

The Exonian

The oldest continuously running preparatory school newspaper in America

Phillips Exeter Academy
Exeter, New Hampshire



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Campus Prepares for Climate Action Day



Front Street Commons continues construction.

Joy Chi/*The Exonian*

By SELIMKIM, MAX MANTEL, ARIANA THORNTON, and CHENGYUEZHANG

After two years of virtual Climate Action Days, Sustainability Coordinator Andrew McTammany and student climate activists on campus are excited to bring back the special day in its personal, authentic form on Monday, April 24th.

The day will begin at 9 a.m. with a keynote presentation from the director of Harvard's Center for the Environment Dan Schrag. The entire prep class will then travel to family farms in the seacoast area. Other students and faculty will attend a registered workshop, chosen from a selection of activities ranging from traveling to Hampton Beach to learn about marine and estuary health to painting a collective mural depicting human complacency amidst the climate crisis.

Planning for Climate Action Day began in the summer and early fall. "It's a large project where you want to cast your first net as wide as possible," McTammany explained. "In the beginning, it was mostly about identifying themes and potential speakers that would lay a basis or a framework for understanding climate change. Then, from an academic perspective, finding individuals who could build on that in terms of creating opportunities for students to become advocates."

Climate Action Day this year will focus especially on Exonian's involvement in climate activism beyond the campus. "There's a group of speakers I'm super excited about inviting to campus. They really want to speak on how to get involved after Exeter, like how you can make bigger policy changes or have a larger impact," McTammany said.

CLIMATE ACTION DAY, 2

Academy Discusses Sexual Citizenship at Assembly

By SOPHIE MA, KENDRA WANG, and ALAYSHA ZHANG

On Monday, April 4, students gathered in the Assembly Hall for a conversation between student panelists and authors Jennifer Hirsch and Shamus Khan, who published their recent study of campus-wide sexual assault in their newest book *Sexual Citizens*. The assembly required attendance from upperclassmen, who were provided with copies of the book before spring break, focusing primarily on questions surrounding the book submitted by students and organized by the panelists.

According to Assistant Principal Karen Lassey, planning for the event be-

gan in early December. "Members of the administrative team, Dr. Palmer, deans, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), the Health Human Development Department, and some other faculty met with Dr. Hirsch and Dr. Khan to hear more about their work and discuss the implications for secondary schools," Lassey said.

Principal William Rawson explained that this conversation would be one of the Academy's many steps in "improving programming to support safe learning environments and healthy sexual relationships."

"This is just one way we look to external resources to help inform our thinking and our work," Rawson

said. "I thought the discussion we had about topics in their book was quite helpful to probe further some of their thinking and to talk through some of the misunderstandings about sexual assault that persist in our own community."

"After [the speakers] met with the seniors and uppers, they met with Principal Rawson, Dr. Palmer, Dean of Faculty Ellen Wolff, and myself to continue that conversation," Lassey added. "Later in the morning, other faculty joined. We covered a range of topics, from Exeter policies to some of the specific stories that reflect the general conclusions in their book."

During the assembly, Hirsch and Khan discussed power dynamics, placing

emphasis on the fact that one cannot make headway on sexual assault prevention by simply telling people to act better. "You need to address the underlying question of power on campus and in the world," Hirsch explained.

"I hope that people will use the concept of sexual geographies to think about how building communities of equity is [a form of] sexual assault prevention," Khan added. "So that means thinking about gender, of course, but also all kinds of other intersecting forms of power: race, class, ability, sexuality, etcetera."

Hirsch continued to discuss the importance of taking a public health approach against sexual assault, which means thinking about prevention. "We talked [in the assembly] about broadening out who is considered responsible for sexual assault prevention so that it's not just schools. It's

ASSEMBLY, 4

PEA Admissions Rate Rises to 14%

By AVEEN BURNEY, LAUREN KIM, ELLIE ANA SPERANTSAS, CATHERINE WU, and ANDREW YUAN

On the morning of March 10, hundreds of students all around the world opened their inboxes to a congratulatory message announcing their acceptance by Phillips Exeter Academy. In the next few days, admitted students received packages containing Big Red merchandise and handwritten letters from admissions officers as they deliberate whether to commit to the Academy.

According to Director of Admissions William Leahy, the Academy accepted 14% of its applicants in the 2021-2022 admissions cycle, of which 76% have already enrolled. The new

students come from over 30 states and 19 countries with a wide range of backgrounds, identities, and experiences.

Leahy also expressed his excitement to be able to meet future Exonians through on-campus events. "Due to our interviews being all online this year, being able to actually meet so many of our newly-admitted families was personally really exciting," Leahy shared. "We love how excited our new families were to come to visit and to meet all the people who make Exeter such a remarkable community."

This year, between March 31 and April 4, the Academy reintroduced Experience Exeter, a major event the Academy hosts

ADMISSIONS, 3

Exhibit Spotlight: Our Voices

By ASHLEY JIANG, SOPHIA TURNER, and LEO ZHANG

On the evening of April 1, community members celebrated queer student *Our Voices*, An Artistic Exploration of Queerness. The event, facilitated by seniors Allison Kim and Jaden Sides, exhibited various forms of art created by students in the winter term Core Values Project (CVP) "Supporting Queer Students 101."

"I wanted to host this performance to showcase the art that people worked on during our CVP block, especially art that might explore their identity," Kim said. "Jaden and I specifically wanted to create queer spaces and make spaces on campus more accessible and safer for students—for example, places like the Academy Building that might seem very academic and cold," Kim continued.

Sides agreed. "The ideas, both issues facing the queer community and repre-

sentations of queer joy, are very everyday things. But queerness is often showcased in a very rigid sense, and only in moments of widespread pain or violence or tragedy, even though that's a fraction of what we experience, and we wanted to show that more common, subtle, and subjective component."

Student Activities Coordinator Joanne Lembo shared her goal for the event. "For me, the goal of the show was to give the opportunity to our amazing queer students to express themselves and to show the community how awesome they are," Lembo said.

"I also hope that audiences left with a fuller sense of queer identity - that those unfamiliar with the community were able to see queerness existing in a more abstract sense than simply being attracted to the same gender or with a non-cis gender identity," Sides shared.

Kim expressed her appreciation for Lembo's



Students tour the "Our Voices" exhibition at the Academy Building lobby.

Courtesy of Allison Kim

support in executing the event. "Ms. Lembo was super helpful with [the event]. She got us the venue and made sure to reserve the time. She also helped us get a lot of good food for the event itself and all the materials that we need to put up the art," Kim said. "All we really had to do was say what exactly we wanted to do."

For CVP members, the event was a chance to explore and express their identities. "[The CVP] felt

like a good environment to choose the sort of art that I wanted to represent," senior Alana Reale said. "[The event] was titled exploration of queerness, [and] I think a lot of people went in with that at the forefront and very explicitly included like that type of content, but for me, it was more of a good chance to express myself."

Reale performed a cover of "Bug Collector" by Haley Heynderickx. "It's definitely one of my favorite songs, and I also liked

the aspect of queerness. The artist is a pretty small artist. She's [queer], and the message of the song is about soothing someone's anxieties or supporting someone I guess," Reale said. "It just feels clear to me, even though it wasn't explicit."

For lower Katelyn Cui, recent events inspired their artwork. "With all the bad news and tough situations that we face in our school community and the larger world I really wanted to take this opportunity to cel-

brate happiness. Art can be a strong representation of emotion and I wanted to express joy and hope as an act of resistance," Cui said.

Upper Chloe Becker shared their creative process. "I was trying to incorporate the body, so I started drawing a face. I didn't really like how it looked and I thought, that's actually perfect," Becker said. "Then I felt like I wouldn't really

OUR VOICES, 3

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Our Voices Cont.

get the point across with just images, because body dysmorphia comes with these internal thoughts that are really damaging to your psyche,” Becker said. “I wanted to show that process of thinking and how you can overcome that.”

Becker continued: “So, I started to write down my intrusive thoughts with pencil and then I went over it with paint markers. Then I started drawing sketches

over top of those, like flowers that I doodle in class or sketches of people or just bigger, bold words that drowned out those intrusive thoughts. I just wanted to show this process of trying to be okay with who you are and what you look like.”

Facilitators tackled the obstacle of time by creating asynchronous CVP meetings. “The hardest part was just making sure that everyone who wanted to do

something, got to do it and would finish on time,” Kim said. “I think when you’re trying to control a bunch of Exonians, it can be hard, especially when the project is under CVP and not under a class for a grade.”

“Something I appreciated about this CVP was the kind of freedom that it offered because most of our meetings were asynchronous,” Reale added. “The leaders of the workshop

mostly just gave us time to work on our pieces and prepare, with occasional check-ins on progress. That was helpful, and I never felt like I was pressed for time or anything.”

CVP members also appreciated the freedom of expression that art provided. “I really love these opportunities to just create art, because it’s not focused on the end result. It’s mostly a way to get students to actually

stop and create something and think about themselves and deal with their emotions in a healthy way other than consuming large amounts of caffeine,” Becker said.

“I liked the self-directed process of creating a piece that spoke to me, using a medium of my choice. I appreciate the great independence of artistic expression—the only person who can understand and realize your vision is you.” upper

Aletheia Zou agreed.

Looking to the future, Kim shared her vision for the long-term goals of the CVP. “We are going to try to aim for a more permanent exhibit or project and try to have it be more individual. The final project will be decided by each person who’s doing it rather than have it all be a final performance.”

Assembly Cont.

everyone, including families and all the institutions that shape young people’s lives.”

Some students acknowledged that they felt initially hesitant about the assembly. “I feel like a lot of the time the school can give us books and topics to cover [on sexual assault], but I feel like we don’t go much in-depth and it doesn’t turn into a long-lasting conversation among the students,” senior Tina Huang said.

“But I think the event itself with the speakers was very informative,” Huang added. “I don’t think they could have went over all of the details because of the time constraints, but I think they covered a lot of important topics.”

Senior and student panelist Janessa Vargas expressed appreciation for the

authors’ fresh perspective. “We really valued [the authors’] emphasis on treating sexual assault as a public health issue. It’s really taking a different approach to sexual-assault prevention rather than simply focusing on punishment, which I think is what we focus on here,” Vargas said.

Upper Izzie Riccardi agreed, noting especially the authors’ authentic and honest responses. “I feel like the many [sexual assault assemblies] in the past have focused on ‘how we can avoid this’ and ‘how we can avoid having sex in general.’ But they know that college students and even students on campus are going to be having sex,” Riccardi said.

“Sometimes people are like, ‘Oh, we’re afraid to have these conversations [about sex] with students

at a young age,’ say, ninth grade,” Hirsch shared in an interview with The Exonian. “Our answer is, ‘Well, you teach people to drive before they start driving.’ Similarly, you need to have these conversations with young people. We wouldn’t say that they have to start with sexual assault, but they have to start by talking about sex.”

“Additionally, I think that the educational aspect of the sexual assault awareness month programming is really important,” student panelist and upper Jennifer Finkelstein added. “I think sometimes you lose sight of your very limited knowledge. It was really important to participate in learning on top of other events like Take Back the Night.”

“I honestly think it was a really wonderful intro to the month of April,” student

panelist and senior Lyric Zimmerman said.

Some students shared recommendations for future events. “One thing that did frustrate me about the nature of the assembly is that only uppers and seniors were required to attend [and received the email],” upper Gracie Keyt said. “I think that’s ridiculous because sexual assault and issues of sexual misconduct affect students regardless of what age you are or if you’re going into college. This is happening on our campus as well. It’s important that it’s opened up to the entire school.”

“I do think that this assembly was a step in the right direction,” Keyt continued. “But I also think that we still lack tangible mechanisms in place to make students feel protected and safe on campus, as well as effec-

tive ways of dealing with sexual assault when it does happen. Because it’s not an ‘if’ question, it’s a ‘when’ question.”

Upper Liam Brown called attention to how this specific assembly approached sexual assault differently. “I think the approach they took was very direct. Seeing authors treating sexual assault as a public health issue as opposed to an individual moral issue was very interesting. But I also want to hear Principal Rawson or some of the deans get up on stage and say, ‘Hey, we have a problem, and this is what that problem is’ in plain terms. I haven’t heard any of them say frankly and directly what the issue is and I very much wish they would,” Brown said.

Upper Cindy Su commented on the need to in-

crease awareness leading up to the event as well. “I think that they should’ve prepared the campus for a better discussion. I didn’t know that we were supposed to read the book over break, so I wish there was a little bit more instruction on that.”

“I also wish that there was more time spent with [the authors],” Su added. “I wanted to have a lunch Q&A session with them.”

Khan hoped that students will remain optimistic when tackling serious issues such as sexual assault. “We hope that students will not approach the problem from a perspective of hopelessness and fear, but instead to be filled with a sense of empathy and hope for concrete things that they can advocate for within their communities,” Khan said.

Climate Action Day Cont.

The keynote speaker Schrag embodies the focus on long-term work. McTammany came across Schrag when Schrag’s work related to President Obama’s science and technology team. “He’s given a bunch of lectures and I was really intrigued by it. He was very willing to help, and his son actually came to summer school here too,” McTammany said.

“There are many competing factors when you are thinking about a keynote speaker. One is the ability to speak to a high school audience, considering that a lot of students have not experienced a Climate Action Day in its previous form before the pandemic. Coming out of the pandemic, many students might not have the educational exposure to some of the aspects of climate change from

a long-term perspective,” McTammany explained.

“I was looking for individuals who could do both scientific explanations and just be uplifting because I think climate change can be a real downer. You don’t want people being like, ‘Okay, so it’s hopeless. I just sat through 45 minutes for them to tell me this.’ I’m always looking for people that have messages of ‘Here’s how we solve this really great problem,’” McTammany said.

The programs this year also factored in existing COVID restrictions. “A lot of our buildings aren’t able to house large gatherings of students. Thinking about the best way to balance both indoor and outdoor activities, I came to the conclusion that we’re going to send a large

portion of students off-campus,” McTammany continued.

The shift to off-campus events also came with its own struggles. “It takes careful consideration and planning. Like any project that you’re on, it’s fraught with delays and unexpected events that make the planning process trickier. But I think that’s part of why it’s fun to plan,” McTammany said.

“I really hope that students commit to [Climate Action Day]. There will be some activities that not everyone will put all of their energy into, but hopefully, people realize the importance of the day. And it’s not just the day. The day is supposed to bring awareness, but climate action is continued over an entire lifetime,” upper and cohead

of Environmental Action Committee Alysha Lai said.

McTammany agreed. “It’s not just one day of service. It becomes an attitude or behavior. That’s the first goal of this: to help students, particularly young students, to feel like they can make a difference, and then have opportunities for seniors to think about what they can do after they leave Exeter. It’s called Climate Action Day and April is Earth Month, but it can’t just be encapsulated in a 45-minute to an hour-long workshop.”

Environmental Stewardship Committee Member Jason Bremiller agreed, noting that Climate Action Day should aim to create long-term impacts. “I think that the Committee’s goals evolved in tandem with some of the

diversity, equity, and inclusion goals and vision of the Academy,” Bremiller said.

“Towards the end of my tenure as Sustainability Coordinator, we were really trying to be deliberate and explicit in how we were linking conversations about climate to conversations about equity. It’s my personal view that they are two inextricable conversations,” Bremiller said. “We know that people of color are disproportionately affected by climate change even though they are oftentimes the least responsible for producing the carbon that is causing climate change in the first place.”

Although Climate Action Day only lasts for a day, many hope that attendees will take away a lasting impression from the event.

“You hope that you provide activities and education in the first few years that inspire students to then get involved with other activities on campus,” McTammany said.

Lower Cee McClave agreed and stressed the importance of students being involved in climate action both in and outside of school. “You can play a meaningful role in a ton of different things without actually having tons of experience under your belt or even tons of training,” McClave said.

“We have to graduate Exonians who are climate literate. It’s not an option in my mind for students to graduate from this school and not have a really fundamental understanding of the problems that we’re facing,” Bremiller concluded.

Asian Students Look Back on Atlanta Spa Shootings

By HARRY CLARK, KENDRA WANG, RISHI GURUDEVAN, and LIAN-NAYANG

On Tuesday, Mar. 16, 2021, gunshots rang out, tragically ending the lives of eight people, six of whom were Asian women. At Exeter, on Mar. 22, 2021, student organizers hosted a candlelight vigil with the support of the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) to honor the eight victims. A year later, incidents of anti-Asian violence continue to fill the headlines, and the Asian community at Exeter reflects on their continued impact.

To prep Angelina Gong, the shootings in Atlanta were a stark reminder of discrimination against the Asian community. “When I first heard

about the shooting during class, I remember feeling like it was a wake-up call, reminding us that Asian Americans hadn’t been safe in this country for a long time,” Gong said.

An anonymous student agreed. “I was watching the news with my mother back home, and there was just a general silence in the room. My mother is someone who’s very, very close with her Asian identity. I think for her to see this kind of thing transpire was definitely a very polarizing experience which still impacts her and our entire family today,” they said.

Senior Toby Chan shared how many major news outlets reported with an unjust bias. “Some news outlets were hesitant in calling the attack racially motivated, and others even provided

justification for the attacker by attributing his violence to sex addiction. The reinforcement of the stereotypes towards Asian women, in particular, was deeply hurtful,” Chan said.

“Within our community on campus, I’m glad that there’s a lot of support for Asian students. I recall the vigil organized after the shootings. It was a really powerful moment for the community, where we had the chance to reflect on what happened and have a safe space to discuss how we felt,” Chan added.

Senior Siona Jain, co-head of the affinity group Asian Voices, recalled reactions to the incident and spoke on its lasting impacts. “There was a mixture of hurt, disgust, anger, and general acknowledgment that this is

the experience for Asian women in America. The shooting is rooted in a lot of stereotypes held about Asian women. But, more than anything, there was a sense of unity across Asian women on campus. I remember everyone being extremely empathetic towards each other and understanding there is sort of this common acknowledgment of the way that Asian women sort of experience harassment, and how that can manifest itself into violence,” Jain said.

“One thing that I felt, especially from the older members of my family, was fear. Fear that something like this might happen to the ones we love. Fear that we were not welcome in this country, but mostly fear that nothing would change.” Gong added.

Prep Henry Xue commented on his and his family’s efforts to help the cause. “My mom and I actually donated some money to one of the programs that help the families of victims. After the shooting, there were also a lot of ‘Stop Asian Hate’ signs that started appearing on everybody’s lawns. That was something I really loved to see just driving around, and we also actually got one for ourselves.”

Jain identified the need to be cautious about the way the subject is approached. “Especially with the far-too-frequent Asian hate crimes in New York City, with Asian people being pushed into the subway tracks and being randomly beaten all the time, it’s just a lot to constantly hear about, and is something we’re

really wary about pushing into people’s faces,” Jain said.

“Everyone must recognize that people from different backgrounds may be affected more severely by some of the hate crimes you see on the news,” the anonymous student added.

Gong shared her optimistic perspective on the fight against Asian hate. “We have to combat hate because we are a minority, but communicating and sharing experiences has made me feel so much less alone in my struggles. I’ve realized that I’m part of a larger community that’s willing to help me just as much as I am willing to help them,” Gong said.

Students Reflect on Russo-Ukrainian War

By ANVIBHATE, BEEKE FOCK, PHIN GIBBS, EMILIA KNIESTEDT, and ELLIE ANA SPERANT-SAS.

Since Feb. 24, 2022, Russia's continued assaults in Ukraine have demolished critical infrastructure and killed tens of thousands of civilians and defenders. As of recent news, on April 19, Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov has announced that a new phase of invasion has begun, its implications yet unknown.

At the Academy, some students have taken to social media to raise awareness and share fundraisers for Ukrainian civilians. The Academy also launched attempts at responding to the global conflict. Phillips Church hosted the "Prayers for Ukraine" event on Feb. 25, 2022, and certain history and English teachers have briefly discussed the topic.

Upper Phil Avilov

grappled with the productivity of these discussions. "This war is the continuation of many pieces of history that received an unfair share of our attention. I think diving into discussions about the war without knowing the history behind it seems a little counterproductive, but then I wonder if there is really any other way to start talking about it," Avilov said.

"A lot of the conversation surrounding the war often revolves around the question 'what can we do?' I don't feel like we are able to affect it. The war is not a public opinion issue. It's Putin being crazy. I think that's one important misconception," Avilov added.

Upper Agatha Prairie agreed, citing the impact of social media. "My initial reaction to the conflict in Ukraine was absolute shock. If you had told me at any point before now that I would live to see something so close to an all out land war in Europe, I wouldn't have

believed you...Social media has created a sense of panic and desperation and has made me feel helpless. The jokes about getting drafted got old fast," Prairie said.

Exonians who have family members and friends currently living in Ukraine fear for the safety of their loved ones. "My mom is Ukrainian and she's Belarusian," prep Rima Alsheikh said. "It was really surreal for me because she was telling me how she would be seeing literal tanks and soldiers going through her hometown on TV. It's really strange having heard that, and seeing everything here go on as if it's normal."

Avilov, whose father is Ukrainian and mother is from western Russia, feels that the campus can sometimes work to leave space for students with ties to an international conflict. "The war in Ukraine doesn't affect me emotionally as much as people think it does, and I think it's because

I don't have immediate family in the area. People sometimes come to me and want to check that I'm okay, and I really am," Avilov said.

Avilov added that the war and its repercussions has disrupted the lives of many Russian and Ukrainian families living in America. "The war did disturb many of my plans. Over spring break, I had to figure out alternative plans to travel home, plans to get stuff sent to me," Avilov shared.

Many Exonians sympathize with Ukrainian families. "A lot of Ukrainian people and families are being displaced and having to leave their country," lower Asena Gursel said. "It must be incredibly difficult, especially having your life uprooted, and having to go to another country and be a refugee. It's a very unfortunate situation."

Although the school has provided a few resources, certain students

feel like there has not been enough discussion about the events on campus. "I feel like there hasn't been any additional support than there is during any other time at Exeter," lower Hope Gantt said.

"In class, we haven't talked about it yet. I've definitely had conversations with my friends about this considering how relevant the topic is to international politics, but I don't think I've talked about it with coaches or teachers. I feel like discussion is important, and I also think it's really important that your facts are right, and that you know your sources are credible because a lot of fake news is being spread," Gursel added.

Prairie agreed, highlighting that students with different experiences needed different types of support from the Academy. "I think the school has provided me with enough support. Or maybe I don't feel I need any support from the school.

But if I were to guess, I would say there are probably many students who have not been sufficiently supported," Prairie said.

Several Exonians are trying to support Ukraine via smaller gestures. "We have been working to buy Ukraine flags for Amen to show support. We are in the process of procuring funding because Amen has no direct funding for flags," Alsheikh and prep Danixza Pinto shared.

As the war unravels, the campus continues to find ways to reconcile the everyday motions of Exeter and the war happening halfway across the world. "I think providing support in times such as these without burdening people who are already struggling more can be tricky. The school could provide more optional support opportunities and space for discussions. As a micro culture, let's normalize hard conversations about the conflict in Ukraine," Prairie concluded.

Admissions Cont.

for prospective student families. Canceled for the past two years as per COVID-19 restrictions, Experience Exeter enables the help of student volunteers, tour guides, and panelists to offer prospective students an authentic on-campus experience.

Many Experience Exeter panelists shared their highlights from the day. "I was chosen to represent the student body along with five other students," prep and panelist Sophie Phelps said. "We didn't apply, we were just chosen by members of the Exeter community."

"I decided to speak on the panel because I hoped to bring out the uniqueness of Exeter life. I wanted to mention dorm traditions, the Harkness magic, and the last-day-of-school 5 AM Dunkin' Donut runs that students wouldn't be able to get out of a website," senior and panelist Russell Tam said. "Fun moments like swim team throw-downs, acapella serenades, or Abbott Casino are the ones that best bring out Exeter."

Upper Jenna Silvestri discussed Exeter on the weekends. "I talked about going into town and eating at Stillwells because I think the town of Exeter is unique to PEA. Although none of the questions were particularly connected to my interests, I am really passionate about the town of Exeter—so it was nice getting to express my enthusiasm to the prospective students."

Members reflected on the importance of holding an informative panel for prospective students. "I think the panel is a great way for students to learn about the school through an inside perspective of a student. It's a great way for them to get a feeling of what the school's like and ask specific questions they may have about life at Exeter. Virtual panels are also very accessible for students of all backgrounds," Tam continued.

In addition to panelists, many students also signed up as Experience Exeter hosts who guided a new student through a typical school day.

Experience Exeter hosts, like lower Ethan Jha, discussed why they first choose to become a host. "I decided to do Experience Exeter because I thought it was going

to be fun and engaging, and I wanted to do something to just give back to the community," Jha said.

"When I was an incoming prep, I had my Experience Exeter day and it was pretty awesome," senior Bradley St. Laurent said. "I met the whole cross country team [since] I had one of the cross country captains as my person [host], and it was a great experience... It really eased any anxieties or worries that I had. I was thinking 'wow these people aren't crazy smart mutants that only do school work, woah they're human and cool people.'"

Several students who were hosts for Experience Exeter did so through athletic recruitment. "The person I was hosting felt very accepted and very excited," St. Laurent said. "He was potentially a cross country recruit. I introduced him to the team, gave him a tour, and it was really cool."

Likewise, lower Stacy Chen hosted a potential basketball recruit. "My coach reached out to me because the girl that I was hosting is a girls varsity basketball recruit, so I wanted to get to know her better and have her meet the team. We really want to yield as many recruits as possible... I think it was a really awesome feeling because I was in their shoes two years ago, so it was cool to see that sort of carry-on. I enjoyed having lunch with the person I hosted and the rest of the basketball team," Chen said.

Experience Exeter hosts recalled their highlights from the day with their guest students. "I really liked seeing new people being integrated into the Exeter community. For example, at lunch we ate with my friends and then another part was when we were doing small groups in the classroom as it was really interesting to see her communicating with my classmates," lower Sophie Zhu said.

"All the kids I toured were great and seemed really interested in what Exeter had to offer. I loved showing one of the kids I toured the art building and seeing how amazed he was by our ceramics studio," lower Jack Hutchins added.

Overall, Experience Exeter hosts recommended

future students to take part in introducing new students as well. "I would do Experience Exeter in the future because it was very fun to introduce prospective Exonians to our school, and I personally think it was a fun experience," lower Daniel Hu said.

On the other hand, many prospective students took Experience Exeter as an opportunity to understand daily life at the Academy, in terms of class dynamics, friends, and workload.

Prospective student Emerson Seymour found that Experience Exeter allowed him to understand more of the Exeter Experience. "I really felt like I was a part of the school and each and every person there really helped to make me feel included and valued. I loved seeing how engaging the classes were and how each and every student really participated to the best of their ability in every subject I saw."

Fellow incoming prep Ethan Benenson also found the community to be welcoming and supportive, especially about giving advice for Exeter life. "Every single person that I met was super nice and welcoming. They were all just having a lot of fun. They were very open about giving me tips on the best dorms, the best classes, and whatnot," recounted Benenson. "As soon as you talk to a few people, you can tell that the environment is very supportive and that people care about each other. Although everyone wants to do well, the competition is supportive."

"It really gave me a sense of what it was like to be a good and true Exonian. I think the day was really well planned, organized, and executed considering we only had seven hours. The students, the student relationships, and Harkness were really able to shine and have their moment," incoming prep Rebecca Nguyen added.

Incoming prep Tristan Price found himself even more excited for his PEA experience from Experience Exeter. "This school is amazing. I was excited about the facilities before, and after Experience Exeter I am even more excited," Price recounted. "The classes are a bit different from



Bissel House.

Minseo Kim / *The Exonian*

my current school, but they are perfect for me. Harkness is one of the main reasons that I am coming to Exeter."

In terms of classes, many incoming students found that they were especially drawn to the Harkness discussions they witnessed, and look forward to learning in this unique method. Prospective student Abe Webb reflected on the Harkness discussion he attended. "In regards to the classes, Harkness was very prevalent and now having a firsthand experience in watching it work makes me believe that it is an effective teaching method... I am most excited about the opportunity to be surrounded by such a great community of people and amazing teachers."

Incoming prep Andrew Gould added. "I went in already excited for life at Exeter but it was important to me to be able to have a more intimate look at school life. Seeing Harkness in person at its birthplace was truly inspiring."

Incoming prep Ananya Ray describes an engaging math Harkness discussion she witnessed. "Every person was engaged with the material and no one shied away from asking questions. I admired the way students led the discussion when explaining how they solve certain problems," Ray reflected. "Being a collaborative person myself who learns well in groups, I had a lot of fun getting to see the dynamics of partner work and how great every

pair complimented each other. They would catch each other's mistakes and talk out formulas and methods to solve equations, all in a manner that was respectful, light-hearted, and enjoyable."

Incoming prep Olivia Zhang also mentioned a Harkness discussion she attended. "The classes took some getting used to, but everyone was so engaged. It was kinda new to me because most of my classes weren't discussion-based, and even though we were sitting together people would be in their own little world," Zhang says. "There was a lot of sharing between the students for work that they did and I noticed that people weren't afraid to be critiqued."

One concern that arose is feeling homesick, especially in a unique boarding school environment. Incoming prep Leonardo Lombardi described being nervous about "feeling homesick. Since my family lives in Italy, they will not be able to see me often. I think this is going to be one of the greatest difficulties of attending Phillips Exeter," says Lombardi. "However, I consider myself lucky, due to the digital era we live in, so we will be able to call each other every day. I have a close bond with my family and trust we'll be able to reshape our relationship in a positive and constructive way."

Another challenge many new students will face is finding their way around

campus, and deciding which amongst the myriad of extracurriculars and subjects to focus on. Incoming prep Elaina Fortney says, "I'm nervous about finding my way around campus. I can totally see myself getting lost more than once. In some ways, I am also worried about all the opportunities at Exeter—so many options for clubs, sports, and other activities. It could be challenging to fit in everything I'd like to do and excel in the classroom."

Overall, students look forward to attending Exeter in the fall, and for the years to come.

Incoming prep Inilarum Mohan said, "I am super excited to meet the students. When I was choosing between high schools, what made Exeter stand out was the people. The students respond graciously to my panic-filled questions on what I should expect at Exeter. After I accepted, everyone was quick to welcome me to their school. They really are why I chose Exeter."

As for the greater Academy community, Leahy thanks students and faculty members alike for sharing their daily lives with prospective students. "I would like to thank every member of this community, students and adults, who helped welcome our new families during the revisit days," Leahy concluded. "It was wonderful to see everyone coming together to share their Exeter experience with our admitted families."

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Senior of the Week: Avery Lavine



Senior Avery Lavine

Joy Chi/The Exonian

By ANVI BHATE and LAUREN KIM

In the columned walls and black-and-white tiles of Wheelwright Hall's common room, senior and proctor Avery Lavine lounges in the cluster of red armchairs. She is most often seen laughing over hilarious quotes with her friends, helping lowerclassmen out with daunting math problems, and generating the most imaginative check-in questions. A calming presence in the dorm, Lavine is not only a trusted proctor, but she also plays the role of Student Listener, providing a safe space for peers.

Lavine first arrived at the Academy from her hometown of San Francisco. She attended a day school with her twin brother, and chose Exeter after her revisit day. "I remember wondering which one I would regret the most not attending, and so I chose to come to Exeter," she said.

Since arriving at the Academy as a prep, Lavine immediately appeared to be a jack-of-all-trades, developing an interest in the arts, while also excelling in STEM classes. "I love chemistry and physics a lot and I like all math and computer science classes," Lavine reflected. "Some of my favorite classes definitely included the arts classes as well."

Honing on her interest in art and design, Lavine is also an editor-in-chief of PEAN, and has served in the club since she was a lowerclassman. "As an editor-in-chief, you're overseeing all departments. You get to work with amazing people, and end up designing the whole book. It's a lot of fun," Lavine said.

Besides laying out pages in the yearbook, Lavine also personally creates art, inspired by her own experiences and styles. Her friends, among so many others, find her art pieces fascinating. "Every oppor-

tunity I get, I'm like, 'oh my gosh, look at my good friend Avery's art,' and I show them my phone," senior Coco Lipe said.

Lipe continued to speak about some of their favorite aspects of Lavine's art: "She's excellent at hyperrealism, and I had never seen anything like it before I saw her art."

"Her awesome art in the library is definitely a very cool legacy," upper Sage Murthy commented. "Whenever I go to the library, I see her paintings on the walls. You walk in and in the basement, there's that painting with the face made of all the hands. I think that's crazy. And Avery drew that."

Reflecting on her journey with the arts, Lavine hopes to pursue a path related to art and design in the near future: "I've just honed in on what my interests are over the years. I've always loved art more as a hobby, but being at Exeter and seeing so many avenues for where I can pursue either de-

sign or painting, is really starting to inspire me about where I want to direct my future."

When asked about what she will miss most about Exeter, Lavine immediately responded, "Wheelwright, for sure. One thing that I have grown to love about this dorm is that it's just naturally so easy to become friends with people in different grades. Over the years, I've found myself really close with people in Wheelwright, no matter what their grade."

Lavine's dormmates reciprocated the care she has for them. "She's just very sweet and very considerate. She's always trying to put her best foot forward," Murthy commented. "Sometimes it's really hard and she tries her best anyway, and I admire that a lot about her."

Senior and fellow proctor Audrey Aslani-Far describes a card game she and Lavine shared over the years in the dorm. "Since our prep year, Avery and I have played a card game called 'set together.' She is incredibly good at the game, and so many of my best memories at Exeter are fiercely competitive late night set matches with Avery on the common room floor," recounts Aslani-Far. "We have torn up many decks of cards, but it's all been worth it."

When asked for some of their favorite memories with Lavine, Lipe shared some of their traditions from last year. "We used to take the Walmart wagon every Wednesday to Walmart, and make obscene purchases and take terrible photos in sunglasses," Lipe mentioned. "We went to Trader Joe's once on the weekend,

which was a very exquisite experience."

Upper Sage Murthy shared a similar sentiment, one that their friendship never really had a "defined" beginning. Over the years, however, their friendship has blossomed into something beautiful. "I remember distinctly, at the end of fall term, we were building puzzles and singing the entire soundtrack of 'In the Heights', the movie," Murthy said, speaking about some of her favorite memories with her. "It was very fun and we did a lot of singing to musical soundtracks. I enjoyed it a lot."

"My favorite thing about Avery would definitely be her sense of humor. She's one of the funniest people I know and is really, really good at making references to things and they always land, they always hit," Lipe brought up another side to her personality. "She's also just a very caring and kind person. She brings the energy with her wherever she goes."

Bringing her energy to Phillips Church the morning of March 30, Lavine delivered a beautiful meditation reading in the Phillips Church. Her meditation, having been previously read to her dormmates, was focused on her relationships with her twin brother and a brain surgery she had as a pre-teen. "I was nervous to do it just because I was afraid of revealing this part of myself to others," Lavine said. "I wanted to see if I could find something different, but during the process of writing, it still felt like the most prominent part of my life."

Lavine continued, "Signing up to read it in the church was a really kind of big deal to me, as I don't really speak in public that often. It was pretty intimidating to read it, but I've been building myself up to it: first reading to my class, then to the dorm, and then to whoever wants to hear it in the church."

Aslani-Far, who attended Lavine's "incredible meditation," was touched by her writing. "It was an amazing, creatively structured piece that blends her love of science and thoughtful reflections into a beautifully rendered story. I feel very lucky to have heard it, and am glad that the rest of the Exeter community had a chance to experience it as well."

Lavine has definitely left her mark on the Academy, and many of her friends described the large impact she left on their lives. "Without her, I would definitely not be the same person I am now," Murthy reflected. "At least for me, she's definitely one of the people in this dorm who's shaped who I've become. That is pretty important to me."

As graduation nears, Lavine's advice for fellow Exonians is to expand their horizons, and cherish the time spent growing here: "This is just a very valuable time in life, however long you're here. It's a valuable time to get to know what your passion is, either by developing what you already know about yourself and expanding your horizons, or doing what you've always wanted to do since you were a kid. You could even just turn around and start something new. And every way is completely fine."

Students Celebrate Take Back the Night

By SELIM KIM, EMILIA KNIESTEDT, MAX MANTEL, and CHENGYUE ZHANG

On a foggy evening, bustles of students crowd into Grainger Auditorium. All around the open space lie booths hosting activities that range from creating T-shirts, writing about hopes on flags, to a HAVEN information booth. This scene is familiar to many Exonians, who have seen the Take Back the Night event every year.

Like previous Take Back the Night events, this year's event foresaw the continuation of incorporating activities that aimed to bring awareness to sexual assault culture on campus. This included themed booths run by clubs such as Exeter Student Service Organization (ESSO), WPEA, and Cosplay Society of Exeter. Near the end of the event, a compiled video highlighting student performances was screened to attendees. Outside the auditorium, Clyde's Cupcakes was present, serving a sweet treat.

The planning process for the event began before the start of spring break, with each individual event included in Take Back The Night having a corresponding committee. These committees were chosen by senior Lyric Zimmermann and Director of Student Wellbeing Christina Palmer.

Instructor in English Courtney Marshall, one of the key organizers of Take Back the Night, recounted that the overall process ran smoothly: "I think we just had to remind people when they came back from spring break, but other

than that there weren't really any struggles encountered. People were very flexible, and I'm really impressed with them," Marshall said.

Senior and organizer Ana Casey also noted the growth in the event this year: "Last year we had three clubs and teams that were a part of it, but this year we have fifteen, which is a huge change. So, that's really exciting to see how it's expanding," Casey said.

Though the event was originally planned to take place outdoors on the McConnell Quad, weather circumstances moved the event indoors. "It was really nice to have it on the quad outside Elm last year. More people were able to come last year simply because of the location. Because it was more in the area of student life, you couldn't avoid it," Casey said.

Despite the unexpected change, the planned activities and events were hosted and conducted as usual.

Lower and organizer Alexander Luna explained the main directive behind the planned events of this year's Take Back the Night: "The organization team tried to bring in clubs that aren't specifically based around sexual assault awareness. 'We [tried] to make sure people are getting involved, getting educated, learning, and taking steps forward,'" Luna said. "We wanted to have interactive activities that draw people in."

Increasing interaction with the Take Back the Night event was a significant goal for the planning team. "A lot of the other stuff we do is very academic or policy focused, which is obviously important

and needs to happen. With issues such as sexual assault that have such emotions and feelings attached to them, it is important to also be able to have spaces to talk about it and be in solidarity with each other. That's what Take Back the Night offers to students," Casey said.

Marshall also sees the event as an opportunity to demonstrate solidarity. "The big thing about Take Back the Night has always been to foster a sense of community, and to let survivors know that they're not alone. So when you see people coming out to an event like this, it makes a big statement to people who have survived different forms of sexual violence," Marshall said. "It lets them know that these people are safe. These people care for them. It's a big community builder. It's also another chance for us to think about what type of campus we are."

Such efforts seem to have proved successful as many students shared their positive reactions to the events. Prep Pranavi Vedula believed the event was "very informative and fun to attend." To Vedula, booths that merged notable information with degrees of interactivity left the biggest impression. "One of the most memorable booths for me was the red flags vs green flags booth. People put up paper flags describing what they thought were 'red' and 'green' flags in a relationship," Vedula recalled. "It was very creative and enjoyable."

Lower David Goodall shared similar sentiments. "I think it's great. I always think the Take Back the Nights is really well done and really thoughtful. I really appreciate all the work that was put into

it," Goodall said. "I think one of the greatest things about Take Back the Night is the sense of community it brings and how everyone's really able to come together. You're communicating the message that you are valid, you are seen, and you are heard."

Aside from the interactive booths, another major aspect of this year's Take Back the Night was the incorporation of student performances, which ranged from musical performances to monologues. "The monologues are really good. They come from all different perspectives and I think it just shows what a big topic sexual assault is, so it also gets people talking about the topic too," Marshall said. "I also think it is a moment of self-reflection, and a chance to learn more... These monologues make you see the scope of the problem, but also localizes it: you have an individual story, but then you get these big statistics."

Upper Aletheia Zou appreciated the care and attention to bringing multiple perspectives to light. "[The event] was a chance for people to express their feelings unfiltered, whether that's anger or sadness or concern," Zou said. "I appreciate how some bits of the event were anonymous. It is a chance for people to know that they're safe sharing those ideas without getting it tracked back to them."

Many attendees of the event expressed their appreciation for the video's powerful message. "It's nice to see everyone joining together for this cause. It felt like a safe environment and felt very genuine. I enjoyed the video that was put together. Seeing so many students that I know

being a part of that was really inspiring," lower Vera Aiummondion reflected.

Lower Ayaan Akhtar agreed. "I thought [video presentation] raised awareness in a way that would leave a strong impact on people, using student voices and student musicians to teach about sexual assault. It was enlightening seeing my peer's voices and listening to people talk about a difficult topic, making conversations more approachable amongst other Exonians," Akhtar said.

Though many students recognized the significance of Take Back The Night, some students expressed concern about the actual effectiveness of the event. "I do think the event is very important, but every time one of these events happens, I can't help but wonder if the people who need to hear this even come," Zou said.

Another student, who wished to remain anonymous, shared, "I did not want to go because as a survivor, simply seeing the event email upset me. What could we possibly do to make somebody feel safe and recognized in this community when students ask them to have safe conversations on previous sexual assault cases with teachers, but we still struggle to discuss what is happening on our own campus?"

Lower Kenza Madhi agreed: "The administration and teachers are trying their best in raising awareness, but at the same time, there is no 'perfect' thing that they can do. We can complain about it in some ways, but we cannot blame them for doing all they know to do. There is a challenge in striking a balance between those two things."

Indeed, this year's Take Back The Night has drawn varying reactions from attendees. Yet, no matter the reaction, many of the organizers agree that the end of the event does not mean the end of the effort to raise awareness about sexual assault.

Marshall said, "I hope that students can tap into their emotions and feel that sense of empathy for others". But, I also hope that they will think about what they can do afterward. Like, 'Now that I've seen this, how can my behaviors change or how can I just be more supportive? How can I learn more about the resources either on campus or off campus for survivors?'"

Marshall continued by noting her faith and admiration for Exeter's hospitable community. "I think there's something really powerful when we share those really painful parts of ourselves with others. I've seen Exonians just care for one another so much, so I just hope attendees learn how to better support other students."

Zimmermann agreed. "There's constant ways in which we can be on this campus and act as... good sexual citizens, but it's incredibly difficult to do when you're surrounded by other students who aren't always doing that," Zimmermann said. "The performance is a really great way to show that there is solidarity in students here with a profound willingness to fight for one another and to exist for one another and in support of one another."

"The biggest takeaway, at least, personally for me, is this is us. We are here, and we are staying, and this is going to continue," Zimmermann concluded.

Faculty of the Week: Kaitlyn Martin Fox



Religion Instructor Kaitlyn Martin Fox and her dog Briggsby.

Joy Chi/*The Exonian*

By SOPHIE MA and SOPHIA TURNER

It's a sunny Wednesday morning when Religion Instructor and Bancroft dorm faculty Kaitlyn Martin Fox arrives at her classroom on the second floor of the Academy Building. In her hands are donuts and drinks, specially prepared for her advisees, one of whom is celebrating their birthday this week. As students start trickling in, they all greet her with the warmest of smiles.

"Every time it's someone's birthday, she brings them desserts like Dunkin' and asks for their order," senior Peyton Hollis explained. "She brings the advisory stuff and then she asks them really cute questions to actually try and get to know the person."

Hailing from Abilene, Texas, Martin Fox first came to Exeter two years ago. "I grew up in a small town in Texas and was really excited to leave, in part because I really wanted to explore other places in the world," Martin Fox said. "And I always planned to become a professor because I really wanted to teach."

It was in college when Martin Fox realized that she wanted to pursue religious studies. "I was studying abroad in London and that experience gave me the opportunity to realize why I wanted to study religion. I was part of a class where we got to visit different religious spaces and meet different people who practiced different re-

ligious traditions," Martin Fox said. "I just remember feeling like, 'Wow, I want to do more of that.' It was an exciting way for me to think about the world, but it was also an exciting way for me to think about myself."

Later, Martin Fox returned to the United States, where she obtained a master's degree in Theological Studies from Boston University and continued her graduate research in their religion department. "I noticed that at Boston University, my colleagues didn't prioritize teaching as much as their research. I found myself really craving other faculty who really cared about teaching."

"Someone who had graduated from my program actually worked at Andover and told me about Andover and Exeter," Martin Fox continued. "They said I might be interested in [boarding schools], because teachers here really care about students and how their research can impact student lives. I found that was true and have really enjoyed being a part of this community."

Fellow Religion Instructor Austin Washington, who went to school at Boston University with Martin Fox, described her as "committed, diligent, and brilliant." "She's been an insightful colleague in helping me understand how to engage in responsible education," Washington said. "If there's anything I feel like I have left to learn, which is a lot, I feel like I can always look to be in conversation with Ms. Martin

Fox to help me grow."

On coming to Exeter, Martin Fox expressed great happiness since arriving on campus. "I feel like I'm in a community. When I lived in Boston, I lived by a lot of people. It was a very populated area where I lived and yet it was really hard to get to know my neighbors. You could live right next to someone and not know who they were."

"I think here at Exeter, I have found that I really feel like I'm living in a community with other people," Martin Fox added. "My neighbors are students who live in the dorms, who come to say hello to my dog when I'm walking my dog. My neighbors are the other dorm faculty who plant flowers outside of the dorm. It makes me so happy to share spaces with those people."

"I think she's really great," fellow Bancroft faculty and Mathematics Instructor Aviva Halani said. "There are times when I know that I don't need to worry because I know that if anything happens, she has your back. We've spent a lot of time together because our dogs—Grandpa and Briggsby—are best friends. We were both learning how to take care of dogs for the first time together."

"I got Briggsby within the first couple of months of moving to Exeter in Fall 2020," Martin Fox recalled. "He is a spoiled Exeter dog in that he gets to socialize with all of the students. One of my favor-

ite things is we'll be walking on campus, and then all of a sudden I'll hear, 'BRIGSBY!' And he is running to whomever has yelled his name and they have a beautiful meeting."

"I think he is so happy to live on a boarding school campus," Martin Fox continued. "There's also so many other dogs here. Although, it sometimes makes our walks much longer than anticipated."

Virtually anyone who speaks to Martin Fox can attest to her wonderful personality. "She is such a sweet and kind person," Martin Fox's advisee and prep Aven Burney shared. "She is always willing to talk and help me out with any problems I have, large or small."

One moment with Martin Fox stands out for Burney: when Burney bumped into Martin Fox after a muddy cross-country meet. "The fact that she listened to my long story while the rain was beating down on us, and kept saying how I should feel proud of such an accomplishment, made me feel so much better and comforted."

"Ms. Martin Fox is precisely the kind of person you would want teaching at the Academy: brilliant, curious, kind, and compassionate," Religion Instructor Thomas Simpson said. "She has a depth of wisdom about history, literature, human development, and the performing arts that is such a gift to our community, and she offers it with absolute joy, without an ounce of pretentiousness. Our casual, ongoing conversations about teaching have been invaluable to me. I'm officially her mentor, but I am learning from her constantly."

When asked about her favorite part of the school, Martin Fox shared her admiration for students' curiosity. "My favorite thing about the school is that I feel like I encounter a lot of curiosity with students. That's my favorite thing about teaching—when students have questions. I find that my students have so many good questions and sometimes those insatiable questions that they are simply burning to ask. That's something that's so exciting to me."

"My least favorite thing is that I wish there was more time for students to rest," Martin Fox continued. "This will be familiar to some of my students in my REL594: Imagining Your Future class. We talk

about the concept of idleness as a really important part of thinking. You need time when you're not doing anything; it's not filled with other appointments or activities or homework, but you have time to just sit and think and be. I think that's so important for curiosity and wellbeing."

"She is such a great instructor," Burney said. "She always checks in with how the class is feeling, customizes the readings and material in terms of what our class is discussing, and gives valuable input at the right time."

Lower Nupur Malhotra echoed Burney's sentiment. "She's such a nice person that no matter what grade I get in the class, I feel like it wouldn't matter because I know I'm learning a lot from her. She is so sweet and if I have any troubles, I know I can come to her."

This summer, Martin Fox looks forward to finishing her Ph.D. "I am very hopeful that this summer I will complete my dissertation and then become Dr. Martin Fox," she shared. "I've written most of it and now I'm kind of in the editing and completion stage. It'll be a busy summer, but that's my goal."

"My dissertation is about religion and race in literature that has been commonly taught in public schools in the United States," Martin Fox explained. "Some of the books that I'm looking at are *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*—books that were discussed by teachers and scholars in the 1950s and 1960s as ways to address the problem of racism in the United States."

"Part of what my dissertation does is look at why and how people turn to literature to create a better world," Martin Fox continued. "What is actually going on in the books people claim teach important moral and social lessons? In what ways does literature have the power to work towards social change? In what ways might these texts actually double down on the kind of racism they're trying to address? And how do people imagine literature can solve social problems on a moral or personal level that need to be addressed institutionally and systemically? I'm studying Toni Morrison's *Beloved* as a counter case, which I argue imagines the role of literature in social change differently."

Iron Widow: A New Narrative

By CHENGYUE ZHANG

Iron Widow is the book that will start a revolution.

When I first heard about *Iron Widow*, I was humored, or terrified perhaps, by its mere concept: a story, written in English by a Chinese-born Canadian author who uses they/ them pronouns, that is set in a highly advanced sci-fi/fantasy society that follows ancient Chinese custom from imperial times, with mechas straight out of Japanese anime and original queer characters with the name of Chinese historical figures across dynasties engaging in a polyamorous relationship (a true love triangle I haven't seen since *Twelfth Night*).

When I sat down and read the first page, I cringed at the typical YA book premise: Zetian, a hot-headed teenage girl vows to avenge her dead older sister who was "sacrificed" in battle by her male co-pilot. However, soon the reason behind the sister's death hit me hard. Zetian's family, knowing of the death waiting for her older sister, sent her anyway, so the only son in the family could have money to study in Chang'an, the capital city of Huaxia. Then, little by little, the dark, oppressive sides of this world is revealed: girls' feet bones are shattered at a young age so they can obtain

perfect tiny lotus feet for beauty (this is a real Chinese custom that was practiced); when sent to battle as concubines of male pilots, the spiritual energy of the girls is sucked away as fuel while their male counterparts enjoy all the glory of a celebrity life. When sent to battle as concubines of male pilots, the spiritual energy of the girls is sucked away as fuel while their male counterparts enjoy all the glory of a celebrity life.

Iron Widow is bizarre, outrageous, and groundbreaking in every way possible. It successfully incorporates all the seemingly improbable and contradicting elements throughout time and space and blends them together into a fantastical world. It bridges the disconnection between history and modern ideology. It is fiction with a statement.

One curious fact about the book: given its popularity in the west, *Iron Widow* is not yet translated into Chinese, which is especially odd considering that it is already translated into eleven other languages. The reason for that is not hard to guess considering *Iron Widow*'s extensive depiction of queer relationship and unapologetic criticism of injustice, both of are considered taboo in the current Chinese society—sexism is often dismissed as something in the past, as extreme traditions like wrapping

'lotus feet' were abolished after the Qing dynasty. Queerness similarly is dismissed as some random western idea incomparable/incomparable to Chinese traditional values.

Zetian, or rather the author Xiran Jay Zhao, dares to tear up the facade with a brute portrayal of reality. Take for example how Zetian described her family dynamic: "*Countless times, I watched my father turn my mother into a nervous wreck by simply transforming himself into a dark cloud of a presence. He wouldn't use any curses or shouts, but he'd set his bowl down a little too loudly, or slam doors a little too harshly... He'd teach her to twist herself into knots to prioritize his needs and wants, in some strangling hope of quelling the pressure in the house and returning things to normal. I was never willing to learn my father's lessons. My default solution was always to push him until he exploded. A few moments of pain were better than days and nights of fear.*"

Iron Widow felt like 1984. The supposedly 'dystopian' parts of this fictional world hit too close to home: cultural and systematic sexism, capitalism as represented in Gao Qiu's corporations, parental trauma, and the cycle of abuse within Zetian's family etcetera... The book points out the flaw of the

ancient Chinese culture and the brutal truth behind its glorified history.

However, the book does not feel like a political statement or an accusation (not that I don't hear about horrible things about China from western media already.) Instead, *Iron Widow* feels like a genuine call to action: extremely personal and empowering. It shows me a way to pay homage to the culture while pointing out its flaws and at the same time. It makes me feel that the long history of China and its culture, which can be binding and oppressive at times, can be used by us, a younger generation, to tell our own story.

At one point in the book, Gao Qiu, biggest media mogul in Huaxia, threatens Zetian to film a video of her reading the contract they bind in the nude. Zetian panicked, but quickly gets on her feet again. "*I wrestle myself out of the pit of endless shame that my family has beaten me into all my life, and this scenario suddenly becomes hilarious. This silly man is trying to shame me with my own body. Well guess what? I have a fine body. He can get it from any angle he wants, but the video will have no real leverage over me. I don't give a shit if he ight release it to the public. Shame and humiliation are self-imposed emotions, and from here on out, I choose not to feel them.*"

After Zetian finally discovered the lie that the higher ups

of the country had been telling, she was challenged by officer An Lushen. "*You won't be able to change a thing. A wild leer puppets An Lushen's face. Real women know their place. It won't matter if they learn the truth!*" And this is how our badass heroine answered: "*You know what I think? I think this whole concept of women being docile and obedient is nothing but wishful thinking. Or why would you put so much effort into lying to us. Into crippling our bodies? Into coercing us with made-up morals you claimed are sacred?... Before you die, let me confirm something for you: girls like me are everywhere, barely putting up the facade of wives and daughters and concubines. And I don't think they'll be very happy about the army's lies.*"

Perhaps this is what Wu Zetian's story really looked like. It is not a romance as typically portrayed in C-dramas. Wu Zetian probably had to fight in a sexist system to become the one and only female emperor in Chinese history, gaining power through her sexuality and concealing her power in others' underestimation. Additionally, she probably witnessed queer relationships around her. Perhaps history can be no longer a heavy anchor weighing us down but a steady foundation to construct our own narrative upon.

I also wish to acknowledge that though from an western perspective, the accurate Chi-

Outside of academic work, Martin Fox explores a wide range of hobbies, something she's "always working on having more time for." One activity she plans to put some time into is gardening. "A goal of mine is to have a garden this summer, to plant vegetables and herbs and flowers so that there are things to keep me busy outside," Martin Fox said.

As travel restrictions begin to loosen, Martin Fox hopes to explore more of the world. "One of the places that's been on my bucket list the longest is New Zealand, mainly because of watching the *Lord of the Rings* when I was little," she said.

Martin Fox is also a big film connoisseur, enjoying movies like *Coco* and *Black Panther* which she also shows in class. "My favorite TV show is *PEN15* on Hulu because it perfectly captures what it was like for me to be a middle schooler in the early 2000s. *Derry Girls* on Netflix is another good one. For movies—my dog *Brisby* is actually named after the movie *Brigsby Bear*, which is this really silly indie flick."

Other hobbies that Martin Fox likes to explore include watercolor painting and listening to pop music. She also enjoys listening to podcasts during her free time as well. Her favorite podcast is a religious studies podcast called *Keeping it 101*. "I listen to it because I really like to think about ways I can bring other types of materials into the classroom. Instead of just reading from textbooks, I like to provide other mediums."

Martin Fox also enjoys hiking and recently added backpacking to her extensive list of hobbies. "A friend of mine convinced us to do a 31-mile eight-mountain hike that was three days long. We carried like 30 pound packs and I cried multiple times while we were on the backpacking trip, but I really enjoyed the experience and the challenge."

"I'm just so lucky that she's my advisor," Hollis continued. "She's helped me with so many things and navigating some difficult situations. She had so many paths that she could've gone down, but she chose to come here to Exeter and she's just so dedicated to us and so positive. She goes out of her way to make our lives better," Hollis finished.

nese culture representation in a sci-fi YA novel might be revolutionary, for me personally it is merely commendable since I have read tons of original Chinese web-novels that take place in fantasy/historical settings. It is not an uncommon idea. (I feel the same way about *Squid Game* by the way. The idea of a battle royale show with a larger societal theme is quite common in Asian media, but *Squid Game* is somehow considered special because of its outreach to western audiences.) Though I do appreciate the various cultural references in *Iron Widow*, some of them feel very superficial, unfamiliar to a Western audience perhaps but overused and cliché in my point of view. References such as *Biyiniao* from *Classic of Mountains and Seas* and *Mount Zhurong* remain surface level and are never deeply explained.

In the end, however, this book is not a history book. It is a YA novel inspired by Chinese culture. I expected a lot from the book, and I was disappointed in some ways yet amazed in others. *Iron Widow* is not the best queer story I read, and it is not the best fantasy novel I read, nor the best Chinese-culture inspired novel I read. However, combining all the mediocres makes the *Iron Widow* special. I appreciate how Xiran Jay Zhao brought issues into the spotlight in all its brutality and cruelty while giving us the strength to carry on like Zetian does.

Stand-Up Comedy Club Hosts April Show

By JOONYOUNG HEO and CATHERINE WU

Charles de Gaulle, former President of France, is reported to have said that “He who laughs last didn’t get the joke.” It is a quote that serves as the cornerstone of Exeter’s very own Stand-Up Comedy Club, whose mission is to make humor both genuinely comedic and accessible to all—so that the audience will all get the joke at the same time, and laugh as one. According to a few Exonians, the group might just be doing something right.

Stand-Up Comedy Club is led by the auspicious (and likely talented) hands of uppers Blake Simpson, Ina Mason, and Phil Avilov, as well as seniors Sava Thurber, Pedro Coelho, and Jack Archer. They are advised by the formidable Kayoko Tazawa of the Modern Languages Department, and their work each term usually culminates in a stand-up comedy show open to students and faculty alike. These shows are among the only public club events on campus where people feel inclined to glance up from their phones. The most recent one was held on April 2. This term, the club plans to host another show before the seniors graduate if, as Tazawa put it, “they actually get around to putting one together.”

The club is important to the coheads for a variety of reasons. “A lot of people here think they’re funny, but not a lot of them go out, you know, in front of a large audience,” Avilov said. “I don’t think I’m funny, but I do like attention. And laughter makes your life longer.”

Others agreed, underscoring the singularity of stand-up as a comedic form. “I really like being a cohead because I love performing in the shows,” Thurber said. “I’ve been in front of an audience for much of my life, mostly with the violin. With standup, it’s a very similar thing. Like, you get up on stage and your goal is to move an audience. There’s also a lot of spontaneity I enjoy. Obviously I have a script beforehand, but a lot of what I do is improvising and riffing off what the crowd likes. If I’m making jokes about one topic that’s not landing as well, I’m just going to move on instead of dwelling on something that’s not funny.”

“I have always loved stand-up,” Mason said. “Even before coming to Exeter, I used to listen to stand-up comedy daily. They have comedians on Spotify, so I would

listen to their shows instead of music, and I spent a lot of time thinking about what it would be like to write my own script. Stand Up Exeter was actually one of the first clubs I heard about when I got here. Its founder, Adith, was on a zoom orientation panel, and hearing that Exeter had a club celebrating stand-up comedy was one of the first things that really proved I had made the right decision in choosing to come here.”

For many of the coheads, Stand-Up has also had a considerable impact in their time at the Academy. “I would say it made me look at things less seriously, but I’d be lying,” Avilov said. “I think it made me look at things more seriously because I know that everything I do could be made fun of in another standup routine. And I think, maybe, that’s a positive, because somebody gets to laugh at the end.”

“My experience with Stand Up Exeter has been great! In my first show, everyone was really supportive of my act. The coheads and other comedians gave really great feedback on my script and performance, and I was able to use it to make something I was really proud of. Since then, it has been awesome to be behind the scenes helping to make these shows happen and supporting my fellow creators,” Mason added.

For others, the club has helped them through tough times, and that says a lot, considering how tough the times can get at Exeter. “When we had social distancing during Covid, for example, it was very hard to get people together,” Thurber said. “I found standup to be a catalyst for that, as an opportunity for everyone to be in the same space. It’s not like an assembly or another required meeting in which the mood is contemplative and scholarly. Instead, people show up with the goal of being lighthearted and to have a good time. That’s why it’s so important.”

The coheads have many a fond memory of their time in Stand-Up. These memories persist for some in their alimentary canals as well as their heads. “When Otis used to lead the club, we’d have samosas at every meeting,” Avilov said. “It was a highlight. I think some had peas and potatoes in them. Some had lamb. They were probably triangular.”

For Mason, her favorite memory was “by far Will Park’s appearance on stage last Saturday. That was entirely unscripted and completely hilarious. For anyone who doesn’t know: Sava called

two people out of the audience to compete with each other to see who could make the weirdest sound. The first person who went had a really good noise that Will was not going to be able to beat—so instead, he plugged his new Instagram account. His last one had been hacked and its new owner kept posting really weird scams on his stories.”

The show on April 2 stands out, too, as a great moment for Stand-Up Comedy this year, with many performers delivering a crowd-pleasing stew of dry wit, props of vegetation, and a suggestive PowerPoint about those small winged creatures that we call birds. “I loved Blake’s style and I think he’s by far one of the best coheads we have, at least in terms of performance,” Thurber said. “He has this recurrent joke about a horse, but it’s somehow funnier each time he does it. And I was also pleased with my own performance. I did a slideshow and narrated through it. It was about birds whose names were double entendres. It bordered on inappropriate, but I thought it was a brilliant topic because I framed it as a very educational PowerPoint, and all of the humor and magic happened within the minds of the audience members. It was so much fun to put together.”

Senior Dorothy Baker shared her introduction to Stand Up Comedy. “I really love comedians like Seth Rogen and Jonah Hill who started their careers in stand up, so I was excited when Sava reached out to me and asked me to participate,” Baker said. “I did a comedy routine when I was at Exeter Summer School with my best friend William, but we mostly told jokes his mom sent us an hour before the show. We also told the story of how he broke his nose on the Soule door.”

“I submitted an old English paper as my script then went on stage and completely winged it,” Baker continued. “I wasn’t that nervous because the demographic of people that attend comedy club performances are non judgemental, but we had a good turn out and people seemed to like my jokes. To open, I serenaded one girl with ‘Sicko Mode’ by Travis Scott though, and not a single person laughed. That was tough. Afterwards though, it was smooth sailing. I told the story about my involvement with Exeter athletics and sprinkled in some jokes that my Dad sent me when there were lulls in the audience. Also had the crowd chanting ‘wenis’ which was fun.”



Stand-up performers receive a standing ovation.

Courtesy of Jack Archer

For Senior Catherine Uwakwe, the show on Saturday was her first time. “I actually JUST joined Stand Up Comedy club! I’ve always been on their email list and I’ve helped as a person in the crowd that laughs at any joke (especially necessary if one doesn’t land),” she said. “I was curious about it and Senior spring just felt like the best time to try something new! I was able to see people laughing in the crowd and many people complimented my performance after too! 10/10 experience for sure,” Uwakwe said.

Plans went awry for some, but they had no less fun at the event. “I needed an ear of corn, but I couldn’t find one, so I had to settle for a banana because those look similar,” Avilov said. “Then I tried to pass it around the audience for a ‘friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears’ joke, but they didn’t really understand what was going on. So I just left the banana there with the audience, and I don’t know what happened to it.”

Tazawa commented that she takes delight in her position as advisor. “It’s great seeing their improvement. When I went to their first show, I was mostly laughing to be polite and I was feeling sad for them sometimes. But now I can really laugh, and I don’t have to feel sad about it. So it’s great.”

When asked what she would say to prospective youth who were considering joining the club, she said, “Just join.”

Students who attended the show discussed their experiences as well. “I think it was a fun event that I went to with my friends to experience some very humorous fun on a cool Saturday night. I would say the atmosphere was very lively, you definitely felt that there was an energy in the crowd that was inspired by the

funny words we were hearing from the ‘magic man’ on stage,” senior Toby Chan said.

“It was so fun, especially seeing my friend Catherine perform because she hosted me when I came to visit Exeter as an eighth grader... [The performance] was very lighthearted, it wasn’t tense, there were never any awkward silences, and it was just the true Exeter community coming to support one another,” upper Abigail Babalola agreed.

For lower Krishna Deora, “The performance was very individual to the person and extremely enjoyable to listen to. I only wish it would have gone longer and there were more performers,” Deora said.

“Overall, it was really funny, warm, and happy. The audience was supportive, cheering for everything the stand up comedians said, and that’s the kind of environment we want to foster here at Exeter,” upper Enzo Nakomsri said.

Many shared their highlights from the show, such as Sava’s performance. “Sava made an entire slideshow with penis innuendos disguised as an ornithology lecture. The most Exeter thing to do. He’s hilarious,” Baker said.

“I loved it, especially Sava’s [performance]. I think Sava ended off on a really good note, and I liked his presentation, which was about different birds, and it was very very funny. I really liked the ‘cock in the rock’ [joke], which was a really good name for the bird, and Sava asked a really important question of whether the plural should be called ‘cocks in the rock’ or ‘cock in the rocks,’” Nakomsri continued.

Lower Sarah Sargent quacked up during Sava’s bird stage as well. “My favorite performer was Sava because I thought that he was very informative and I really

learned a lot from his presentation,” lower Sarah Sargent agreed. “My favorite joke that was told was ‘swallow.’”

Others enjoyed watching different performers’ shows and jokes, too. “I enjoyed Catherine U’s performance, she was very relaxed and easy to follow... I had a great experience, there was a lot of variety in humor and specificity,” lower Freya Busser shared.

“I think all the performances were great, but my particular favorite would go to Phil’s performance. Phil’s performance was a very puntastic performance,” Chan said.

Babalola particularly noted Ina’s execution of her stage. “[My favorite part was] probably when Ina started taking out all the junk from her pockets and the whole cargo pants joke, it was really funny,” Babalola said.

“[If] you’re bored on a Saturday night, nothing to do, sit in Assembly Hall and you have a whole row to yourself—come for a laugh!” Babalola concluded.

As a finale, various club members shared their favorite jokes in the hopes of converting more Exonians into comedians.

Avilov: “What do you call a carbon dating app? Timber.”

Thurber: “I was playing chess with my friend the other day. I asked him if he wanted to make things interesting. Then we stopped playing chess.”

Baker: “What’s green, fuzzy, and will kill you if it falls out of a tree? A pool table.”

Tazawa: “I have my next block in two minutes, you need to leave my classroom.”

Stand-Up Comedy truly is an incredible club, jam-packed with some incredible comedians, some incredible spectators, and an incredible advisor.

Academy Celebrates Ramadan

By ASHLEY JIANG, HANNAH PARK, and KATE ROSE

From April 2 to May 2, many Muslim students partake in Ramadan: the ninth month of the Muslim calendar during which observers fast during daylight hours. “Ramadan is a time when we recharge our spirit. Throughout the year, we are very busy running and juggling between our duties and our responsibilities every day,” Science Instructor Shimaa Ghazal said.

This holy month holds significance for many reasons. “Ramadan is the time for reflection, intense worship, it is the time for self-discipline and sacrifice, we fast around 14 hours, no food or water, we teach ourselves self-control,” Ghazal said.

“Ramadan commemorates the month in which the Quran’s first verses were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. It’s important for that reason, but also it’s my favorite time of year because there is so much

bonding and community over fasting, praying, and breaking fast together,” Salaam advisor Dionna Richardson-Alayyubi added. Salaam is an affinity group for female-identifying Muslim students.

“Ramadan brings a sense of community and celebration. Due to the many gatherings and traditions involved with Ramadan, it’s a time to connect with people in the community and struggle together,” upper Sinna Oumer added.

For many, Ramadan is a time of reflection. “It gives me a chance to realize how grateful I am and allows me to become a better Muslim,” lower Ayman Naseer said.

“Ramadan is important to me as a practicing Muslim because it offers an opportunity to go back to the basics of what it truly means to live out one’s faith,” Muslim Student Association advisor Amadou Talla said. “At a spiritual level, it is a chance to attain a state of taqwa, loosely translated as God-consciousness in everything you are doing.”

Muslim community mem-

bers appreciated the Academy’s accommodations during Ramadan. “The school is very supportive during Ramadan, starting from providing a quiet place for Taraweeh, which is a long prayer done after sunset,” Ghazal said. “Many of the faculties hosted breakfast ‘Iftar’ for the community, as a way to express their warm feelings.”

“The school, particularly the Office of Multicultural Affairs as well as Religious Services, has been extremely helpful with supporting us this Ramadan,” Oumer agreed. “In addition to many returning helpful accommodations, [such as] extended dining hall hours, extended check-in for underclassmen, snack items provided at the church, one of the biggest things has been the iftars—special dinners to break one’s fast—offered this term.”

Oumer continued: “Thanks to the combined efforts of Muslim faculty and various parts of the administration—specifically OMA, Religious Services, and Dean Breen—we’ve been able to offer communal iftaars for at least half of the week. Thanks

to these, I’ve been able to enjoy more familiar, traditional Ramadan food at night.”

Others also expressed gratitude for the Exeter Muslim community. “Part of the reason that makes Ramadan so special is being with family; however, I think the Muslim community at Exeter has grown so much that it makes me feel welcomed,” Naseer said.

“There have been genuine efforts and kind offers by my colleagues to offer alternative meeting times or places so that I don’t have to sit through lunch meetings and watch everyone eat or dinnertime meetings that prevent me from breaking my fast on time,” Richardson-Alayyubi agreed.

“Things are so much better this year because the community is more aware of Ramadan. There has been more accommodations for faculty and students,” Talla noted.

Despite this support, some challenges still arise while celebrating Ramadan at the Academy. “The main challenge is my extracurriculars. I don’t really want to be awake

anytime after 4:00 p.m., which is a major hindrance to going to weeknight clubs, which often run around iftar times. I also am not particularly in the mood to drag myself around campus, or anywhere around South Side [as someone who lives on North side],” Oumer shared. “There is also the toll on my sleep and social life: it’s kind of awkward when you’re eating lunch with someone, except you just sit there as your food gets cold and stare at they eat.”

“While I really value the Muslim community we have on campus, the biggest challenge of celebrating in Exeter is the lack of an off-campus Muslim community—there are no nearby mosques for evening prayers and community and there are limited options for halal food,” Richardson-Alayyubi added.

On March 28, Principal William Rawson announced via email that Principal’s Day this year would coincide with Eid al-fitar, the conclusion of Ramadan, to “recognize and celebrate the Feast of Breaking

the Fast.”

Community members shared their thoughts. “I’m extremely grateful that we have Eid off again this year. One of my fondest memories of last year’s Eid was the early morning prayer we had (a key cultural tradition), followed by everyone running to grab breakfast at Elm and eating together in the Stuckey Room. I want to be able to do at least that again, and it’s an important example of what we would have missed, if Eid were a class day,” Oumer said.

“Ultimately, that is what is most important to me: that we do have it off. However, I’m hoping that in future years, Eid will be planned into the calendar to begin with, so that we can avoid this sort of situation. Then we wouldn’t have to worry about where to substitute a free day for Eid,” Oumer continued, concluding with her excitement for the holiday. “[I’m] hoping that the rest of Ramadan goes as smoothly as it’s been so far. I’m looking forward to Eid!”

» OSCARS

Read Nhan Phan '24 discuss the Will Smith slap at the Academy Awards ceremony, 8.

» CHESS

Read Joonyoung Heo '25 evaluate the ban on chess player Sergey Karjakin, 9.

» PRINCIPAL'S DAY

Read Ariana Thornton '24 reflect on inclusivity at the Academy in the context of Eid and Principal's Day, 9.

Anti-Racism, Exeter, and *The Exonian*

By OTTODO '22

As a part of *The Exonian's* 142nd and 143rd board, I have had the opportunity to work on Since 1878, a multi-part series examining the Academy's past and current racism. Part of our coverage highlights how racism is a pillar of the Academy. This essay has been a long time in the making. I began writing it when I was working under the 143rd board and have revised it numerous times since then, nearly giving up on publishing it because I found myself leaving with more things unresolved the more times I came back to it.

But I was inspired to give this another try, remembering Editor-in-Chief emeritus Anne Brandes' '21 final Letter from the Editor, titled "Reporting on Exeter and Sexual Assault." She wrote: "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." So, whether or not I made good enough progress since I first wrote this, I hope to synthesize my reflections about the newspaper's role in creating an anti-racist community.

Thus Since 1878 began: "In its early years, *The Exonian* wrote a brief history about Phillips Exeter Academy's founder, John Phillips." Phillips claimed three enslaved Black people as property, receiving them upon marrying his first wife, Sarah Gilman, who inherited them from her deceased husband. "This was the racial context from which the Academy evolved," Since 1878 wrote. And the Academy witnessed and participated in the evolving racism of America at large, for "it was not until 77 years after its establishment that, in 1858, the Academy accepted its first Black student: Moses Uriah Hall."

If we fast forward to the present, we see racism, though perhaps manifesting differently, persist. (Forgive me for skipping ahead so far. A lot has happened within this time, but I'll leave you to read Since 1878

in full. I cannot do the history of racism justice in a single article. If I could, racism would be a lot easier to navigate.) I want to say that racism and anti-racism is at least more often discussed in contemporary discourse, but the concept of anti-racism existed long before its coinage. It has roots in abolition, a term first used in opposition to the trans-Atlantic African slave trade in 1788, then in regard to proposals or arguments to end American slavery by 1823.

Nevertheless, the term anti-racism dominated every aspect of life with the murder of George Floyd in the spring of 2020. That spring also marked a shift in our own community as the Academy made a commitment to upholding anti-racist values, retooling the schedule to include an Anti-Racist Work block (now the Core Values Project block) and increasing "the number of faculty of color by at least 50 percent over five years."

This is a lofty goal, so it requires accountability. A newspaper seems to fit such a role well because it chronicles the evolution of the Academy, but I find myself left with more questions when I ask who the newspaper is really holding accountable.

When students demand change, they often invoke the administration, but I am unsure of who even falls under such a category. If it's the deans, I don't know if they really have the power to make systemic change. If it's the trustees, they don't have the ability to divest the endowment from industries contributing to climate change or profiting from prison and child labor. If it's Principal Rawson, he is just one person.

And if it's all of these people, well, I don't think they have the right education to make the radical change necessary. And I don't mean to say this in a judgmental manner. It's just a simple fact. Our deans were trained to teach mathematics, health, and whatnot. I also don't mean to say they do not care about anti-racism—just that everyone who might fall under the term "administration" is not set up to effectively bring about change.

There are, howev-

er, those working in the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) and Dr. Bramlett, people who do have a DEI-based education, but their role, I think, is more to create discussion and understanding around identity than to create systemic change. And if that was their responsibility, they don't have the power to radically overhaul the mechanics of Exeter.

I mean, how can we expect them to divest from problematic corporations when even the trustees cannot? Again, none of this is to say that we don't need all of these people, but to say that if we are to be fully transparent, we should admit now that Exeter can never become fully anti-racist under its current structure. Roxane Gay echoed this in her MLK Day keynote address. A student asked her during the Q&A if the Academy could ever be anti-racist when the endowment is invested in corporations profiting off of prison labor, and she, very frankly, said no. And if we are not anti-racist, then, according to Ibram X. Kendi, we are racist.

I think the Academy has made strides and certainly many promises, but they don't always fully actualize. For example, *The Exonian* published an article titled, "PEA Investigates [Its] Ties to Slavery," on Feb. 14, 2019, which covered the beginnings of an Academy-led investigation. Since its announcement, however, this project has been sidelined, and for all I know, ended.

Since 1878 is what this project might have shaped out to be, so I started asking myself if acknowledging the Academy's racist history is where *The Exonian's* anti-racist duty to the school lies, if students should even have so much responsibility at all. But if this is the case, it means that we cannot exclude *The Exonian* from our evaluation. I should practice being blunt in naming racism now, because when future students look back, they will condemn us in their own versions of Since 1878.

In the spring of 2020, the term of the first COVID lockdown and the height of the George Floyd protests, the paper printed a \$8000+ dollar graduation issue at a time when people across

the nation were calling for funds to demand justice for the Black bodies murdered by the police. I know we cannot donate endowed funds designated solely for *The Exonian*, but I think the implications of this limitation are important. It means, I think, that the money we have is gridlocked from doing the most for the anti-racist movement.

Through discussions with peers, I've come to see—and accept—that *The Exonian* might be one of the most frivolous concepts imaginable—a preparatory school club which spends about \$1200 every week (now every other week) to print in the microcosm of a billion-dollar Academy.

At this point, I am asking myself how *The Exonian* can fulfill its own mission of being a "vehicle for positive change," and if, as a subordinate organization, it is even possible. If you look at this essay thus far, the bulk of it criticizes the Academy and not the paper. This is not an ideal proportioning if my goal is to examine the paper, but it's necessary because the Academy's history is the context through which we look at *The Exonian's* history.

This is not a reason to excuse the paper, but precisely the opposite. Although some like to think otherwise, *The Exonian* is not an independent organization. The simple reality is: the paper is not financially nor historically independent and, thus, cannot be independent in other respects. So to think that *The Exonian* could exist as an anti-racist club when it is subordinate to a racist institution would be absurd.

If I am to be perfectly logical in my criticism, then I myself should not attend an institution as racist as Exeter or, likewise, live in a country such as the United States. But this seems ridiculous, too, so maybe the question I should really be asking is: How do I operate within racist spaces? And by extension, how should *The Exonian* conduct itself?

That spring of 2020, the paper's board consulted the writings of professionals in the field, including equity consultant Tema Okun, from whom I learned that *The Exonian* should no longer be considered a writing

club if it wants to strive to be anti-racist. Doing so implies that the club values strong documentation skills most when the ability to understand others should be more central to its mission.

Hand-in-hand with this is also the structure of the paper. Being on the other side of working in the paper, I ask myself what the purpose of all the hierarchy, titles, and formality of the paper is. On the one hand, I can see it as part of *The Exonian's* goal to provide a journalistic experience as realistic as possible, but on the other hand, I don't see the title positions functioning all that well. I won't be the first to say that many people with title positions (and this is not exclusive to the paper) don't really fulfill the basic duties. I don't say this to exact judgment, but to ask: how many people would be working for the paper—and actually working—if there were no titles at all? Or would the paper fall apart completely? Ponder that.

It's also important to think about the role of a newspaper more broadly. A newspaper sheds light on events or structures that impact the community, so it makes sense that *The Exonian*, by nature, should serve the community. To achieve this, I have been told that it's important to make sure my interviewees are an accurate reflection of the community. This, I was told by those before me, like democracy, is how we give equal representation to all voices.

I realize now that there's a flaw in this logic because to give every voice equal weight is to serve the majority. So what does it mean to serve the majority when the majority is white? Maybe majority rule is inevitable, but it doesn't always make sense. In the same way that men—the majority group in public office—shouldn't have equal voting power as women in feminine hygiene legislation, it doesn't make sense to have white individuals be the center of a conversation surrounding anti-racism.

This makes me wonder if to be anti-racist is to subvert many of the journalistic principles I have been taught, chiefly objectivity. If we take Ibram X. Kendi's defini-

tion of anti-racism, that the opposite of racism is not an absence of racism but anti-racism, then to be anti-racist is to have a subjective agenda. I don't think this means that the principles of journalism are racist, but I think it does mean that we shouldn't cling to them so tightly.

Reform—and certainly radical reform—might be the key to progress, but when I think about reform I understand it as a process to fix a 'broken' system. *The Exonian*, however, is not broken. It is working in the exact way it was designed, preferring writers who have been privileged with an elite education or those willing to remake themselves in that image—an image of a model academic along white standards.

Numerous times have I been told that the writers who become the best editors have common sense. For example, a good writer should just instinctively know what to do, not needing to be instructed or told. The notion of common sense, however, is highly problematic because it is really just habitualized convention—and usually habitualized white convention. I think that's why, at least in my time at Exeter, *The Exonian's* executive board has been predominantly Asian and white—groups statistically more likely to have attended a predominately white institution before coming to Exeter and thereby more accustomed to white conventions.

Reform, then, is not an option. Maybe *The Exonian*, as we know it, must be abolished in order to achieve anti-racism. And the same for Exeter. I don't say this to advocate for the end of *The Exonian* or Exeter, but to stress that a truly anti-racist paper and school, perhaps, looks nothing like *The Exonian* and Exeter of today. And beyond that—we are not isolated in our flaws and failures. If you ask me where I have seen a truly anti-racist space, I'll be honest in saying I have yet to see one. However, I don't think this means we should give up and accept a racist reality. I hope we can all can work hard to imagine what an anti-racist paper, Exeter, and world can look like, despite the racist setting we find ourselves in now.

The Exonian

We would like to acknowledge the Squamscott/Penacook peoples who were the first peoples of this land. We would like to honor their ancestors, descendants and future generations for caring for this area and allowing us to be here today.

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On the Will Smith Debate



Will Smith slaps Chris Rock at the Oscars.

Courtesy of The New Yorker

By NHAN PHAN '24

We have seen the memes, we have seen the parodies, and I am sure the phrase “keep my wife’s name out of your f***ing mouth” will go down in history as one of the most iconic lines ever (and by the former Prince of Bel-Air too!). When Will Smith slapped Chris Rock and the 94th Academy Awards earlier this month, the internet exploded. The debate brought many of society’s biggest flaws to the surface and highlighted the toxic culture of popular media.

A month on, how has the slap seen ‘round the world changed it?

First of all, let’s talk about the slap itself. To provide some context for those who have not yet seen or know fully about the infamous slap: Chris Rock was presenting the award for Best Documentary Feature during the Academy Awards when he made a joke about Jada Pinkett Smith, Will Smith’s wife. The joke said, “Jada, I love you – I can’t wait for GI Jane 2.”

Rock was referring to Smith’s openly-discussed struggle with alopecia, a sudden hair loss condition. Will Smith did not take the joke well—in fact, he took it so poorly, he got out of his seat, walked up on stage, and slapped Chris Rock live

on national television. He then promptly returned to his seat, and yelled the infamous aforementioned phrase twice. Later that evening, Smith won Best Actor for his portrayal of Serena and Venus William’s father in *King Richard*. He apologized to the Academy and mentioned what Denzel Washington said to him after the incident: “At your highest moment be careful, that’s when the devil comes for you,” but did not mention Rock explicitly.

Days after the incident, Smith issued a public apology to Chris Rock, saying, “jokes at my expense are a part of the job, but a joke about Jada’s medical condition was too much for me to bear and I reacted emotionally.” He wrote, “I am embarrassed and my actions were not indicative of the man I want to be. There is no place for violence in a world of love and kindness.” He then resigned from the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences, which barred him from attending their sponsored events for the next 10 years.

If you ask me whether I think Will Smith was right or not, I wouldn’t be able to give you a straight answer. On one hand, Will Smith had every reason to defend his wife; Jada Pinkett Smith had previously openly discussed her struggle

with alopecia, which causes the hair loss. His slap could have been argued as him defending his wife’s dignity on national television, sending a statement to those who make fun of the condition.

On the other hand, he was first seen laughing at the joke, to his wife’s chagrin. I also don’t know if a slap was the best solution. Perhaps, what Smith did on stage brought an emphasis to the fact that there are always two ways to go about resolving an incident: talking about it or resorting to violence. Clearly, Smith’s actions demonstrate the latter. In today’s world where so much of our “resolving” of problems involves violence, what Smith did only reinforced this notion. Assault should never be the way to go about anything.

I am angry at Will Smith. The Oscars are about honoring the professionals who bring stories to our screens and those who embody the best in art and culture. It is a shame that this incident where one man let his emotions get the best of him took the spotlight away from the filmmakers, writers, actors, musicians, and designers who deserve recognition for their work. I wish that Smith handled his emotions so the incident could never have reached its climax and taken center stage live.

I also have to say, Chris Rock handled the incident well. He diverted attention back to those who deserved recognition after the incident, and he did so gracefully, selflessly, and appropriately. For those reasons, I cannot give you a full conclusion on what I feel about this incident because it is simply not in my place to judge one’s intent or judge one’s decisions without knowing everything that happened around them. To do so uninformed disregards the other’s point of view, and I am sure both Smith and Rock have their own versions of the story. The only thing I can say is that violence should never prevail.

As the slap happened, Twitter erupted into a firestorm; #whatjusthappened was trending. Trust me, I was on it too. News outlets jumped onto the incident, reporting it on their sites at a breakneck pace. Some articles had clickbait titles, some were confused as to what happened. Either way, a debate was triggered around who was in the right. This plain reaction to what had happened reflects society’s biggest flaw: we are way too quick to jump to conclusions.

If this slap had not happened, Twitter had not erupted into a firestorm, and CODA winning Best Picture was the main highlight of the night, I

would not have written this article. I think this speaks to a larger trend in today’s society—we only react when things go wrong. We prey on moments where celebrities, often figures of high influence or esteem, mess up. I will refer to those on social media as “netizens.”

Being a celebrity comes with its risks: every action, every statement, everything that a celebrity does come under intense scrutiny. What this reveals about the general social media audience is that they are interested in moments where the celebrity messes up, does something wrong, or takes a misstep. They are interested in drama. Nothing is more engaging than reading gossip about a celebrity scandal online. The feeling of being in on the secret, preemptively judging someone because of one thing that they do makes us feel better about ourselves. There is nothing more gratifying than to say, “thank goodness I was not there,” or “I’m so glad I’m not [insert person].” Nowhere is this clearer than in the response to that slap.

Netizens love the gossip, they love to judge, and they sure as hell love to debate. What the slap reveals about the toxic culture of popular media is that humans, somehow, want to see other

humans mess up because it makes them feel better about themselves. The fact that the netizens on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, etc. were so fast to respond to this slap is because they saw someone that they know, someone famous, assault someone else. It’s drama. It’s content. It’s entertainment.

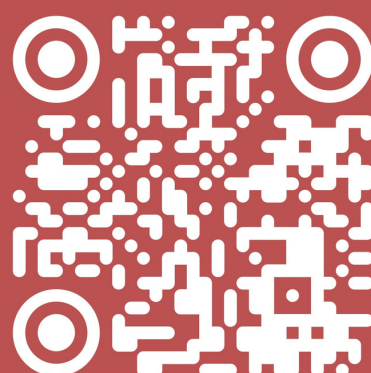
Caught in the spur of the moment, netizens often forget that celebrities are humans too. They are always so quick to judge or declare that either “Will Smith will pay for this,” or “Chris Rock is insensitive,” without knowing the full story. Perhaps, Chris Rock did not know about Jada Pinkett Smith’s condition with alopecia. Perhaps, Will Smith was urged by his wife to act and to make a statement. We will never know the full story.

Either way, netizens are way too quick to jump to conclusions to the point that they often disregard the humanity of the celebrities in question. This places immense pressure on celebrities to present the best picture of themselves possible, and thus creates a toxic popular media atmosphere. This slap has brought this toxic atmosphere into center stage and it forces us to reconsider the way we treat celebrities versus the way we treat those who we know.



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On Eid and Principal's Day

By **ARIANA THORNTON**
'24

On March 28, Principal Rawson sent out a school-wide email announcing that this year's Principal's Day would be scheduled on the same date as Eid, the Muslim holy day. The Muslim Student Association (MSA) was involved in this decision and originally advocated for Eid to be a day off on its own. However, they were only able to reach the compromise that Principal Rawson mentioned in his email. This news has come as a frustration to many students in our community, opening up long-standing discussions on inclusion

and how non-Christian cultural holidays are held at the Academy. Here and around the country, school breaks are scheduled around traditionally Christian holidays. Yet time and time again, students who celebrate non-Christian holidays are not given the same treatment.

Like many schools, the Academy strives to be the inclusive space that every student needs and takes pride in its cultural diversity and interfaith communities. The Academy has no formal religious or spiritual affiliation and welcomes students with a variety of cultures, backgrounds, and faiths. Affinity groups like the Exeter Jewish Community,

Christian Fellowship, Muslim Student Association, Buddhist Meditation Group, and Hindu Society all have dedicated time and space in Phillips Church, the central hub for spiritual connection. The administration does make efforts to celebrate these groups: the Exeter community received a day off for Yom Kippur in the fall, East-Asian students enjoyed feasts and decorations in the dining halls for Lunar New Year, and gatherings for Ramadan are ongoing. There are also numerous workshops, discussions, and club meetings where we learn about, recognize, and celebrate the diverse cultures and backgrounds of our peers and faculty.

No student should choose between schoolwork and celebrating their culture, and in turn, two important holidays should never be fused together in the way that Eid and Principal's Day has been. I am unaware of the full details regarding the decision about Eid and Principal's Day, but if necessary, the school schedule should be adjusted to accommodate the religious holidays of our student body.

In deliberating which holy days to include in the school calendar, I believe it comes down to the Academy's student demographic. The majority of the Academy's student body are Christian, Jewish, Muslim, or Hindu, and, therefore,

significant holy days from each religion should be included. It is not enough for the Academy to simply ensure that no major assignments fall on a religious holiday or provide the option for students to submit a petition to the deans and take time off on their own. Due to the rigorous and fast-paced nature of classes, many students are extremely hesitant to miss class and risk falling behind on work. The Academy strives to ensure that students of all faiths and ethnic backgrounds are treated with fairness, understanding, and respect, and this should continue with formally recognizing non-Christian holy days as school holidays.

It is disappointing and not acceptable that Eid, a holy and spiritual celebration that Muslim students deserve to enjoy as its own, is being combined with Principal's Day, a casual spring surprise that supposedly provides students with no duties or obligations. Through all of Exeter's cultural diversity, concrete decisions reveal more than words and student demographic statistics. Our administration must regard our non-Christian cultural holidays with fairness and respect—it is nothing less than what we deserve.

On Chess and Free Speech

Eileen Gu celebrates her win at the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics.

Courtesy of Quartz

By **JOONYOUNG HEO** '25

On March 21, 2022, Russian chess player Sergey Karjakin (currently ranked No. 17 in the world) was banned from any chess tournament sponsored by the International Chess Federation (FIDE) for six months. The ban was a decision passed by the FIDE Ethics and Disciplinary Commission (EDC) after Karjakin made several controversial comments on Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine. In a series of Tweets, he put his support for his country in no uncertain terms: "I am on the side of Russia and my President. No matter what happens, I will support my country in any situation without thinking for a second!" Among other inflammatory remarks, following an assault on the Ukrainian city of Donetsk, Karjakin accused the Ukrainian army of shelling its own citizens and called Volodymyr Zelensky, its president, "the killer of the children of Donbass."

The EDC cited an article in the FIDE Code of Ethics, which states that "disciplinary action" will be taken against those who "damage its reputation," as grounds for the ban. The decision was supported by many in the chess community. Yet there were those in opposition, equally, who

found that it was entirely unreasonable, and it is with this latter group that I sympathize. Karjakin's Tweets may be entirely twisted in their morality—I make no argument to the contrary. While within their legal purview, however, FIDE had no moral right to ban Karjakin. What amounts to an impulsive resolution sets an absurd precedent for the decades to come.

In order to understand the impact of this decision, it is important to explain the extent of Karjakin's ban. Although the ban only applies to FIDE-rated tournaments and is set to last no more than six months, Karjakin's career will suffer a major blow. For one thing, FIDE runs a virtual monopoly on the game of chess. Its rating system is recognized universally, and it has a hand in most tournaments at the highest level, including the World Chess Championship. To a player like Karjakin, a ban from FIDE can be likened to a ban from professional chess altogether. What is more, he has been forced to withdraw from the 2022 Candidates Tournament, an eight-player competition whose victor earns the right to challenge World Champion Magnus Carlsen in 2023. There were high expectations for Karjakin, who challenged Carlsen in 2016 and (arguably) came the

closest to taking the crown, and his place in the Candidates was well-deserved, having placed second in the Chess World Cup last year.

With the gravity of these professional consequences in mind, I argue first that FIDE is a chess organization—nothing more, nothing less. It must be concerned primarily with the chess skill of its affiliated players. This is also its only concern. As it has publicly claimed, it is "the governing body of the sport of chess . . . constituted as a non-governmental institution." The chess community at large has entrusted FIDE with little more than ranking global talent, handling tournament logistics, and enforcing a comprehensive set of rules that tell players exactly what they can and cannot do. If a player were caught cheating, it would provide more than sufficient grounds to impose a ban. When three French players were caught in violation of fair play (specifically, using a chess engine to find the best moves) during the 2010 FIDE Olympiad Tournament in Russia, FIDE was completely justified in doling out an approximate three-year ban for each player. Indeed, it had no other alternative. Karjakin, however, has never violated the rulebook. Even if he had cheated in the past, for that matter, the present contro-

versy would have nothing to do with it. The EDC's ban concerns exclusively his comments about Putin and Ukraine, not his ability to play the game of chess. In an attempt to take something of a political stance, FIDE is invalidating the time, the effort, the sheer skill that went into earning his place in the Candidates Tournament.

Of course, it is true that FIDE must occasionally concern itself with more than chess. It could hardly afford to let, say, a grandmaster take part in a tournament if he also happened to be a murderer. But there is no law that prohibits free speech; rather, it is celebrated as a basic human right. Certainly, Karjakin's comments may be morally objectionable. I reiterate that the purpose of this op-ed was never to defend Karjakin, only to criticize FIDE and its branch of EDC. I posit solely that the question of morality holds no relevance here. Karjakin gave his opinion, just like all those who denounce Putin as a "war criminal" and all those who praise Zelensky as a hero. Overwhelming support from the international community does make the majority opinion the right one. In banning Karjakin, FIDE has overstepped its moral purview.

What the situation amounts to, in consequence, is that FIDE is gatekeep-

ing the game. Regardless of intent, it has essentially imposed its moral ideology on the players with whom it is affiliated. Those who support Zelensky and the Ukrainian resistance are lauded and allowed to remain, while those who do not—and most of all, those who actively spur Putin's war effort on—are removed at its earliest convenience. At this point, it might even be said that FIDE has become less chess and more politics. With the organization operating a virtual monopoly in the chess community, further, the top players cannot simply elect to migrate. For many, FIDE is their entire career; we have seen how much damage a six-month ban has done to Karjakin. If FIDE really is impartial, a "non-governmental institution," it cannot afford to suspend its players on the basis of a political statement.

There is, finally, the matter of precedents. In 2015, for instance, British Grandmaster Nigel Short (incidentally the vice president of FIDE itself) stated that men were "hardwired" to be better chess players than women. He was never suspended from the organization, let alone stripped of his position. There seems to be a discrepancy. What exactly is the threshold that must be crossed for the EDC to take action? If a baseless, mi-

sogynistic comment made by FIDE's very own vice president does not "damage its reputation," how does a patriotic Tweet by a player outside the institute's employ manage to set off alarm bells in the boardroom of an "ethics and disciplinary" commission? Either FIDE is corrupt or it has just now decided that it ought to take a moral stance in the contemporary sociopolitical climate. Should the latter case be true, it must henceforth pass judgment on every issue of morality for as long as it continues to exist—and given that this would be an impossible undertaking, it should never have wandered out of its lane in the first place.

To be explicit, I am not making an argument about the "right or wrong" of Karjakin's remarks. I am most certainly not claiming that his Tweets stand on high moral ground. I contend only that FIDE had no right to ban him for it. Karjakin earned his spot in the Candidates Tournament and, with it, a second chance to challenge Carlsen. If expressing an opinion on a public platform merits grave disciplinary action in FIDE's rulebook, perhaps its century-long role as the arbiter of chess must come to a close.

Humor

Top Ten Exonain Screw-Ups

By DAVID CHEN '23

1. Mark Zuckerberg

At least it's not George Bush

2. Will Park's Hacker

Hey Will Park's Hacker!

Sorry to say this... but it's not cute. Literally where is my money? I've given you my Venmo 20 times! GIMME MY MONEYYYYYY! On that note, everyone should follow Will's new account!

Sincerely,
David

3. Exeter's Rising COVID Cases

Self-explanatory. Let's just

say I haven't eaten lunch in about 5 days (the lines, man, the lines).

4. Saturday Track Meet Canceled

THE UTMOST TRAGEDY. Though I don't run long distance track anymore (or run in general, for that matter), the distance team still has a special place in my heart. I hope y'all got your time trials at least.

5. Cars on Front Street

That awkward moment when you let the cars go and they... don't, and you're caught in this awkward phase of telling them to go then them not going then you going then they move and AHHHHHHHHHHHH I'M TOO AWKWARD FOR THIS! SAVE ME!

6. Tucker Gibbs' Dab

In 2022? With the whole wind up and everything? And at least 3 (and probably many more) times a week? Come on, Tucker, I know you can do better.

7. David Chen's Genshin Impact Addiction

It's always Genshin this, Genshin that, Kazuha this, Hutao that, Zhongli this, Yae that, Ayato this, Ayaka that... WHEN WILL IT STOP!?!?

8. The "Basketball Court" Outside Ewald

It's 11:37pm and I'm writing this humor article even though I'm a News Editor because I thought I was funny but now I'm realizing I'm not actually that funny and I'm panicking because

this article is due soon and thump. Thump. Thump. Boink. Thump. Thump. Thump. Boink. Thump. This is not my heart, it is the ball on the court. Swoosh. I look outside my window—straight at the "basketball court" in front of Ewald. A figure. A shadowy figure. A dashing shadowy figure who is wearing a Jayson Tatum jersey. A dashing shadowy athletic figure who is wearing a Jayson Tatum jersey who is PLAYING BASKETBALL AT 11:39PM. By the way, if you're reading this—I think you're cool and we should hang out :)

9. Introduction Letters at the Beginning of the Term

It's always the humanities teachers. Special shout-out to my adviser Dr. Samuels, whom (look at

me being fancy) I wrote an introduction letter to for his history class despite him being my adviser for two years. The letter begins like this:

"Hi Dr. Samuels,

As you may or may not know, my name is David Chen. That's Chen, C-h-e-n—slightly different from Chan (an alternate (in my opinion, at least; the Chans would argue that "Chen" is, in fact, the alternate (wow look at me go so many parentheses! It's parentheses-ception!) spelling of Chen)), and quite different from Chang (which actually stems from a different Chinese surname, most commonly spelled in the United States as "Zhang"—that's Z-h-a-n-g)."

Hehe... it's just me being quirky.

10. Top Ten Exonian Screw-Ups

So... here we are. I never thought I'd write a humor article some day (the last time I tried was prep year). A huge and very special thank-you to Clark, Safira, Alia, and Jessica, Minseo as well as the Humor Section (Humor Editors Blake, Nina, and Andrea) for believing in me and making my dreams of being the funniest News Editor come true (I hope Athena, Kaylee, and Elina are not reading this right now, but if you are... I'm sorry but I'm claiming this title). I hope you've enjoyed embarking on this journey with me and seeing my spiral into madness. Peace.

Manchin-Sinema 2024

By ANDREW YUAN '24

In April 2023, Sen. Manchin and Sen. Sinema announced their late joint presidential ticket in a Democratic field as crowded as the number of complaint emails in Jen Psaki's inbox. "Viva La Revolution!" One eighty-year old Independent from West Virginia shrieked.

However, Democrats across the country would soon witness the dramatic downfall of their political hope. How? Well, the Democrats started dropping like flies once Manchin and Sinema held their frail bodies by the Senate Rotunda, threatening to impeach Biden with the new Republican House... and wow, nothing is as scary as ninety-year-olds lying on carpeted floors!

Vice President Kamala Harris stood as the last candidate in the race till June, when Manchin and Sinema decided to push a filibuster by reading, "One fish, two fish, Democrat fish, Republican fish, you don't know which fish I am," in Harris's face, claiming that apparently filibuster is the new cure for

COVID, a new scientific principle endorsed by Mitch McConnell and Tom Cruise—the scariest duo you will ever see!

Yet Harris was a hard fighter—the same hard fighter who offered Californians maurijauna and arrested them for having maurijauna! Despite President Biden's lack of endorsement, she campaigned across the nation: from California to California, from the East Wing to the West Wing. The last straw came upon Harris one day before the DNC, when Manchin and Sinema started painting Harris's residence, the Naval Observatory, black with fuel and called the only ten supporters they had in the nation to stop all gas imports into America.

Meanwhile, President Trump was enjoying the highlight of his post-presidency political career combatting the patriotic Gov. Ron Desantis, better known as "the Florida man" by those not in Florida. RNC 2024 became a crowded stage of Republicans dressed all in the American flag and overtly displaying their pistols and

AK-47's while trying to debate which one of them is the most woke racist Antifa traitor.

Unlike 2020, now the Democrats can at least claim that they had a unified platform: oil and old men!

Surprisingly, the Democrats won in a landslide victory against the Republican Party nominees DeSantis and his awful caricature of Ketanji Brown Jackson, the Tea Party nominees Sarah Palin and Ted Cruz's Cancun plane ticket, the Southern Party nominees Lindsay Graham's cough and Mitch McConnell's turtle-like giggles. California went for Harris and Delaware went for Biden's sunglasses.

Sinema became the second woman to hold the office as the Vice President following Harris's footsteps, before she would become the first female President after she painted his face with floral patterns.

As President Joe Biden stood frowned on the White House lawn witnessing the country set on fire by partisan politics on his last day in office, he turned to Kamala, mispronounced her name and said, "What a malarkey!"

Rating Exeter Architecture

By CHENGYUE ZHANG '24 and MAEVE KENNEDY '24

Maybe put and intro paragraph on what you are thinking about maybe it doesn't have to be rating a top 10...

George H. Love Gymnasium. The George H. Love Gymnasium is a perfect example of brutalist architecture. It also incorporates many straight lines, which gives it an aesthetic similar to that of a medium-scale Minecraft build.

Class of 1945 Library. We're not listing this building as first place because it looks so much like a Minecraft building that we would be surprised if we saw it in someone's Creative world.

Main Street and Ewald Your Dorm (You live in Ewald or Main Street). The Main Street Plague is the second worst thing to come from this cluster of dorms after Zuckerberg

(source: Chengyue heard it from someone and says don't fact check her). How many people in Main Street do you think play Minecraft?

Your Dorm (You live anywhere else) My mom told me to stop playing Minecraft and maybe I would have been able to build McConnell if she loved me...

Phillips Hall looks like a spider that appears in my dream. Don't you see the thousands of eyes following you wherever you go and the legs.

Goel Center. It was many and many a year ago, In a kingdom by the sea, That a maiden there lived whom you may know, By the name of Annabel Lee; And this maiden she lived with no other thought Than to love and be loved by me. I was a child and she was a child, In this kingdom by the sea, But we loved with a love that was more than love—/I and my Annabel Lee—/With a love that the winged seraphs of

Heaven/Coveted her and me.

EXT. ART BUILDING PATIO - DAY. MAEVE: Because we can't come up with any more jokes. It's, like, absurdist. CHENGYUE: The music building is absurdist. MAEVE: No, I mean, like, the article. That's why it's funny. CHENGYUE: Don't write that down. It has to be a building. MAEVE: No, it will be a building. Because I'm writing that you said "the music building is absurdist." CHENGYUE: (Something really long about choir and chamber orchestra??)

The Davis Center. I think the Davis Center looks a little like it was built in Minecraft, but not enough which is why the Class of 1945 (huge Minecraft fans) built their library.

If anyone has availed themselves of methods for scaling a building at Exeter, please email czhang3@exeter.edu.

Clark Wu Jumped Me: Learn the Art of Defense

By JOONYOUNG HEO '25

Upper Clark Wu is an esteemed member of the Exeter community. He is a musician, a scientist, a logical thinker, and a co-Editor-in-Chief of *The Exonian*. Incidentally, he's also exceedingly talented at jumping people. "Jumping," in this sense, is admittedly not a very common word in the modern lexical climate—Google even takes the liberty of labeling it "informal"—but it is the most accurate description at hand. For the sake of simplicity, "jumping" is the act of springing at someone when they least expect it. You could say, for instance, that, "The hooligans were jumped by the cops on Third Avenue." In this context, the cops are the jumpers, the hooligans are the jumpees (the unfortunate souls who are jumped), and Third Avenue is the name of the street in which the jumping takes place.

Whenever I have tried

to educate the masses about the art of jumping, it has been laughed off as something anyone could do. This is, to be blunt, absurd. Sure, any old amateur could spring at an unsuspecting pedestrian and call it a jumping, but that simply is not the case. Jumping is an art form, one that takes who-knows-how-long to perfect. Clark Wu is one such artist. That few people expect it from him is among his greatest strengths. One moment you're walking past Grill and waving at Clark Wu, and in the next you're getting jumped. It catches you off guard, the speed with which he can jump someone, and that means you're unprepared. And if there's one thing I want to get across, it's that you can't ever afford to be unprepared.

In this article, I want to give a few pointers on how to launch a successful campaign of defense. The final product will essentially be a comprehensive survival guide. Peruse it if you must.

1. Run. The very instant you see a flash of movement from Clark Wu, you should be pumping your legs in the opposite direction. Often people are paralyzed because they just don't know what to do. Running is criminally underrated. If it comes down to it, you might have to tussle with him for a few seconds, but your only objective in any instance of close-distance melee against Clark Wu must be to escape. I recommend adopting an ancient medieval technique of slapping your opponent away. Bend low and swivel your hips in an irregular rhythm—as soon as you become predictable, the fight is already lost—then stretch out your arms and flick them at his general torso. You're basically flinging the back of your hands against him, like Bob Ross against a blank canvas, to keep him at bay. Be swift in your motions to maximize your success. As soon as you put even a few inches between you and Clark Wu, spin around and gallop away.

2. Recite poetry. If you sense him drawing near as you pump your legs, poised to jump at your turned figure, crack your mouth open and recite a poem. Your voice must be deep and resonant. In that moment, Clark Wu will be thinking only about jumping you. The poetry you recite needs to penetrate the "mind fortress" that will be keeping all other thoughts out of his head. It needs to strike a chord within him. This will make him halt and stare, confused at the lovely poetry spilling out from your lips. His plan of jumping you will come in direct conflict with a desire to sprawl onto the floor and listen to his favorite poem—powerful internal conflict such as my English instructor has never seen before. Of course, you want to avoid reciting poems that he loathes. That would only channel his hatred into a tangible perpetrator (attacking a straw man, incidentally), and he will jump you with a ferocity which has struck fear into

the hearts of demons. What poems he does loathe, unfortunately, I don't know. I wasn't about to ask him and get jumped, not even for a good article.

3. Run for a place in which Clark Wu would not dare to jump you. This could be anywhere from Powell Hall when concert choir is in session to The Exonian's very own newsroom. In the latter case, the newsroom has quite a few computers and past publications of historical value attached to the wall. Given that jumping always involves a struggle between jumper and jumpee, it is simply impossible that these goods should not be damaged in any sort of jumping. The Exonian's omnipresent faculty advisors, then, would not exactly be thrilled if any jumping were to take place there. These kinds of places are a safe haven. Wait it out until Clark Wu gets bored and finds someone else to jump. Patience is key.

4. Call the fuzz. Also known as Exeter po-po, or (least commonly) campus security. This is when the coast is clear—that is, when Clark Wu has disappeared from sight. Ideally, you would want to report the incident, but they'll never get him. Even the fuzz don't find jumping an altogether pleasant experience.

These pointers should only be used in the worst-case scenario. It is far more preferable to never be jumped at in the first place. If you want to minimize your chances of getting jumped by Clark Wu, you want to avoid the places he frequents. The Gli Scalatori vocal chamber group is one. The Exonian is another. Foolhardy staff writers like myself drastically increase our chances of getting jumped. I implore you, be smart and make better choices.

And if you live in Webster, you're screwed.

Experience Exeter

By NHAN PHAN '24

Allow me to take you through my day as an Experience Exeter host. For starters, the Admissions Office is doing us a favor by actively preparing us to be airport chauffeurs when we grow up. Every host received an airport sign, and a magnet; we were told to raise them high and stand proud. I was too busy trying to figure out how the magnet worked through my jacket fabric, but my kid found me anyway.

Throughout the day, I was constantly debating the most pressing issue of being an Experience Exeter host: should I tell them the truth? Exeter is all about experiencing academic rigor—by sobbing the night before your Physics test because you don't understand the right-hand rule, experiencing the breeze passing through your hair as you charge a Red Bike uphill only to discover you're sliding backward, experiencing being

squished between the sea of people in Grill during every Department Meeting; but, we never tell our kids that. We tell them about how the Library—a cube with lots of holes—is the biggest secondary school library in the United States. We tell them that the food at Elm Dining hall is moderately okay, even though their tofu steak is most definitely laced with a stomach bug. We tell them about how Exeter is a fun place to be. None of which are lies, but mere half-truths. Hosting requires you to balance between the half-truths and the real truth.

After lunch, my kid and I had about half an hour worth of free time to roam around before we entered our first and only class of the day. But before then, I was determined to reveal to my kid everything that Exeter has to offer. Our first destination: EPAC. More specifically: Grill. Even more specifically: the yogurt fridge. I was hungry. But making it into Grill proved difficult. I was in front of the Tan Lane

exit when I saw several of my friends cozily sitting in one of those luxurious brown-leathered Agora chairs. I knew I was entering a battle zone. “Happy birthday!” my friend exclaimed. The rest of them echoed after him even though my birthday was not for six more months. Some even sang the “happy birthday” song. In front of my kid. I spent the next half an hour trying to reassure him that it was not my birthday. He didn't believe me.

The unfortunate class my kid had to endure was Math. Long-block Math. I used the word “endure” for a reason. Before class started, he told me, “I heard about Harkness math, I heard it's really hard right? Like how does Harkness math work?”

“Well, you sit around a table and you talk about Math. You do 7 problems every night and then you talk about it the next day.” If only it sounded better. His face showed a clear sign of frank disappointment. To be perfectly honest, if I had

asked him if Harkness math sounded more appealing than the Math he was learning back at his current school, he would have probably said no.

He was not the only Experience Exeter kid in the class; there was one more. Our class had 14 people. Fitting two more chairs around the table proved to be difficult. The first thing that struck everyone's mind: let's play musical chairs, the last two remaining have to stand for 70 minutes. If only it was that easy. In order to waste as much time as possible, the now-16-person class went around in a circle, introducing our names, pronouns, dorms, hometowns, how many siblings, favorite foods, second least favorite Math topics, cell phone network providers, and lastly the good ol' icebreaker question: “If you could be a kitchen utensil, what would you be?” The introductions ate up 10 minutes of the class. We had only one hour left to go.

The class was working on a couple of problems about

integrals and derivatives. “Hey, those two are opposites of each other!” the other Experience Exeter kid said. Given that the guests were incoming preps and lowers; I couldn't have possibly expected my kid to know about the *Fundamental Theorem of Calculus*. I couldn't be any more wrong.

Perhaps, the hardest aspect of being an Experience Exeter host is realizing that your kid is younger than you AND smarter than you. That's why I've always hated young people; they make me feel old. Nonetheless, I was supposed to present a problem to my class that day, only I had no idea how to solve it. On my iPad screen, underneath problem #468 was an eerily silent blank space with only a couple of scattered numbers that didn't reveal anything about the Riemann sum underneath the graph of the first section of a cycloid. My kid peered over at my screen, took my Apple Pencil and wrote on the page, “it's just $F(b) - F(a)$.”

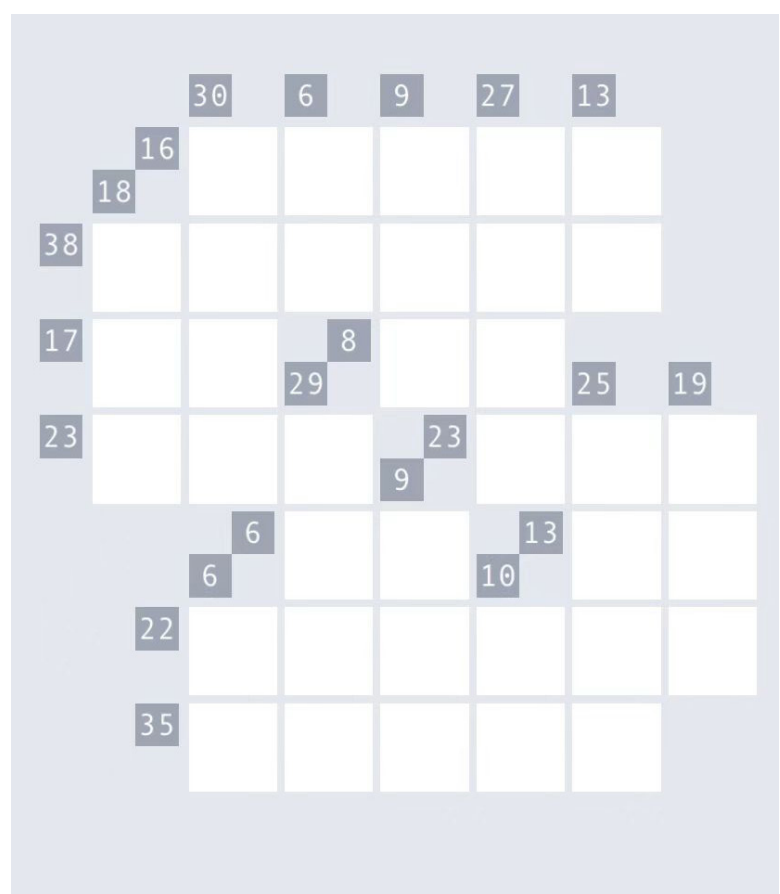
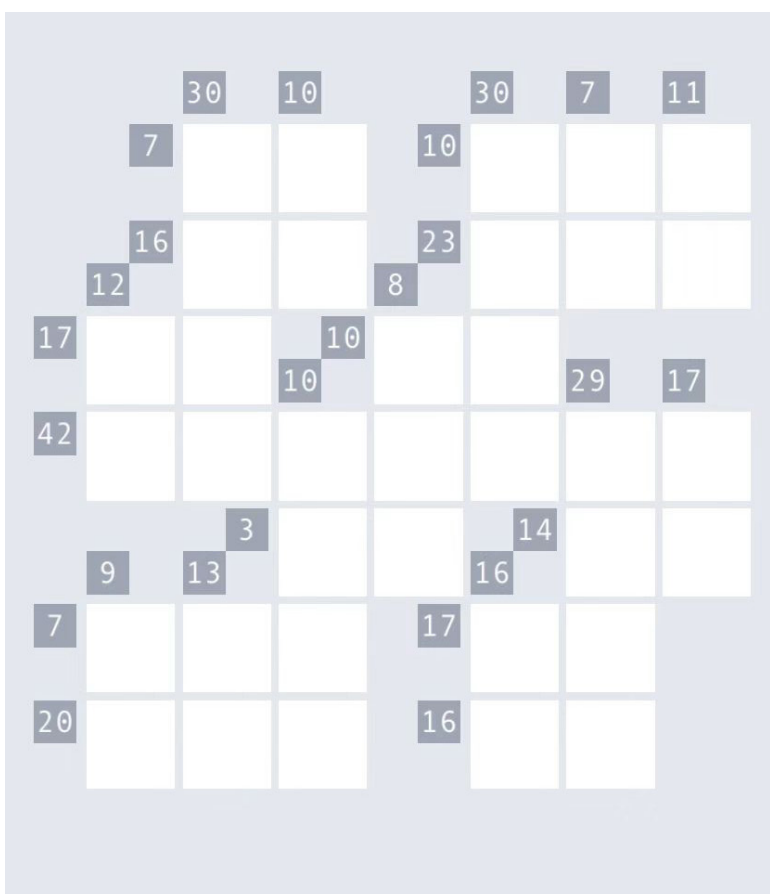
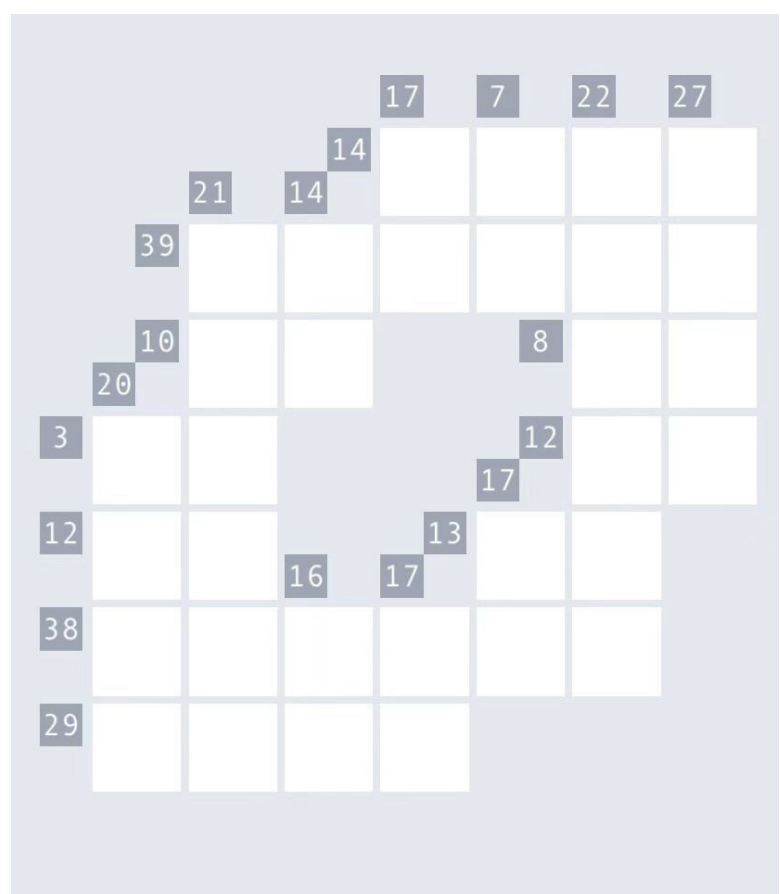
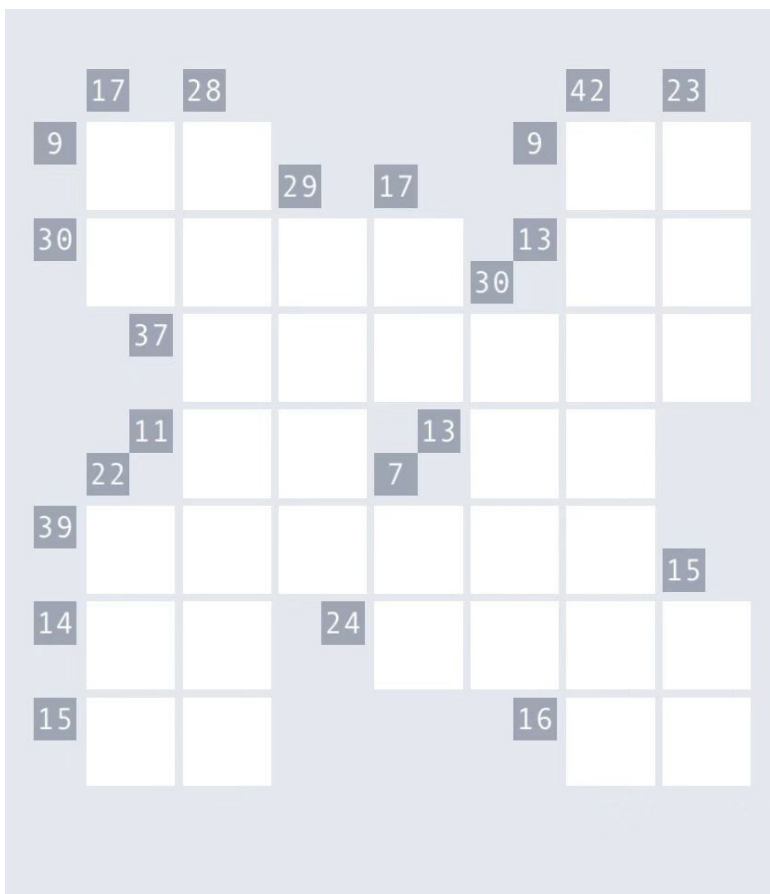
I gave him the iPad. He solved the problem within a couple of minutes. Within the completion of the problem, I came to realize how much of an idiot I was. And more shamefully, it was my Experience Exeter kid who pointed it out. Nothing feels worse than having an 8th grader solve your AB level Calculus math problem for you, and letting him go up to the board with you for a joint-presentation. It felt shameful and humiliating. At the same time though, it reassured me that I was admitted to Exeter due to an administrative mistake, 100%. I shouldn't be here.

Anyways, back to the “truth” of being an Experience Exeter host. If you want to feel ashamed of your mathematical ability, if you want to uninspire the next generation of Exonian youth, and if you want every day to feel like your birthday, being an Experience Exeter host is the role for you!

Kakuro Corner

XOXO Edition

Each puzzle consists of a blank grid with sum-clues in various places. The object is to fill all empty squares using numbers 1 to 9 so the sum of each horizontal block equals the clue on its left, and the sum of each vertical block equals the clue on its top. In addition, no number may be used in the same block more than once. Puzzles below from “Kakuro Endless.”



Sports

Captains of the Week: Boys' Volleyball



Seniors and boys' volleyball captains Charlie Thibault and Captain Chris Antosiewicz smile on the court.

Owen Dudley/The Exonian

By ROHIT KANTAMNENI, SOPHIE MA, and LYVIA ZHOU

The boys varsity volleyball team recently emerged victorious in both of their matches against the Northfield Mount Hermon School and Choate Rosemary Hall. This exhilarating start to the season has demonstrated the strong leadership and drive exhibited by the two captains: seniors Chris Antosiewicz and Charlie Thibault.

Thibault's volleyball journey didn't start until he came to Exeter. "I didn't play much before high school," Thibault recalled. "I played my sixth grade year and in middle school gym class. When I got to Exeter, I played soccer in the fall and I didn't have a winter sport, so I figured I'd try out for a spring sport and volleyball was what I chose."

"I snuck onto the team as a freshman and I've been playing ever since," Thibault said.

Antosiewicz shared a similar story. "I technically started playing in the spring of eighth grade," Antosiewicz said. "I think that volleyball's definitely become a big sport for me. I was typically a soccer player—that's my main sport—but I got a lot more into [volleyball] when I got

here. Having [coach Bruce Shang] as a coach was really nice. He definitely helped me get a lot better along the way."

Team members attested to the captains' warm personalities. "I really got to know them more this year," upper Rupert Ramsay said. "I found out that they're both very kind, supportive people. Even when you're struggling, they're always there to pick you up. Whenever I serve out or into the net, they're always there to give me a high five. And that's always something that I appreciated," Ramsay finished.

Lower Jacob Fernandez echoed Ramsay's sentiment. "They maintain a consistent positive mindset throughout their matches. If they ever criticize a player, it's only in a constructive fashion."

"There is a level of respect that they give everyone," upper Paolo Belfiore said. "[They] help everyone out with their experience while also being open to being taught themselves and learning from those who look up to them."

Thibault vouched for the team's tight bond. "I think the team naturally is very close with each other," Thibault said. "I don't know why. Maybe it's because the majority of the team walks to D-hall after

practice together and gets dinner together. I think we just naturally foster a very inviting team culture and a big part of that is that we're just having fun."

"I mean, obviously you want stuff to be positive. You don't really want there to be any negative energy. So during practice I really want to try and make sure there's energy and we're happy and we're getting into it, but I'm definitely a very competitive person," Antosiewicz added. "So I'm always trying to win. I do like to have a little fun and try to get people to laugh a little bit. There's definitely times where I'm trying to get people to lock in and take things seriously. And so I think we have a good mix of that."

When asked about team memories and bonding with their captains, Ramsay said, "If somebody messes up, we've started doing this thing where we lift each other into the air physically, that's always fun. Always interesting, always a sight to see."

"The team is looking great," Shang said. "There is good leadership from the captains on the court. They help the new kids with their technique and explain positioning and purpose."

"They've changed since they first started," Shang continued. "Now

they have to lead and they have to learn new positions on the team. Chris was a middle and Charlie started as a libero, now Chris plays outside hitter—our best weapon—and Charlie plays setter, acting as our offensive coordinator."

Coach Suzan Rowe also attested to the captains' skills. "Charlie's athleticism is what makes him so successful. He's able to get to balls very quickly. And I think Chris has just taken a real likeness to the game and it's able to make him a huge contributor."

"Both Chris and Charlie are just amazing on the court," Ramsay said in agreement. "Their volleyball skills are—no offense to the rest of the team—better than the rest of the team. Charlie's an amazing setter. Chris does everything on the court: passing, serving, really everything. He's very good at it."

"They inspire me every day," Fernandez added. "The motivational speeches they give both at the beginning and end of both practices and matches truly bring the team alive."

Paolo commented further on how the captains influence and inspire him. "They influence and inspire me through just wanting to be up to their level of play. Being the other outside hitter, I look up to

Chris and watch what he does on the court on both sides of the ball—how he hits and receives balls and so on. With Charlie, he has this fire within him that is unlike anyone I have ever played with in any sport. It truly lifts me up while on the court with him."

Upper Rodrigo Spino-la shared the same feelings, especially during the team's tough times. "They've always helped me when I get down on the court, even when they're not having a good time either. I think they're really, really good at that."

Both captains shared their appreciation for being chosen for their position. "I was very excited when they announced me as captain," Thibault said. "I thought it was cool to actually have a role in a varsity sport. When I played on the soccer team in the fall, I would only get subbed in when we were up 3-0, 4-0. In volleyball, my role has a big decision on whether or not we win the game and I think that's very exciting."

"I remember the seniors and the juniors in my prep year when I was just starting to play volleyball. They were so helpful in teaching me. I thought it would be interesting to be able to do that for the young kids [this year]," Thibault said.

"I was really happy," Antosiewicz said. "I mean, it always feels nice to be a captain—from being a prep on varsity to being a senior and a mentor for the team."

Thibault shared some insight into the team's goals for this year. "The goal this season is [to win] the sixth championship in a row for Exeter volleyball," Thibault said. "We took the last two years off because of COVID but the program won the five years before that. We got our sight set on that. We want to finish with the perfect record, which would entail beating Andover three times. And, of course, we want to have some fun along the way."

"I'd say the only thing is to keep coming out to the games," Antosiewicz shared, encouraging Exonians to attend their volleyball games. "It's great to see people in the stands when we have home games and it's always fun to have people cheer for you. I think that as the term goes on, we're only gonna get better. We're only gonna get close as a team and I'm excited to see where that leads us."

"Our goal for the season is the same as every year," Shang added, echoing Thibault and Antosiewicz's philosophy. "To have fun and get better."

Girls' Varsity Lacrosse Bests Choate

By LAUREN KIM and KATE ROSE

On the sunny afternoon of April 2, the girls' varsity lacrosse team played against Choate Rosemary Hall, coming off with a 19-4 win. Not only was it their season opener, but it was the beginning of their first competitive season in the last few years. The game was dedicated to the ending of mental health stigma with athletes. With virtually no COVID-19 restrictions, the girls look forward to an exciting season, foreshadowed by the amazing win of their season opener.

Players and coaches alike were proud of their performance, and commended each other on a game well played. Lower player Annika Finelli reflected on the game, adding that the team was a little anxious going into their first game. "I don't think we could have had a better game to start off the season. We were all a little nervous going into it, but of course that makes sense considering that it was our first 'official' game playing together," said Finelli. "It definitely helped us become more confident on the field and gel as a team."

Upper teammate Emilie Dubiel agreed. "I'm su-

per excited about our win against Choate. I think it set a good tone for the beginning of the season, and it was great to have our first official game," recounted Dubiel. "The highlight of this game for me was seeing our team start to come together on the field. It was also super high energy, which was exciting."

Coaches and players also gave shoutouts to teammates Amelia Byerly and Eden Welch for their outstanding performance on the field. Head coach Christina Breen praised the two players, as well as the team's seniors. "Our team played very well against Choate. Eden Welch had a

whopping eight goals and Amelia Byerly had nine draw controls. Every member of the team was able to contribute to our win which made it extra fun," Breen said. "Our five seniors are serving as outstanding leaders on and off the field and they helped us secure the win!"

Lower Willa Bazos added on, cheering on her teammates. "The team worked so well together, and each and every person put effort into the win. Several of us were able to get first goals of the season because it was a big team effort," Bazos said. "A big special shoutout to Eden Welch with a clean behind

the back goal, and Amelia Byerly for her amazing Twizzler goal."

Besides the upperclassmen on the team, assistant coach Alexa Caldwell discussed supporting the younger players on the team. "We have a lot of young players new to the team, so we will look to build on each game. Every moment will be a valuable experience," said Caldwell. "We also have a core group of experienced players who have done a great job so far modeling consistent competitive play."

Overall, the team is excited by this win, and have high hopes for an amazing upcoming season. Finelli

puts trust in their team's strong players, and looks forward to the season. "Yes, this season will be challenging, however, we have a lot of really strong players and I am really excited for the rest of the season!"

Bazos concludes, "I believe that game got us hyped up for the season and even more ready to take on some tougher teams we will play in the future. I love this team and I'm excited to see how the season goes with all the hard work we are putting in!"