hearing, his role in the next 4 years still remains unclear.

Senator Roy Blunt of Missouri, one of the lesser known names on this list of Republicans, will also be a key senator to watch. He won his re-election bid in 2016 only by a margin of 3.2%, making him a vulnerable Republican up for re-election in 2022. As the fourth powerful Republican in the Senate, he actively spoke against President Trump in the past few weeks.

For instance, when Trump suggested that Biden had committed fraud on election night, Blunt argued that "you can't stop the count in one state and decide you want the count to continue in another state. That might be how you'd like to see the system work but that's not how the system works." He also agreed with Sen. Marco Rubio on providing intelligence briefings to President-Elect Biden, despite McConnell's demand to wait for vote recounts. If he is willing to reach across the aisle to join Congressional Democrats on some key issues, then a unity would seem likely given his powerful influence over other Republicans.

Congress's role will become vital in the next 4 years, and America is already anticipating another more divisive election in 2024. Biden, who will likely not seek re-election, will be also tested on his ability to heal the country, with Kamala Harris representing a more diverse voice in the administration as the first female, black and Indian-American Vice President. Despite the slim odds of unity, we must not forget that the future of America lies in our hands and our hands alone.

While it's easy to go off and point to Congresspeople as the only ones who can bring about change, so much of our activism happens on a grassroots level — we are the ones who can pressure our lawmakers, and more importantly, we are the ones who can tone down the national division in our own communities, even if Washington will not.



The United States Senate chamber.

Courtesy of Politico

Has Exeter Considered All Its Options?

By ARHON STRAUSS '23

We, as a student body, return to campus on February 11th. We will only have 1 month of in-person winter classes before spring term. Almost half of the winter will be spent online and off-campus. So why is the administration sending us back at all, what are the implications of their plan and is this truly the best decision for us?

Exeter is one of the most elite boarding schools in the country. Parents pay tens of thousands of dollars to send us here. As such, the administration has a vested interest in satisfying us and more importantly our parents. Essentially, they need to make sure our families are getting their money's worth. Online classes would not have been enough for

us or our parents. The administration, however, can not ignore the health of its student body. Balancing these two sides has led to the half and half decision of online but on campus classes during fall term.

The situation for winter term is fundamentally different. Going into fall term, the number of COVID-19 cases was decreasing, but recently cases have been surging to record highs. With this in mind, it makes sense that we would not return to campus for hell weeks or winter term for that matter. Not returning at all would be the safest option. Is it the best option, though?

A high school's most basic goal is to educate its students, and at Exeter that education revolves heavily around campus. So in order to meet that goal,

and in other words satisfy the students and parents, they took the risk of bringing us back to campus even though it may have been safer to have an entirely asynchronous experience.

Returning in the middle of the term will most likely make it hard for some students to transition from the off-campus to on campus learning environments. A home is a very different place from a dorm and moving between the two halfway through the term will create a culture shock. Specifically, time management will become more difficult during the period in which we move in; readjusting to juggle dorm, school and social life will come with a learning curve. Additionally, the travel time difference will exacerbate the sudden change from home to school

learning. The administration has provided students with an extra day to settle in, but one day will not be enough to account for jet-lag, much less accommodate the situational changes.

However, given the current situation, Exeter has taken the best path, even if that path is not ideal. The changes that we, as a student body would have to make for the midway switch from off to on campus learning are not nearly as bad as simply being off campus the whole term. The current plan gives us, as a student body, the ability to connect with our peers and experience a more normal Exonian life. Spring break has also been shrunk to only 4 days, so that students who are already on campus can stay on campus and that off campus students have an opportunity to

return for spring term.

Winter term is going to be hard or rather harder than usual. COVID-19, home classes and the transition will add stress to an already stressful term. Yet, the school has made the most of a bad situation by allowing us to return to campus, even if it is for a short amount of time. Additionally, staying on campus during spring is a great option that I think will help with many of the logistical issues that students may have had otherwise, as it will reduce the amount of time we must spend quarantining. So while winter term will still be difficult, there will still be parts of it to look forward to. We'll push through — but it's important to find the good where we can.

Ableism in Everyday Speech

By OTTODO '22

As beings who create, adopt and develop our vernacular on a daily basis, we are largely ignorant of all the ways that we can imbue harm into our language. There are many scenarios where we do this, but I would like to hone in on one that has yet to enter my social media feed: ableism.

In my Christian elementary school, one of my teachers read a verse of the bible to us: I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it, Psalm 39:9. Puzzled, I asked her, “Dumb? He was stupid?” She clarified that dumb means mute—unable to speak. “So there are two definitions then.” She opened her mouth to speak then paused. After taking a moment to gather herself, she nodded in confirmation.

Incredulous, I found out for myself. Meriam-Webster defines dumb as “of a person, now often offensive: lacking the ability to speak.” By its strictest definition, dumb means “lacking the ability to speak,” but long ago, someone used the word in a degrading manner. And this connotation has since spread, becoming a commonplace phrase.

At Exeter, we have participated in similar behaviors. Although not the official name, Prep Program, the default physical education program for preps was, and still is, referred to as “Prep Spaz.” While we might mean to say “unathletic,” spaz(ed) refers to

people with cerebral palsy or similar neurological disabilities.

I have also observed that many throw around the word r*tard(ed) [r-word]. Someone might trip in the hallway, and they say, “That’s so [r-word].” I use brackets because believe it or not, retarded is actually a medical term, referring to people with intellectual disabilities or someone who might process and think at a slower rate. So this use not only connotes negativity, it is actually incorrect; when my friends use this word, they are inadvertently making a diagnosis when they do not have the license to do so.

Often when I inform my friends of the definition of the r-word, they apologize to the person whom they labeled just a moment ago. But we should not apologize to the person who we incorrectly named. Instead, we should apologize to the entire disability community for continuing the trend of binding negativity to something that is not in fact negative.

Even worse, our ableism has often been disguised. How many occasions have you seen advertisements or posters of people with disabilities, captioned or that suggest, “if they can do it, you can too”?

Many, myself included, might have called the people on those posters inspirational, but when an able-bodied person calls a person with a disability “inspirational,” we’re usually applauding them for existing. In turn,

we pat ourselves on the back for realizing how difficult life with disability must be. This behavior is problematic for multiple reasons, but it chiefly reduces people with disabilities to their disabilities, making disability their defining characteristic.

We have leveraged the disability community in more ways than one—first, by using their disabilities as convenient jokes and second, to inspire ourselves to “wake up in the morning.”

This is a lot to take in, so what now? Although I believe that we should carefully reflect, ruminating for too long on the fact that we have been misusing words is not productive either. The choices we make are ultimately what defines us, so making new decisions, taking up the active effort of unlearning and revising our behavior is the only way that our being may bend towards justice.

So let us begin the process of unlearning — and lift the belittling subtexts we’ve placed on these words. And of course, let us educate each other, so that no human life will be viewed as lesser than. Let us bring conscientiousness to our speech.

These corrections require persistent and consistent effort, so I have compiled a running list of words that I aim to remove from my everyday speech:

Crazy: Refers to people with mental

or psychiatric disabilities.

Cripple/Crippled (by ____): Refers to people with physical or mobility disabilities.

Deaf-Mute: Refers to Deaf or hard of hearing people.

Derp (also herp-derp and variations): Refers to people with intellectual disabilities.

Dumb: Refers to d/Deaf or hard of hearing people, people with speech-related disabilities, or people with linguistic or communication disorders or disabilities.

Handicap(ped): Refers to people with physical or mobility disabilities, and is usually a euphemistic phrase to avoid saying “disability” or “disabled.”

Idiot(ic): Refers to people with intellectual disabilities.

Insane or Insanity: Refers to people with mental or psychiatric disabilities.

Invalid (as a noun, as in “my neighbor is an invalid and never goes outside”): Refers to people with physical or mobility disabilities or chronic health conditions.

Lame: Refers to people with physical or mobility disabilities.

Lunatic: Refers to people with mental or psychiatric disabilities.

Madhouse/Mad/Madman: Refers to an institution housing people with mental or psychiatric disabilities.

Manic: Refers to someone with bipolar (used to be called manic depression); Refers to people with mental or psychiatric disabilities.

Midget: Refers to little people or people with small stature or a form of dwarfism.

Moron(ic): Refers to people with intellectual disabilities.

Nuts: Refers to people with mental or psychiatric disabilities.

Psycho: Refers to people with mental or psychiatric disabilities.

Psychopath(ic): Refers to people with mental or psychiatric disabilities.

Psycho(tic): Refers to people with mental or psychiatric disabilities.

Retard(ed)/[anything]-tard (examples: libtard, f*cktard, etc.): Refers to people with intellectual disabilities or someone who might process and think at a slower rate.

Spaz(zed): Refers to people with cerebral palsy or similar neurological disabilities.

“Sped”: Usually refers to people with learning, intellectual, or developmental disabilities, but can mean any person with a disability. Usually a euphemistic phrase to avoid saying “disability” or “disabled.”

Stupid: Refers to people with intellectual disabilities (i.e. “in a stupor”).

What Do We Do Now?

By ANDY HARRIGAN '23

When I began writing this piece, networks called the state of Pennsylvania for Joe Biden, and the Democrats declared victory in the 2020 presidential race. This campaign has been historic: Joe Biden has received more votes than any other candidate in history. Come Jan. 20, 2021, Biden will take his oath of office and become the 46th president of the United States.

Though the race was called earlier, the outstanding states of Georgia, North Carolina and Alaska went for Biden, Trump, and Trump, respectively. These developments have officially concluded the race as a 306-232 victory for Vice President, and now President-elect, Biden. President Donald Trump has yet to concede to Biden, claiming that the election was fraudulent on account of the historic use of mail in ballots, as well as citing other as-yet unspecified reasons. President Trump has

also declared victory, but without the required 270 electoral votes anywhere in sight.

In the last four years, President Trump has created a divide in this country. He has politicized things that should not have been politicized, the most disastrous of which were the existence of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Black Lives Matter movement. We have become a house divided against itself, and in such a state we cannot stand. In this time of division, the country must come together.

Joe Biden is the best man to do just that. During his campaign, he highlighted his ability to govern in a bipartisan manner, based on a 36-year long career in the Senate. Politically, Joe Biden is a left-leaning centrist; he’s resisted the pressure to be a more progressive candidate and has stated many times that, “I plan to work as hard for those who didn’t vote for me as I will for those who did.” It is important—now more

than ever—that in this climate to come together as a people and put politics aside and work on unification. Biden’s political strategy and philosophy accomplishes that objective.

I, for one, am excited to see the President-elect take action on the historic issues that are now facing our world, such as climate change, and see his approach to handling COVID-19. Concerning the climate, Biden has said that he will listen to scientists and act accordingly. This is a stark contrast to President Trump, who’s said that “[the earth] will get cooler, just watch” while addressing a climate scientist. (The earth, in fact, has not gotten cooler). This was the first election that magazines like Scientific American and National Geographic have endorsed a presidential candidate, primarily on the account of the irreversible damage that a second term of the Trump presidency would do to the environment.

The Trump Administration

has also given up on the coronavirus pandemic, which has taken a total of 250,000 American lives and takes more with each passing day. Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris have already started their transition COVID-19 task force, which features leading members in the field of epidemiology. Biden has also said that he will issue a mask mandate and make sure that no more communities are destroyed because of the virus.

The only worry remaining I hold is—what now for soon-to-be former President Trump? What’s stopping him from doing as much damage as possible in his remaining two months in office? Considering his cult-like following, we could see far-right hate groups like The Proud Boys come fully out of the shadows, as many of them did at the “Million Maga March” in Washington, DC this weekend.

Another concern is if Trump will ever concede, or at least commit himself and his government to a peaceful transition of power? When asked this question during one of the debates, the president simply said that he would “have

to see.” This is an unprecedented move, and, considering the fact that he is still insisting that he won is simply frightening. He continues to tweet about his victory while spewing baseless conspiracies, and the Trump campaign has continued their attempts to stop the counting or recounting of ballots.

Beyond this, the (other) biggest threat to the Biden Administration is currently the Senate, which will most likely remain in Republican hands. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell will likely try to block much of the legislation proposed by Biden and the Democrats, as he did during the Obama Administration.

Let’s end, however, with a bit of optimism—something that seems eerily lacking in 2020. Though Joe Biden’s presidency may not be easy, and though he might not have been many people’s first choice, he might be exactly what this country needs right now—to stop being a laughing stock on the world stage, to get back on track and restore faith in America. It will be tricky, but I have hope.

Winter Term for the Child of an Alcoholic

By ANONYMOUS

One in ten American children live in a home with at least one parent who abuses a substance. If we expand that to people at Exeter, that’s well over 100 students. That’s a kid in every single one of your classes, a person on every floor of every dorm and a few students on every sports team. I would know, I’m one of them. Just knowing that they’re out there, that there are other people who dread every single vacation, brings me a lot of comfort. I’ve only met one other student who I know has been through the same thing as me. In an English class, I was handed a personal essay for peer review so familiar that I could have written it myself. I didn’t say anything in that moment, but to know that I wasn’t alone lifted a weight off my shoulders.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to speak or write about such things at Exeter. Almost every adult is a mandated reporter, which is a good thing, at least in theory. But the vagrancies of mandated reporter laws means

that I always err on the side of caution when sharing any of my personal experiences. The fear that some overzealous administrator might take it upon themselves to contact Child Protective Services hangs over me. Let me be clear: I am in no way being abused. I have a place to live and food to eat. I am not being hurt physically or sexually.

However, I am afraid that, if I were to write about the turmoil in my house, I would end up being railroaded by various layers of bureaucracy and administration. I fully understand why those stopgaps exist; it is always a tragedy when a child slips through the cracks. But this sort of fear creates a deep sense of isolation.

I always shudder when I hear my classmates talk about how happy they are to be going home. Don’t get me wrong: I like to have time off from school. I enjoy not having to do homework. But I will never be happy to be at home. My parent’s alcoholism deepened in earnest when I was in the seventh grade, so it’s becoming difficult for me to remember a

time when dinner did not devolve into drunken ranting or stormy silence punctuated by gulps of the alcoholic drink of choice. This is in such sharp contrast to dinner with friends at Exeter that I almost can’t believe that I can be in both of those places in the space of a week. After dinner, I’ll do the dishes and watch Netflix in my room. Give me a night of Biology homework anytime.

The thing is, this used to be less of an issue. A few weeks at home, punctuated by Christmas, two miserable weeks in the spring and a little bit of time in the summer before I embarked on my latest escapist venture. That was all the time I spent at home. But COVID changed all of that. In March, I struggled with the weight of the realization that I was facing an open-ended period of time at home. And now I’m staring that down again. I’ve been trying to pretend that this term won’t end, but it will. So I try to squeeze every last drop of happiness out of every day. I’m going to need it.

So why am I writing this op-ed? Simple. I want my class-

mates to know that being at home is not “slightly worse” for some of us. In fact, for ten percent of us, it is a lot worse. And we’re not talking about it. But fear of getting myself reported by the administration is not the sole reason that I don’t speak about these issues. Exeter’s culture has an unfortunate tendency towards piling on. Get five hours of sleep? Someone else got three. I dislike this, so I don’t want to seem like I’m trying to one-up the problems of others. I also don’t particularly want my carefully phrased confession to be one-upped by someone else. There’s a big difference between commiserating and oversharing. And not everyone can commiserate on this.

The second reason I am writing this is because I believe that the administration has failed to recognize the serious issues that arise from having us at home. There have been many exhortations to reach out to your teachers if you have a problem or a reason why you can’t complete the work. Examples of these issues include having to care for siblings or

elderly relatives and a lack of access to wifi. I do not deny that these are issues for a large number of Exonians. I appreciated the Association of Low Income Exonians’ op-ed illuminating many of these challenges. They can be hard to discuss with faculty. In many ways, instances of substance abuse are similar, although they occur across the socio-economic spectrum.

I am not convinced that the administration recognizes that I and a hundred other Exonians are already counting the months until we can come back. Right now, with nothing but swirling rumors to guide us, the months ahead are looking bleak for those of us for whom home is not a haven. If you’re reading this and any of it sounds familiar, you’re not alone, I promise. Together, we are tough and strong, and we will make it through, no matter what. But I don’t want to be tough. I don’t want to be strong. I don’t want to make it through high school. I want to thrive. I want to be happy. And that can’t happen at home.

Humor

“A landmark StuCo decision is an oxymoron”

—Noah James ‘21

“Why can’t we be like the Phillipian?”

—Adam Tuchler ‘21

“A big thank you to Jack Archer for carrying the humor team for the past eight weeks <3”

—Sonny, Adam and Sarah ‘21

Uncle Simpson’s Apocalypse Shelter Advice Palace

By BLAKE SIMPSON

In these trying times—whether they are trying us or we are trying them is up to no one—we have all had time to reflect, and then after stepping away from the mirror we’ve had a lot of time to think.

I’ve been thinking a lot about how if matter can neither be created nor destroyed, then everything would exist at the same time if time happened all at once but this would be impossible because we are just matter

that was once something else but I don’t dwell on that too much.

Rather than feed you thoughts that bend reality simply by being think, I have come to offer advice. While this is usually a Philosophy Palace, today’s column will be dedicated to providing some tips and tricks to keeping your apocalypse shelter in tip top shape:

1. Acquire furniture. Where else do you imagine your friends sitting, when you so choose to imagine your friends?

2. Use a Shortwave radio. Sometimes long waves just don’t cut it. See, when a long wave is beamed out, it often takes a detour. Because it is so long, it has its choice of anywhere in the world to go, thus it gets distracted. The shortwaves often shoot straight ahead to their destination. It’s just science.

3. Longwave radio. Ok, now that Shortwave isn’t listening I have to come clean. Long waves are truly what you want. They are, in every way, better. The real science shows that because so many long waves have been

sent nearly everywhere, they are in perpetual existence which will aid you far better in the apocal

4. Shortwave radio. Shortwave How did you get here? No, no, you have it all wrong. I would never say those things about longwave, you know you’re the better form of radio. Please, shortwave, you have to understand. Please!

5. I’m sorry. I mislead you. I led you astray, down a false path. I nearly allowed you to believe that longwave is better than shortwave, and although the notion of

duality between true and false is a perception created by the feebleness of the human mind, this fact is, in fact, false.

I’ll finish today’s Philosophy Palace with an acrostic poem, just for you.

How I wish I could be with you
Every single day, but for now
Let’s imagine
Pasta

Me oh my,
Everyday I wish I were with you

Andover Superlatives

By JACK ARCHER AND ADAM TUCHLER

Most popular: Patient Zero

Most likely to make good decisions: Senior who transferred to Exeter

Best looking: Gunga

Most school spirit: Papa Smurf

Most reliable: at&t network

Least reliable: Whoever procrastinated for 21 years before they published the second issue of The Phillipian

Best celebrity look-alike: George W. Bush ‘64

Smartest: Students who were rejected from Exeter

8 Things Extremely Important Things that I Have Learned This Term

By JACK ARCHER

1. If you press alt during a zoom meeting all the controls on the bottom of the screen disappear and you have no idea if you’re muted or not which adds another (exiting?) layer of stress to class.

2. Teachers can read private messages after class.

3. I REPEAT: Teachers can READ PRIVATE MESSAGES after class.

4. Microsoft OneNote is like a Google Doc but if the document was being edited simultaneously by seventeen people across all seven continents as well as a couple dudes floating in the ocean and several colonists on Mars.

5. The yellow “this page contains conflicting changes” banner is just something Microsoft uses to convince you things really are changing in the notebook when in reality you are typing into a void.

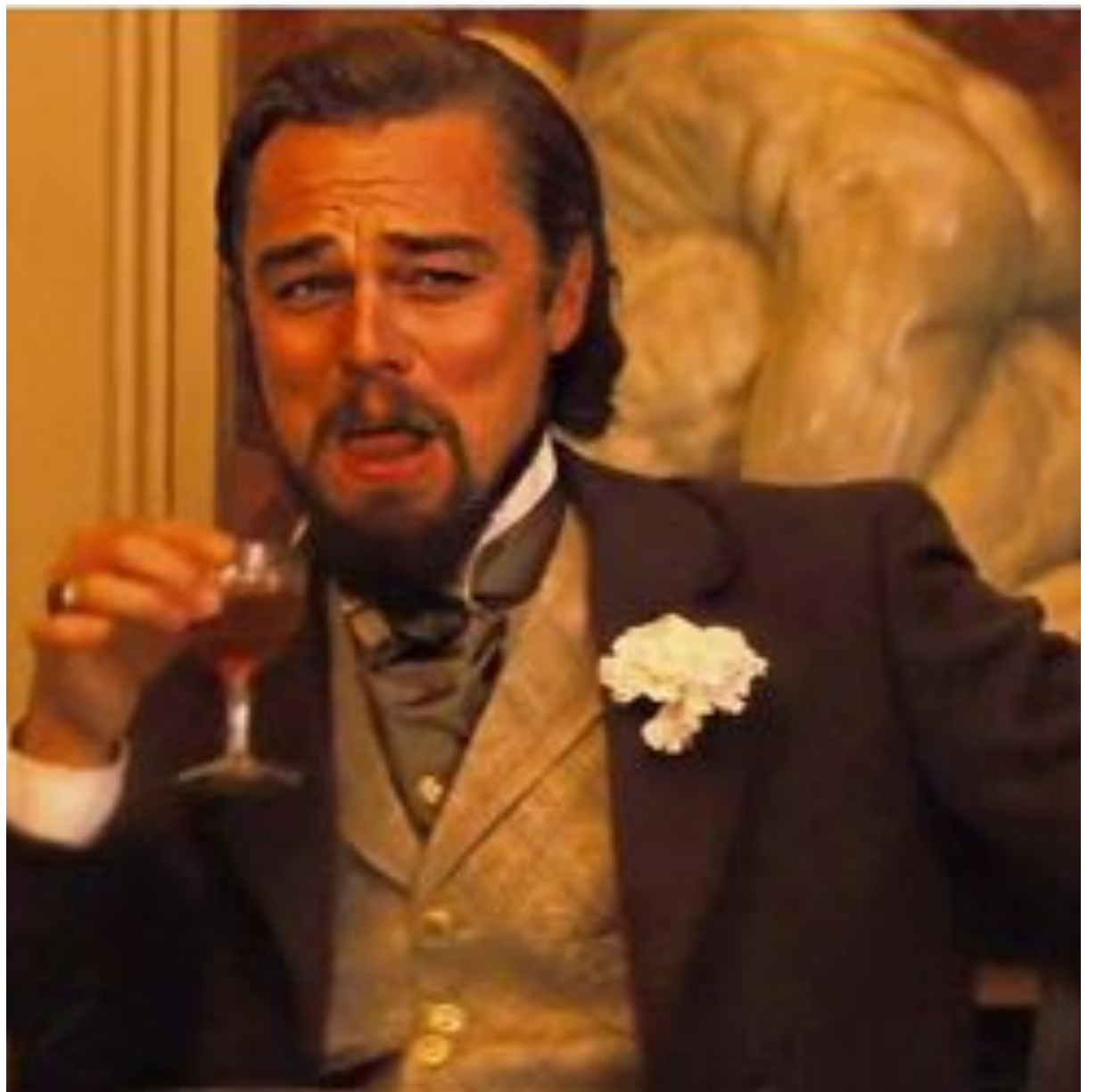
6. What it’s like to have a 9-5 office job where you stare at a screen until it’s time to go home so you can relax by staring at a different, possibly smaller screen.

7. You can find the slope at any point of a function $f(x)$ by evaluating the limit $\frac{f(x+h)-f(x)}{h}$ as h approaches 0.

8. I’m actually not too sure about that last one though.

Exonians on March 17: Oh boy winter term is over! Man am I excited to go home for spring break.

COVID-19:



Thanksgiving During a Pandemic: Dos and Don’ts

By JACK ARCHER

DO:

1. Not have a very large gathering. This is not the White House
2. Wear a mask. Put a mask on the turkey so you remember
3. Stay six feet apart from everyone, especially that one weird relative who you hope you aren’t actually related to
4. Consider the fact that I’m not American and wonder why I’m pretending to know about what Thanksgiving even is
5. Realize that this article is entirely written for the don’t section

DON’T:

1. Sneeze on the turkey
2. Apologize profusely for sneezing on the turkey while trying to wipe off your snot with unwashed hands
3. Reach into the turkey and pull out the stuffing because at least the you didn’t sneeze on the stuffing
4. Run around with two fistfulls of stuffing, offering to feed it to your relatives to make up for your mistake of sneezing on the turkey
5. Trip as you run around with two fistfulls of stuffing and knock over the gravy bowl as you crash to the floor
6. Chase your younger relative’s around while covered in gravy
7. Offer to bring the soiled turkey to your local elderly home as a kind gesture
8. Do it anyway even though your whole family said no
9. Bring the turkey to the hospital when the elderly home declines it
10. Try to explain why you brought a contaminated turkey to the hospital to the angry doctors
11. Attempt to escape from the gurney they strapped you to while your parents come to get you
12. Forget to be grateful for what you have, even in this difficult time.
13. Punch a nurse.

You can do this job much better than we can! Contact the Executive Board to apply for Humor Editorship.

Sports

» WRITE FOR THE EXONIAN

The Exonian is Phillips Exeter Academy's student newspaper; join us by writing for the Editorial Board, coding or maintaining our website for the Web Board or maintaining our financial health through the Business Board. Reach out to any member of the Board, including Editor-in-Chief Anne Brandes, for more information.

Girls' Squash Holds Tryouts

By GEORGIE VENCI

This past Saturday, the Big Red Girls' Squash team held their final tryouts on the courts of the Fisher Squash Center. Despite masks and social distance regulations, the tryouts occurred similarly to the old normal. Returning athletes played against each other in matches according to their previous position on the team ladder, a ranking of the team based on wins. New athletes played each other in hopes of getting on the ladder.

Due to new COVID-19 restrictions, tryouts were limited to merely three athletes per squash court, and masks were required during play.

Still, "I think people want to go to practice, just because it's a bit of normalcy and fun," lower Athen Wang said.

Prior to tryouts, the team practiced in the parking lot behind the Love Gym during the off-season. Typically, the space is used for athlete pick-ups for away games. Team members did many cardio-based exercises, as well as strength and conditioning, to prepare for in-season play. After a few rounds of testing, the team progressed indoors, where they did solo stationary exercises. Eventually, the girls played matches full-on.

"By the end of the term, we were able to play our matches with our

partners in the courts while wearing our masks, which we all really enjoyed," upper Danielle Sung said.

The team is led this year by seniors Catherine Fortin and Emily Baxter. Multiple athletes recognized Fortin and Baxter's willingness to work hard and succeed in the face of challenges. "They've been spending a lot of time with the new players and helping them get acquainted with the team. The captains always ask how we're doing and check in on us before we start playing; it's great that they can prioritize our well-being before practice starts," upper Dorothy Baker said.

The captains were also recognized

for welcoming new athletes and helping them become familiarized with the team. "They are never afraid to reach out to new students and have a conversation with them, and the rest of us sometimes join them and get to know each other more," Sung described.

The athletes were grateful to have such dedicated captains leading the way as the team continues into a new season. Upper Lucy Weil expressed gratitude, saying the captains "are doing a great job of helping everyone get situated and they are always so kind whenever we get to practice."

Looking forward, all students will be remote from Nov. 24 through

Feb. 11, cutting through the heart of the winter squash season. During this time, the team is hoping to host many virtual events and stay connected, as they won't be able to practice together. "We are going to hopefully do some Zoom calls as a team and have a fun group chat," Baker said. The team will also be participating in remote workouts to stay fit for the end of winter term, when they will be on campus. Despite the prospect of an off-campus term, Sung expressed hope for the end of winter term, saying, "I am looking forward to seeing my friends once we get back on campus and have the opportunity to play each other."

Athletes of the Week: Kirsten Hyer and Caroline Luff



By HENRI LIU and TOBY CHAN

Squaring off at the start line, senior and Girls' Cross Country co-captains Kirsten Hyer and Caroline Luff prepared for their Red/Grey event. Last Saturday, Exeter teams competed against each other in place of the annual E/a festivities, which was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic. Hyer ran for Team Red, while Luff donned Team Grey gear for the race.

Both captains did not start running competitively until their time at Big Red, but their careers quickly took off from there. While Luff ran in middle school, she also played soccer as a side sport. "I played soc-

cer my prep year and then I did winter track," Luff said. "I really liked the team because a lot of the preps on the team did winter track, and I was like 'Oh my gosh, I should do cross country because it's so much better.'"

Hyer had a similar experience. "I also ran a little bit in middle school, but I didn't do cross country my prep year either because I hurt my knee, so I couldn't run prep fall. Same as Caroline, I did winter track," Hyer said. "I also did spring track and really liked the team and environment and I decided to join Cross Country lower year."

The team environment that motivated them to both join was described by upper Lindsay Machado

as "a community that bridges the gaps between ages, running experience and abilities. It's an environment that values genuine support for your teammate. It means running together to compound your energies instead of running to compete against them"

Hyer's experience mirrored Machado's. "For me, it's the team dynamic and how supportive everyone is," Hyer said. "Everyone on the team is really great, and we have a lot of fun, but we also like to know when to work hard and get things done with a workout and stuff. There's always a really good balance of work and fun."

"Something about running that's weird is that it makes people really

close, and our team is a very close team and we support each other," Luff said.

When asked about her favorite part of the sport, Luff described the mentality of running. "It is definitely a huge mental sport. It's not like any other sport in the fact that it's literally just yourself and your shoes, and you have to push against the thoughts in your mind saying 'Oh, I can't go faster for that last mile,'" she said. "It really takes a lot of tenacity, I would say, and you have to put your mind to it. You can't go into a run or a race, thinking, 'Let's see how it goes.' You have to have goals and be determined to reach them and keep on pushing."

Luff also spoke of the collaborative nature of the sport. "It's really just how, if you have someone that you're running near, it's really good to push each other because, when someone starts dropping back, the others can encourage them to keep going by pulling forward, and it switches because, if the other person is struggling for a few minutes, now you're the one supporting them," she said. "The teamwork if you're running with someone is really great."

To clarify her point, Luff pointed to the final race of her and Hyer's season, in which they ran together for the majority of the race. "It's really fun being a co-captain with one of your best friends, and it's really fun having that connection and then also getting to be captain together," she said.

Girls' Cross Country is a sport which, at Exeter, has some very unique traditions that play a large role in the runners' experiences. Due to the pandemic, they were unable to perform quite a few, but Luff still listed her favorites. "We always have dress up days every Friday. And like different themes like an-

imal themed, Halloween themed, animal day, rainbow day and colors day," she said. "Now, there are a lot of them, every Friday basically. It's just like fun for people to come to practice and dress up"

"I'd say the season was definitely different especially because a lot of those weird cross country traditions that we normally had were different or like just nonexistent at all," Luff continued. "We can't go to Dame Road or run off-campus, but I still think Cross Country was really important this season to have because people wanted to get out their rooms, and they wanted to see their friends. I think we really focused on the relationships we're building and try to make it as fun as possible, but it definitely took some creativity on the captains' and the coaches' side too."

In addition, all interscholastic races and events were canceled. To adjust, Cross Country turned to team time trials to track progress and stay competitive. "I guess not having races to push ourselves against and to not have goals like interschols or E/a was tough—because usually our team is like one-for-one at Interschol, we've been defending champions for two years straight," Hyer said. "We always want to push to win Interschols and that's usually a big goal, and not having that is weird because we didn't have that goal to push towards as a big team."

Still, the team persevered throughout the season. "I think we did a pretty good job because we had time trials on some Fridays or we had big workouts," Luff said. "And did a 5k simulation race at one point and just replicated. We would have these time trials and workouts that served as benchmarks and things to push against. I think that was helpful, but it was definitely weird not having many races to motivate yourself for."

