

# The Exonian

The oldest continuously running preparatory school newspaper in America

Phillips Exeter Academy  
Exeter, New Hampshire



## MLK

Read about the Academy's Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebrations, 1-2.

## SOTW

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## Academy Celebrates MLK Day 2024 Through "Black Joy and Black Pain in Resistance"



Principal Rawson and students listen attentively to Dr. Tricia Rose's Keynote Speech

Photo Courtesy of @phillipsexeter

By ERIN HAN and MARVINSHIM

On Jan. 15 the Academy celebrated MLK Day, reflecting on the life of Martin Luther King Jr. and the values he upheld. The holiday was recognized at PEA in the form of featured speakers and various workshops attended by both students and faculty. The previous night, the annual social justice showcase, UnSilenced, took place in Goel and enlivened the audience with song, poetry, dance, rap, and film.

Since its inception, the UnSilenced showcase has been entirely student-run and this year was no exception. In collaboration with committee facilitators Willie Perdomo and Elizabeth

Calandra, UnSilenced student directors began preparations in November, which revved up during the weeks between fall and winter break.

Upper and student director Bella Bueno shared that the student organizers met frequently beginning over a month prior to the performance: "We met every Thursday [beginning in November] and the directors talked a lot over the breaks to figure out what performers [would be in the show]. So once we got back, one of my main roles was sending out a lot of emails." Bueno continued, "We had three rehearsals [after winter break], and already had a sense of what each

MLK, 2

## Andrew Yang '92 Addresses Assembly



Andrew Yang stands before assembly

Photo Courtesy of Amy Lin

By ROXANE PARK

*"You all are better situated to fail, and then fail, and then fail again, and then [still] succeed, than just about anyone else in this country. And the question is, what are you willing to fail for?"*

As alumnus Andrew Yang stood before the Academy, a black-and-white photograph of his 17-year-old self glowed from the screen behind him. That boy, Yang told the crowd, would never have imagined that he would one day be an entrepreneur, creator of a nonprofit, a presidential candidate, and founder of his own political party.

A member of the class of 1992, Yang was a resident of Peabody Hall, which he fondly referred to as "not the cool dorm [back then]." Though he described struggling in Exeter's social scene as a new upper and from the pressure to be accepted into a "good" university, Yang also maintained an appreciation for the distinct opportunity that the Academy offers. Addressing current students, he reminisced: "You actually think you're capable of doing anything anyone else does, because you've been with the most talented people of your generation, so you think if that person's doing it, I should be able to do it too."

This motif of self-confidence and determination was a constant throughout the thirty-minute journey that

Yang narrated of his path to success. "I succeeded in a way that made no sense at all," he said.

After graduating from Brown University and Columbia Law School, Yang abandoned a secure foothold in law — the pride of his family — for an unpredictable career as an entrepreneur. He described being a lawyer as "like a pie eating contest where the reward is more pie," and recalled telling his parents that they "did not immigrate to this country for me to do this job."

However, the next three business ventures that Yang embarked on were not the vision of success that he had imagined. At ages 25, 27, and then 29, the startups that Yang had pioneered were unsuccessful and he shouldered both disappointment in himself, embarrassed to face his friends from Exeter, and the shame of his parents, who were unwilling to tell anyone that he had abandoned his "successful" career at Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP.

Yang's fourth and finally profitable venture, a test preparation company called Manhattan GMAT, was acquired in December 2009, and soon after, he dreamed up Venture for America, a nonprofit organization sponsoring students and young professionals to work for startups in emerging cities.

YANG, 6

## Editorial: Claudine Gay's Resignation Affects Us All

By the 146th Board

"When my brief presidency is remembered, I hope it will be seen as a moment of reawakening to the importance of striving to find our common humanity — and of not allowing rancor and vituperation to undermine the vital process of education. I trust we will all find ways, in this time of intense challenge and controversy, to recommit ourselves to the excellence, the openness, and the independence that are crucial to what our university stands for — and to our capacity to serve the world."

Dr. Claudine Gay's resignation from her tenure as president of Harvard University followed months of public scrutiny around Harvard's tolerance of political protests on campus, Gay's statements during the Congressional hearings about free speech, and allegations of plagiarism in her academic work. What is discussed far less is the dedication that Gay held to her alma mater and to upholding her values of equal opportunity and intellectual curiosity.

An alumna of the class of 1988 and former trustee of Exeter (2017-2023), Gay's deep connection to the Academy and its values is undeniable. "It was a privilege to serve with Dr. Gay as trustees at Exeter," said President of the Board of Trustees, Morgan Sze. "During her six years she made important contributions in many areas, including serving on our new mission statement task force and co-chairing our principal search. Her prioritization of her time for Exeter amidst her busy schedule showed how much Exeter means to her. We are fortunate to have trustees from diverse backgrounds serving the Academy who, like Dr. Gay, all generously share a dedication to non sibi service."

Principal Bill Rawson, well acquainted with Gay from her time as a trustee, commented, "Not surprisingly, I was saddened to see her tenure end in the way it did. Dr. Gay made

important contributions as a trustee and was a strong and thoughtful presence at the trustee table."

Gay stepped down as a trustee of the Academy in June in anticipation of her inauguration to Harvard's presidency on Sep. 29, 2023. At the time, she was celebrated for making history as the second woman and first person of color to serve as the university's president. "Our stories — and the stories of the many trailblazers between us — are linked by this institution's long history of exclusion and the long journey of resistance and resilience to overcome it," Gay said in her inauguration speech. "And because of the collective courage of all those who dared to create a different future, I stand before you on this stage able to say, 'I am Claudine Gay, the president of Harvard University.'"

A week after she assumed the role, Hamas launched the devastating Oct. 7 attack on Israeli communities along the nation's southern border with Gaza. International attention turned to the decades-long conflict between Israel and Palestine, inciting dual outrage at the massacre of Israeli civilians and the long-term plight of the Palestinian civilians. Enraged and frequently misinformed university students across America took to protesting, both in person and over social media, as advocates of both "sides" of the conflict.

But the protests turned violent.

Students were heard intolently calling for the genocide of the Israeli people, while others blatantly denied that Palestinians were victims of human rights violations. Three major university presidents — Dr. Sally Kornbluth of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Dr. Liz Magill of the University of Pennsylvania, and Dr. Claudine Gay of Harvard University — were called to testify before Congress on Dec. 5 about emerging antisemitism on their campuses. The crux arrived when they were each asked by Representative Elise Stefanik, in turn, "At [your institution], does calling for the genocide of Jews violate the rules of bullying and harassment?" to which they each replied that "it can, depending on the context."

These controversial statements, likely made upon shared legal advice, garnered significant criticism, and many called for the three presidents' resignation. At this stage, Magill resigned from her post, but Kornbluth and Gay received votes of confidence from their respective boards.

Gay's presidency, which was already placed under unprecedented levels of scrutiny given her race and gender, fell even more directly into the spotlight following the hearings. Questions about her publication record and allegations of academic

GAY, 2

# News

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## MLK Day Cont.

performer would be doing since we had met with them right before the break. [Through the rehearsals] we got a sense of what people's talents and vibes...were, [and started to] organize it all and build it together."

Performances ranged from songs and original rap to jazz and spoken word poetry. Thus, each student on the main stage each used their own medium to voice social change.

Bucno recalled her experience as an audience member at last year's showcase, saying, "Last year I really looked up to all the people who did UnSilenced and who managed it. I was just amazed by every word... Through the singing, through the art, through everything, through the dance, you could just feel the emotions."

She continued, highlighting the important opportunity that UnSilenced poses, "I think it's a really, really powerful show. It's [an opportunity] for performers to come up on stage and show through art what pain and joy...in their blackness or their own race, means to them."

The morning after the night of the showcase marked the beginning of MLK Day. Preparations for the multitude of events that took place on this federal holiday were led hand-in-hand by the student-seated MLK committee and collaborative faculty members.

Members of the Exeter community, students, staff and faculty alike, took part in a variety of speaking events and workshops in celebration

of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In Love Gym, step dance teams Precision and Outkast started the day with a performance before the Concert Choir performed the ode "Hymn to Freedom" to the assembled crowd. Afterwards, keynote speaker Dr. Tricia Rose, a professor at Brown University, gave a speech to the assembly about what it meant to honor the reverend's legacy.

Rose highlighted the deep levels of systematic racism she found as a teenager in Harlem and praised King for his work in the American civil rights movement, describing him as bold and unabashed to fight against the inequality and hypocrisy of the country. "Everyone can love and create a love that would help Black people, but you have to know what folks have been through," Rose said, "If you don't know that, then love actually becomes a capacity and a way to ask us to be quiet and to accept the suffering and the erasure of the love that will actually heal us." After she concluded her speech, the audience gave a standing ovation.

Following her speech, students were able to participate in workshops facilitated by alumni, visiting speakers, and Exeter faculty.

Assistant Director of Equity and Inclusion Kevin Pajaro-Mariñez, who served as a co-chair of the planning of MLK Day, spoke on the goals of the workshops. "I think the workshops aligned with the vision in that we provided structured opportunities for engagement and learning to both students and adults on campus. More



Keynote Speaker Dr. Tricia Rose commences the celebration of MLK Day

Courtesy of @phillipsexeter

importantly, the MLK workshops subcommittee worked tirelessly to ensure that the workshops provided different modes of engagement." He continued, "I hope that both students and faculty took away the fact that King's legacy is expansive. We ought to be curious about the multitude of ways King thought through and practiced justice and building community."

Meanwhile, in Love Gym, three Black entrepreneurs

based in New Hampshire answered questions about their businesses and the challenges they faced during their journey. Oneta Modern, owner of The Office Lounge, spoke of her inspiration to be an entrepreneur upon witnessing her mother's courage. Daryl Browne, co-owner of Soleil's Salt Cave, and Lionel Loveless, owner of Officially Knotted Bowties, each also described their own respective obstacles due to prejudice.

By the end of the day of celebration, people found themselves grateful for Dr. King's teachings and the footprint he left behind. Pajaro-Mariñez reflected, "MLK Day for me means an opportunity to think meaningfully about the legacy of King. Even more than just thinking, I feel encouraged to concretely practice the ways King thought about being in community: a kind of interdependence with a lens that centers justice for

all [marginalized] people."

*Note: One workshop, entitled Black-Palestinian Solidarity, was cancelled for unspecified reasons the day before the event; this will be examined in the next issue of The Exonian on Feb. 8, 2024.*

## Editorial: Claudine Gay Cont.

plagiarism surfaced, and after issuing a series of corrections for inadequate citations and additional allegations surfaced, Gay made the decision to step down from her role. In her farewell message to the Harvard community, later published by The New York Times, Gay clarified, "after consultation with members of the Corporation, it has become clear that it is in the best interests of Harvard for me to resign so that our community can navigate this moment of extraordinary

challenge with a focus on the institution rather than any individual."

With this, Gay encapsulated the core of the issue with the accusations, social media, and the nation's discourse: they are focusing on the wrong things. How did a devastating terrorist attack halfway across the world cause the resignation of two Ivy League women presidents and cast doubt on the tenets of free speech and diversity, equity, and inclusion? Why is it that,

at any point, there was more news coverage of this domestic dispute than the very real, terrifying war and casualties occurring in the Middle East? Is it a coincidence that all three of the presidents called before Congress were women? And further—will the removal of Magill and now Gay truly reshape or improve their universities?

Is the fervor and controversy surrounding Gay's presidency merely a proxy battle for a greater culture war?

These questions yield no easy, nor certain, answers.

What is certain, Rawson promised, is that Exeter will strive to remain true to its core values of freedom of speech, knowledge and goodness, academic excellence, youth from every quarter, and non sibi in the face of external pressures.

"I speak about the importance of free speech to our school mission at every Opening Assembly," Rawson said. "Our core value of academic excellence recognizes the importance

of rigorous inquiry and thoughtful discourse to our pursuit of complex truths. Our commitment to free speech also is embedded in our Vision Statement for DEI, which calls upon all of us to be open to ideas and perspectives that might differ from our own, and to engage across differences, including differences in political beliefs."

Rawson continued, "Toward that end, I have said we must learn to be comfortable being uncomfortable, and we should expect a diversity of viewpoints on almost every subject worth exploring. To realize fully the promise of

our richly diverse community and make the most of the opportunities to learn with and from each other, we seek always to create a learning environment where all members of the community have a strong sense of belonging and all voices are heard."

We, at Exeter, must now come together as a community to define concepts like "freedom of speech" and determine what lines should not be crossed. This will take time — we might not get it right all at once or all of the time, but we must be willing to engage in the difficult dialogue and journey to get there.



Gay, Magill, and Kornbluth give testimony to Congress, Dec. 5, 2023

Courtesy of Puck News

# Town Hosts Presidential Candidate Dean Phillips

By LAUREN LEE

On Jan. 12, the Democratic Club hosted 2024 presidential candidate Rep. Dean Phillips at Water Street Bookstore. Phillips introduced his background and spoke on the core aims of his campaign. After flipping a seat that had been occupied by Republicans for sixty years, he has served as a representative of Minnesota's 3rd congressional district in the House of Representatives since 2019. Prior to being elected, Phillips worked as a businessman and entrepreneur. He currently

serves as a vice-ranking member of the House Committee on Small Business, and a ranking member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs' Middle East, South Northern Africa, and Central Asia subcommittee.

During his speech, he conveyed deep concerns about the upcoming Democratic primary. "The Democratic National Committee has disenfranchised every single one of you who might vote on the Democratic ticket," he said. "It's appalling . . . that the state of New Hampshire just

two days ago had to send a cease and desist letter to the Democratic National Committee for unlawful suppression of voters."

He urged listeners to consider which candidates on the Democratic ticket would be best suited to the task of defeating former President Donald Trump and made clear his view that President Joe Biden would not be capable. "I think Joe Biden is a wonderful man...but he will not beat Donald Trump in this next election," Phillips said.

Phillips allocated time to answer questions on topics ranging from abortion

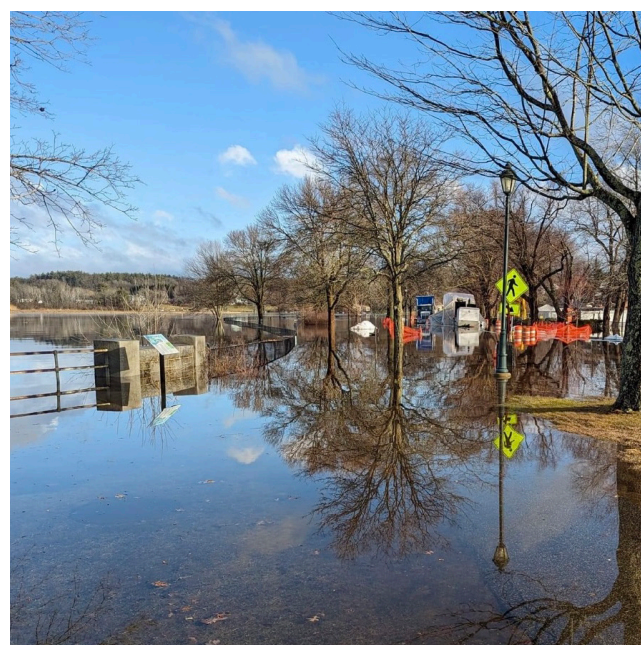
rights to entitlement programs. In response to a question regarding how his administration would combat the climate crisis, he said, "We didn't leave the Stone Age because we ran out of rocks. We left the Stone Age because we came up with better ways to do things and we know what those things are."

Finally, Phillips reminded the audience that "we do not always have to vote out of fear," and expressed his hope of "actually bring[ing] a little bit of joy back to this country and in our lives."



Dean Phillips poses for a photo with Academy students

# High Rain Levels Cause Flooding on Swasey



Flooding on Swasey Parkway Courtesy of Bill Jordan

By ROXANE PARK

Following the snowstorm over the weekend of Jan. 6-7 and subsequent rainstorm on Jan. 10, many seacoast towns in New Hampshire have been affected by unprecedented levels of flooding. The fallout from these storms reached the town of Exeter and the Academy's community members on Jan. 11, when the Squamscott River adjacent to campus overflowed into the Water Street parking lot next to the Harris Family Children's Center. Around noon on Jan. 11, Director

of Campus Safety Services Paul Gravel sent out a warning to community members to move their vehicles lest the water damage them. "The Water Street Parking Lot is susceptible to flooding," Gravel said, "but this was a fast moving tide that flooded the parking lot very quickly."

Due to the sheer speed of the tide flooding the parking lot, the warning was belated for some car owners. "Several cars were damaged as a result of the flooding," Gravel remarked. "Even though we sent out an email notifying people of the

flooding, some cars were damaged even before the messaging went out."

According to the New Hampshire Public Radio, "the latest national climate assessment indicates that, in general, intense rain and snow events are increasing throughout the country, and in the Northeast in particular, as humans continue to burn atmosphere-warming fossil fuels . . . and as the climate warms, more snow is expected to fall instead as rain."

Towns closer to the seacoast like Hampton, NH, witnessed shocking water levels and even

further degrees of damage to vehicles, houses, and stores than Exeter. Thankfully, the flooding was limited to the areas closest to the Squamscott River and did not encroach upon campus buildings.

However, this is likely just the beginning of the weather-induced destruction that the Academy and town will see this season. "I am told that the lot has flooded similarly in the past, but not as fast as it did last week," Gravel shared. "We will be monitoring the river and tides to be better prepared going forward."

# Trustees Elect New Leadership

By LILY RAMPE, MARVIN SHIM and CHENGYUE ZHANG

The Trustees have elected Krysten Van Ostern '96 and Suzi Kwon Cohen '88 as president and vice president, respectively, of the Board of Trustees, which announced the decision in October 2023. They assumed responsibility from current President Morgan Sze '83 and Vice President Deidre O'Byrne '84. Van Ostern and Cohen's four-year tenure will commence on July 1, 2024.

Sze quoted Principal Rawson as he explained the importance of this turnover. "Principal Rawson likes to say, 'Exeter never remains excellent by staying the same.' I am confident that, with the leadership of President Van Ostern and Vice President Cohen working together with Principal Rawson and his team, our school will continue to help lead the future of secondary education while remaining grounded in the timeless values of our Deed of Gift," Sze said.

O'Byrne added, "We are so fortunate that Ms. Van Ostern and Ms. Cohen have been willing to take on this leadership role." All members of the Board of Trustees dedicate a significant amount of time to serve the Academy. Taking on leadership duties requires them to undertake additional responsibilities. Assuming these roles, therefore, is a clear demonstration of their commitment to the school.

During much of Sze's and O'Byrne's term since July 2020, the Academy faced the Covid pandemic. Sze stated, "The pandemic was an enormous challenge, but [Exeter's] faculty and staff responded with outstanding teamwork and resourcefulness to weather

the crisis."

However, as their term comes to a close, O'Byrne said, "It [was] wonderful to see things get back to normal and for students to have an Exeter experience without having to cope with challenges around the pandemic."

While managing the Covid crisis, the board was able to start or expand long-term initiatives, most notably a climate action plan, which outlined three goals to ensure that every student receives proper education on climate change, achieve zero carbon emissions by 2050, and integrate sustainability into all of Exeter's programs. Sze stated that the Academy was "now engaging in long-term financial planning."

As a U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School, Exeter has increased its use of sustainable construction, including solar panels on the roof of William Boyce Thompson Field House and nearly fifty geothermal wells beneath the Academy lawn. "I am very proud of the adoption of the Academy's first sustainability and climate action plan," O'Byrne said.

Sze also mentioned the landmark change made to Exeter's admissions process during his term as president. "We have been able to progress many long-term initiatives important to the future of our school, including finally enabling Exeter to declare our admissions need-blind," Sze said.

Starting with the class of '26, Exeter's admissions decisions disregarded whether a student could pay full tuition, in order to adhere to the Academy's commitment in their Deed of Gift: "All students, regardless of economic status, [must] not only be able to attend but also know they belong at Exeter.

Financial aid makes it possible for students from every quarter to join the Academy."

As for Van Ostern, she has served as the Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee since 2019, two years after she joined the Trustees. Her tenure as board president begins in the summer after the 2023-2024 school year.

Van Ostern first attended Phillips Exeter as a day student in 1992, playing the flute, participating on the ski-team, and leading as student head of ESSO during her four years at the Academy. She described her favorite experience at Exeter as the Washington Intern Program. "It changed the way I thought about politics, government, and cities in general," Van Ostern said.

Van Ostern also highlighted the different experiences students today have compared to her own Exeter experience. "During my time, cell phones, the internet, email, and social media were either rare or nonexistent on campus. We relied on letters, payphones, print media, and in person interaction to communicate and learn."

Nonetheless, Van Ostern described her time at Exeter as "transformational" and inspiring. Eventually, the experiences she had at Exeter served as an impetus to return as an alumni into the Board of Trustees in 2017.

"While Exeter has evolved significantly since my graduation in 1996, it remains an institution of academic excellence, rooted in the values outlined in the Deed of Gift," Van Ostern said.

Van Ostern, as a result of a vote in October 2023, was named the president of the Board of Trustees. She expressed her commitment to leading the board and preserving the Academy's

values while navigating fiscal changes. "I look forward to working with Principal Bill Rawson, Vice President Suzi Kwon Cohen and our Board of Trustees to ensure Exeter continues to inspire youth from every quarter," Van Ostern said.

Van Ostern looks forward to an important milestone coming up in the near future, Exeter's 250th anniversary. As president, she and the Trustees will use this special landmark to contemplate the values of the Academy and adapt to the challenges this century heralds. "I am committed to leading the Trustees in ensuring sound governance as we navigate these changes, all while staying aligned with our mission and values," Van Ostern said.

Cohen first came to Exeter as a lower in Dunbar Hall and got involved in the community through varsity squash, junior varsity tennis, the Asian Students Society, and the piano. She also served as the Features Editor for The Exonian. When asked to detail her favorite part of her Exeter experience, Cohen said, "The friendships I made during those formative years of my life that are even more meaningful to me today."

Cohen returned to Exeter in 2014 serving as a non-trustee member on the Investment Committee. In 2017, Cohen became a Trustee and has continued her service as the Chair of the Investment Committee since 2020.

Cohen looks forward to serving as the Vice President of the Board of Trustees. "Trustees need to be willing to serve in a leadership role over time so that we can be effective and organized as a group. I look forward to partnering with the next President of the Trustees and Principal Bill



Krysten Van Ostern '96, incoming President of the Board of Trustees

Courtesy of exeter.edu



Suzi Kwon Cohen '88, incoming Vice President of the Board of Trustees

Courtesy of exeter.edu

Rawson."

She was elected through a formal process where candidates for leadership were identified, reviewed, then voted on.

Over the years since Cohen was a student, Exeter has changed. "The formal dress code policy that existed then is the biggest difference — no sweatpants! In addition, back in 1985, students did not have cell phones/email/intern so imagine having to call home," Cohen said.

Cohen now looks toward the future and is

excited for this new position. "My three years at Exeter set the foundation for who I am today, and I am grateful," she said. "Being able to serve as a Trustee and now as Vice President is personally a high priority and honor, allowing me to give back to our alma mater that gave me so much. Being a Trustee has also afforded me the opportunity to reconnect with this wonderful school and community as an adult and to 're-appreciate' my time as an Exeter student."

# Exeter Adapts to New ChatGPT Policies

By ISABEL EVANS, ELLEN JIN, and ADELE PITTS

With the recent rise of AI, schools have been questioning the possible effects that may be caused by its use in an academic setting. In a school as rigorous as Phillips Exeter Academy, faculty and students are concerned about whether the use of AI may negatively affect the way students learn.

One of the most popular AI chatbots is ChatGPT, released by OpenAI on Nov. 22, 2022, and it is an application where people can ask questions, generate images, write essays, and much more. Teachers worldwide are trying to limit AI use in the classroom for fear of students abusing its capabilities. However, people have been questioning this response. Is ChatGPT a threat to education or can it be used to improve learning?

While there are a variety of views on this topic, most members of the community agree that using AI tools hinders student learning and thinking but can be helpful to a certain degree.

“The downsides of AI are many for students writing essays and narratives, as so much important learning happens in the midst of struggle and failure,” Barbara Desmond, the Chair of the English Department, said. “AI tools make it easy, even if you are only using them to get started: you never have to have that unsettling experience of staring at a

blank screen.”

Hannah Hofheinz, the Chair of the Department of Religion, agreed that using AI takes away from students’ learning and prevents the originality of their writing, stating, “We want your ideas, your interests, your passions, your thinking, and we want to build that up. That’s true speaking, that’s true idea creation, that’s true writing. That’s true imagining. So if you use AI, you have short-circuited that.”

Hofheinz also believes that AI is something that needs to be explored and has the potential to bring positive changes to the academic setting. “I think the school must take time to do the necessary learning about the technology. Demystify the technology. We should understand how it works. It is not magic, it is simply something that was created,” she said.

Many people on campus agree with Hofheinz, and some have already started employing changes that have been put into motion due to the rise of AI. Instructor in Science A.J. Cosgrove said, “I rarely ask students to complete a traditional ‘lab report.’ Instead, I’ve moved to lab proficiency assessments. I’ve removed the potential for academic dishonesty, and I’m forced to think critically about what lab skills students should become proficient in.”

When students were asked if they use ChatGPT or AI, they mentioned they would use it for factual information. “I would say more recently I

started using ChatGPT to find synonyms for words for papers. But that’s the extent of where I use it for homework,” upper Sophia Wang said.

Senior Emilie Carranza added, “I don’t really use it for homework except as an extra resource. Sometimes, I’ll search up chemistry theories or I’ll ask it to give me problems for math.”

Several students expressed concerns over the reliability of using AI tools. “I think that if you don’t know how to do your homework, you’re better off going to class and figuring out how to do it than you are using ChatGPT, especially because ChatGPT is usually wrong,” upper Sarah Huang said.

“Even if you did try to use it to write essays for class, it’s not a reliable tool and most teachers can recognize that,” Carranza added.

Wang also discussed the common occurrences of AI’s inaccuracy. When asked about seeing other students using AI, she said, “Sometimes people use AI to try to solve math problems, but the answer often comes out wrong. The answers from ChatGPT should be taken with a grain of salt because it’s outputting answers from a random website online. However, it is still sometimes helpful to see the process lined up for you, even if the numbers are wrong.”

Director of Studies and Instructor in Science Jeanette Lovett agreed, saying “While AI can provide information, it might not always be

accurate or up-to-date. Students should learn to verify information from reliable sources.”

Lovett also mentioned the benefits of using AI: “Students can use generative AI to get assistance with homework or for understanding complex topics. It can provide explanations, examples, and help clarify doubts. And it is very friendly and non-judgmental.”

However, Lovett also believes in AI’s potential to harm students’ learning. “Students might become overly reliant on AI, hindering the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills,” she said. “It’s crucial to encourage independent thought and research.”

The rise of ChatGPT has pushed different departments at Exeter to develop their own AI policies. Lovett said, “In the spring of 2023, an ad hoc faculty group discussed acceptable use

of emerging generative AI technologies like ChatGPT. We came to the conclusion that our existing Academic Honesty policy already has the language to encompass generative AI. It uses more general language about first requesting permission from a teacher for the use of any tools/resources, as well as the need for citations.”

Individual departments also have their own policies regarding AI. “AI is a very new thing,” Chair of the Modern Languages Department Fermin Perez-Andreu said. “We are starting to learn about it in our department. We still need time to see how it can be productively introduced in the classroom and how we can avoid its problematic aspects. So far, maybe some of us have started to use it to create practice exercises for readings or videos we watch as part of our classes, but we haven’t

gotten much further.”

Hofheinz also commented on the policies in the religion department. “We’re doing it on a term-by-term basis, but there is a religion department policy which essentially states that AI can only be used with advance and explicit permission from an instructor,” she said. “Every term we’re returning to it and rethinking it. Because our biggest concern is that we respect what our goals are — promoting individual thinking, that is.”

AI has raised concerns about how it may affect student learning, but it is generally agreed that regulated use could be beneficial to students. Lovett concluded, “Overall, incorporating generative AI into education requires a balanced approach that leverages its benefits while addressing potential challenges and promoting a well-rounded learning experience.”



# Academy Initiates Core Values Projects for the Winter Term

By SUNGHYUN BAE, ERIN HAN, and CELIA VALDEZ

The start of winter term marked a new rotation of Core Value Projects (CVPs), with some students continuing projects from previous years and others creating entirely new ones. So far, around halfway through the winter term, a handful of meetings have taken place, with project titles ranging from “Economics For Empowerment” to “Minecraft For Others.”

Projects this term, as outlined in the winter 2023 Core Values Project guide, will “build upon [the] anti-racism and anti-oppression conversations of last year to explore the Academy’s Core Values. Those conversations will provide the necessary foundation to fully live our Core Values and to do so in community with each other. The Core Value Project will explore the ways in which our commitment to anti-oppression is embedded in the Academy’s mission and core values statements.”

Students with a goal of highlighting or improving upon some of the Academy’s core values are encouraged to start a CVP pertaining to a topic they are passionate about, with each employing different mediums by which they expand on these Academy core values.

These ideas were sparked by specific changes students wanted to see in the Exeter community with respect to curriculum and opportunities, students’ personal ties to the topics they chose, and even shared experiences amongst co-facilitators.

Senior co-facilitator of the “Our Stories Through Poetry” CVP Parmis Mokhtari-Dizaji shared, “I have always really loved writing poetry and I wanted to find a way to bring more opportunities to write poetry into the Exeter community.”

“More specifically, I thought that poetry is a great medium to reflect in more of an artistic and fluid way, which is especially important when it comes to expressing your own story, background, and identity,” Mokhtari-Dizaji continued. “There is no right or wrong way, this is just a safe space where people can feel comfortable to explore such personal matters.”

Co-facilitator of the “Minecraft For Others” CVP and upper Nicholas Li spoke about how he and his co-facilitators hoped to build upon Exeter’s values of non-sibi and community and inclusivity through participant-built structures on a shared Minecraft server. “At least for video games, Minecraft is one of the more versatile ones in that it’s an open-world game

where you can really do things depending on how you see fit, which is really why we chose it as a medium.

He continued, “We were trying to exemplify what DEI is in a more casual setting, I would say, recognizing diversity and inclusion are increasingly important to address, and that we can kind of incorporate this idea into our hobbies, if your hobby is to play video games.”

Li also spoke about how he hoped the CVP would also serve as a period of rest from participants’ demanding schedules. “In order to get people to branch out of their comfort zones, we had to give them some kind of leeway to escape from their day-to-day obligations. Minecraft is also just a fun game: a distraction from the day, from the morning, from the first two periods.”

For lower Jinmin Lee, the creation of the “Question Everything” CVP that he co-facilitates felt natural, and like an opportunity to expand on his common interest in philosophy with the other co-facilitators. “Andrew Gould, Forrest Zeng, and I always found ourselves talking until 3 a.m. every weekend (and sometimes weekday) about philosophy,” he said. “We noticed how disagreements in our discussions allowed us to better understand the

topics we talked about. We wanted to broaden our scope of knowledge by engaging with more people philosophically.”

Upper Sofiya Goncharova, a student facilitator of “Global Unrest: Unveiling the Diverse Perspectives on Turmoils Around the World,” explained that her motivation to initiate the CVP with co-facilitator and upper Tania Luchak stemmed from her personal identity.

“I started this CVP because I am half Ukrainian and with Jewish roots and was born in Russia,” Goncharova said. “Discussing the conflict hit too close to home so I avoided it for a long time. I wanted to force myself to confront this issue, because I had been avoiding it. The CVP was a way of forcing myself to think about and confront the conflicts.”

In terms of how CVPs have been progressing, lower Sophie Yu, a participant of “CCC (Coloring, Cinema, Candy),” believes that CVPs help bring people together for effective discussions students might not have otherwise. “I think that [they] really give students the freedom to organize themselves together for effective discussions that’s really cool, and in

that sense it’s easing some of that uncomfortableness of having certain conversations that you wouldn’t typically have or aren’t typically as effective.”

Lower Anne Wang, one of the co-facilitators of “Environmental Activism Through Art” also believes that CVPs are a great way to make improvements in the school’s community. “I think the CVPs are a great way to expand on core values. We tried to make ours as engaging as possible, so that everyone who’s there wants to be there.”

However, not all students share a similar outlook on the initiative. Others view it as more of an obligatory club or extra free block in the day. Lower Muralini Mohan, a participant of the CVP “African and Caribbean Art,” believes that many students are not always truly passionate about the CVPs they join. “I think oftentimes the CVP that people are put into is not really reflective of what they want to do; given their schedules, they put it off until last minute, and they just choose whatever is free,” Mohan said. “Also, it’s just an easy way to get a free block into your day if you know it’s...low-commitment...”

Prep Oluj Okeremi, a participant of “Coding for Campus,” voiced that not all CVPs are focused particularly on the Academy’s core values. “I think CVPs are more like electives and not all of them expand on our core values,” he said.

For some participants, CVPs serve as more than just a platform for

promoting school values, offering a valuable break and welcome respite within the school routine. Okeremi noted that CVPs can be “a breath of fresh air because of how stressful classes can be.”

Yu echoed this sentiment, describing her CVP as a “chill, safe space where you can work on what you can do.”

Mokhtari-Dizaji added from a facilitator’s perspective that CVPs are “a great way to take a moment in the day to work on something as important as our core values.”

However, not everyone shared this same opinion. “Students are given opportunities to avoid engagement,” Goncharova commented.

Lee agreed, furthering that CVPs might not be the best approach to achieve the initiative’s goals. With “Question Everything,” he added, “It is sometimes challenging for students who don’t have a deep expertise in history or sociology to connect and teach a particular activity with themes of anti-oppression. The most efficient method to raise awareness for anti-oppression would be to have teachers teach more classes on injustice.”

“However,” he added, “the advantage that the projects hold is that they are an engaging, student-led way that makes people still think about what the values mean.”

# Mental Health Resources

By ERIN HAN, ANGELA HE, ALLEGRA LAI, and MARVINSHIM

The percentage of young people experiencing mental health conditions, including psychological distress and major depression, has significantly amplified since the past decade. Cultural trends in the last ten years, primarily an increased use of digital media and communication, are cited to be the leading cause of mood disorders, thus diminishing social interaction within younger generations.

Exeter's recently renovated Lamont Health and Wellness Center provides individual, confidential health care and psychotherapy to students on campus. The center is open daily for appointments or walk-ins and houses more than a dozen beds for overnight care.

Medical Director Dr. Katharina Lilly listed the variety of concerns licensed professionals can help students with, including "depression, anxiety, grief and loss, substance use, stress management, and relationships."

Director of Counseling Szu-Hui Lee continued, "We offer free and confidential individual psychotherapy sessions, 24/7 on-call support, as well as events and workshops throughout the school year."

On campus, Counseling and Psychological Services

(CAPS) partners with Student Council's Mental Health Committee, Psychology Club, and student listeners to offer support alongside students. Lilly expressed her team's efforts in trying to "normalize mental health care in a manner that weaves mental wellness into our day-to-day lives."

Lee also mentioned their participation in community-based events every year. "We facilitated a few Core Value Project initiatives and partnered with the Health Education and Human Development Department to implement various Positive Psychology events."

However, despite the resources provided for health care and counseling services, some students find that CAPS is detached from the rest of the school. Student listener and senior Ryan Manley gave commentary on the awareness of these resources, "I would say it would be better if the students and the counselors are more in communication. We live in a boarding school where we're not really around our parents. This independence allows us to self-discover and make very close friends, but many students still find themselves needing in-person, trusted adults to advise and listen to their personal matters."

Upper Ben Soriano agreed. "I think [CAPS] is a little daunting. The steps

are not clear for most of the student body about how to schedule a meeting or how to get in contact. I think any little roadblock in a way, such as not knowing how to contact CAPS, would be much more of a deterrent for them. It is difficult to access CAPS, and I think that's making it harder for students to get the help that they need."

Manley continued, "I actually wouldn't say Lamont would be my first choice if I was having mental health issues, it would probably be friends. I know this wouldn't be the same for everybody, but I would go to a really trusted friend. CAPS is a lot more invisible than you would think."

Proctor and senior Elizabeth Catizone said, "We have many resources available to support students, although I've heard many express understandable hesitations, particularly in utilizing CAPS, due to the fear of being reported. I tend to go to trusted adults, such as teachers, mentors, coaches, or my advisor. I also would talk to close friends or a student listener."

Given all the current support systems in place that address students' mental health needs on campus — such as CAPS, dorm faculty, advisors, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the health center, Phillips Church, proctors, and student listeners —

Student Council's Mental Health Committee co-head and senior Michael Goodall said, "I am grateful that Exeter has a large counseling department with availability to generally get people connected in a reasonable period of time."

However, Catizone identified a desirable adjustment regarding the current support systems and their ability to adequately address students' mental health needs. "I personally believe the change that needs to happen perhaps lies in investigating the underlying causes of stress on campus and working to address those causes more systematically as opposed to adding additional reactionary support."

Manley agreed. "I think it's good that they have systems like proctors and student listeners where they have students involved. However, I find CAPS themselves are really detached from the students' lives."

Mental Health Committee co-heads Amber Zou and Michael Goodall both shared their experiences working with CAPS for the subcommittee as well as their personal encounters with CAPS resources. "My fellow co-heads and I directly communicate with administration and faculty on issues surrounding student mental well-being, host campus-wide wellness events, and facilitate mental

health discussions with our committee members to share experiences and ideas," Zou offered.

Goodall also commented on behind-the-scenes work facilitated between the committee and faculty. "We also worked with Dr. Kari Hart and helped interpret some of the data from her research. We are helping with the documentation of resources available through resource guides and helping to work on the Medical Leave flowchart to clarify how that resource works for those who need it."

Zou also explained that collecting the puzzle pieces needed for a singular new policy is a very measured process, which might give the student body the impression that no work is being done behind the scenes. "To be honest, I think being [committee co-head] has emphasized to me the amount of effort and thought that goes into every decision. I think a lot of the time, the student body, and people in general, are quick to assume that because something, whether it's a policy or announcement, is not made just automatically means that administration, CAPS, or the committee hasn't considered that or that we don't care. For example, we are working on Med Leave policy right now, and it's a very slow and long process with so many moving parts."

Furthermore, Goodall addressed the benefits of CAPS and its specificity to the Exeter community. "A pro is having a counselor who understands the

stresses and social pressure of being at Exeter," he said. "The counselors also understand the intricacies of the Exeter ecosystem and can help in navigating it," he added.

Goodall also shared a personal experience, as well as a piece of advice. "Sleep is so important. It is hard to get enough sleep at Exeter. Be sure to protect your sleep. My sleep got really dysregulated in my lower spring, when I was struggling with my mental health, and I was able to do a 'sleep reset' at the health center that helped."

Goodall also recognized Exeter's effort in helping students despite the stigma surrounding the topic. "While there can be a stigma about reaching out for support, from my experience, I think Exeter's resources are very helpful," he said. "And even if Exeter can't directly help, they can easily connect to outside resources, such as psychiatry and medication support."

The high school stage is considered to be one of the most vulnerable stages of a person's life with respect to mental health. In as rigorous and tight-knit of an environment as the Academy, the prevalence of accessible on-campus resources that can consider the unique experiences of Exonians is critical. It is with steady but consistent progress that CAPS and student advocates across campus work toward the goal of more accessible and supportive mental health resources at the Academy.

# Students Reflect on Assembly



By SAM ALTMAN, LAUREN LEE, CHLOÉ LIND, and TRUMAN YEE

In the wake of new changes, students and teachers alike have been forced to reflect upon what assembly ought to be at Exeter, both in terms of quantity and quality.

Recently, the administration introduced advisory seating to increase attendance at assembly. Each advisee is required to "check in" with their adviser and sit with their fellow advisees upon arrival. Given the space limitations, many are forced to pack into Mayer Auditorium and watch a livestream with poor audio. While the Academy has unveiled plans for renovation in the Assembly Hall to fit more people, many current students share their dislike for assembly all across campus. Others, however, maintain that assembly is an important bonding experience and part of our history that should not be disregarded.

"A lot of variables go into building the program," said Matthew Miller, chair

of the Assembly Committee and Instructor in English. He commented on the selection process for assembly speakers. "We consider community interest, topical subjects, breadth of voices and professions. Input from the staff, faculty, and students goes into choosing speakers. Suggestions from the principal, the alumni office, and institutional advancement have slots in the programming for which they often request specific speakers, often alumni," Miller added.

Miller continued, "Availability is also a huge factor, and trying to find a coordinated speaker schedule with our schedule. And we also want to get students involved, from things like the E/A rally, to Student Council, to the Exeter Association of Rock and dance assemblies, to celebrations of faith like Yom Kippur and Ramadan. Suggestions are always coming in for speakers. I can't walk across campus without hearing about a great prospective speaker. I wish we could bring them all."

Instructor in Science Townley Chisholm agreed

with the sentiment that assembly is an important part of the day. "Assembly is deeply important for helping us develop a sense of school-wide cohesion. It's the one thing that we all do together." Chisholm emphasized the utility of assemblies as a way for students and faculty to connect and discuss a wide array of subject matter.

Instructor in Science Charles Mamolo highlighted the importance of giving speakers of diverse backgrounds the opportunity to speak to the community. "It contributes to the education of the students in the sense that they are afforded a lot of world views and perspectives," Mamolo said.

Miller also expressed a clear desire to invite speakers from different personal and political backgrounds to share their stories with the Exeter community. "Even if we disagree with certain politics, policies, or philosophies, it is important we listen and engage in civil discourse with those we disagree with, hard as it can be to do that. Nothing comes out of an echo chamber except your own fading dulling voice," Miller

added.

"I think assembly is somewhat of a window to the outside world," lower Nathi Lomax said. To Lomax, assembly is unique in its ability to engage and inform students about certain injustices or problems out there in the world that are not covered in academic coursework.

"What's interesting about assembly is that a lot of the assembly speakers are Exeter alumni," upper Matthew Grossman said. "It definitely helps kids from Exeter see where they could be in the next 10, 20, 30 years."

Miller reflected on how assembly is an opportunity for the community to deepen their ties with the familiar. "I love the student assemblies, maybe more than all of the other assemblies. I love seeing you all show off your talent and skill, from singing, acting, and dancing, to presentations on the economics and the environment or technology," Miller said.

In the past, there have been many issues and controversies surrounding assembly. "A minority of

students may be talking or using their phones or doing homework and thereby showing disrespect to the speaker, encouraging everyone around them to follow that bad example," Chisholm said.

The administration is constantly working to combat these issues. Previously, they used QR codes to digitally collect attendance. In theory, students who were present would have access to the code, and those absent would not be able to scan for attendance. In practice, the policy only allowed students to train their coordination and teamwork skills, as students would send photos of the code to absent friends, allowing for falsified attendance.

The administration's latest move was their institution of advisory seating. The simple policy mandates that students sit with their adviser, and attendance is taken from the bottom up. Additionally, students, now under the watchful eye of advisers, are under more pressure to actively listen and avoid disruptions.

Students have been adhering to this policy for several months. Though it certainly limits freedom, the general consensus among students seems positive. When asked about the policy, prep Ted Freedman said, "Advisory seating is good. I see no problems with it."

Some students also believe that advisory seating removes ambiguity. Lower Lydia Reimert said, "I like sitting with my advisory because this way I always know where to go and my advisor knows I was there."

Another credit is that sitting by advisory allows students more time to connect with their advisory groups. "You don't actually get to spend a lot of time with your advising group throughout the week, so I like that you get to sit with them at assemblies," Grossman said.

The increased accountability through advisory seating has led to more students in attendance

than seats available in the Assembly Hall. As a temporary solution, some students must view assemblies virtually from Mayer Auditorium, two floors below the stage.

Mayer's technical issues and isolation, along with a number of advantages make the interim assembly viewing spot a mixed bag. "I liked being in Mayer Auditorium," upper Keon Osei said. "I don't like being in the Assembly Hall. It takes longer to get out of assembly if you're sitting there. But the speakers kind of blare. When you are sitting very close to the microphone, it sounds like you're screaming inside Mayer."

Instructors at the Academy also have their opinions concerning the recent policies at Exeter. "Having students sit together in advising groups has been a profound improvement. I can make sure my advisees attend and that they behave and stay awake," Chisholm said.

Mamolo also felt this was important. "Advisory seating is as important as checking in or being in class because those are moments in which we know that you are fine. It's not that we do not trust you, but it's more of being accountable for your wellbeing," Mamolo said.

At the end of the day, there may not be another way to take attendance.

"The deans oversee how attendance is taken and it can't be an easy task," Miller said. "They've tried lots of different ways to do it, and maybe sitting with advisory groups works best. However, I understand students wanting to maintain the tradition of sitting with their class and there is something to be said for honoring that tradition."

Clearly, advisory seating is not the first of the administration's moves toward a more productive and worthwhile assembly experience, and it may not be the last. Over time, the Academy will likely settle into a more consistent assembly model.

# Andrew Yang Cont.



Andrew Yang greets students in the Assembly Hall after his speech

Courtesy of @phillipsexeter

Channeling his uplifting personality and passion for his cause, Yang spent six and a half years raising money and convincing donors to take his side, which would prove useful to his campaign years later.

The election of President Donald Trump in 2016 allowed Yang to reexamine and recognize the flaws in the American political systems. Among them, he cited the discrepancy between low Congressional approval and high incumbent reelection rates, holding the isolated two-party system accountable for this deterioration. He recalled sharing with his wife his resolution to repair it by running for president and the confusion from his

acquaintances when they asked him: president, “of what?”

Nevertheless, Yang began the grueling process of collecting donations, first from his friends, then from strangers, and at last gaining the support of millions. “I was okay with accepting failure,” Yang admitted. “I didn’t think I would be president of the United States...But what I wouldn’t accept was just shrugging and letting the world head towards what I thought was disaster.”

Although Yang withdrew from the 2020 election to endorse President Joe Biden, he has retained his following and dreams for the future of American public

policy recently founded the Forward Party with the goal of breaking free from the confines of the destructive two-party rivalry. A champion of universal basic income, regulations on artificial intelligence, and climate change policy, Yang promised the audience, “The marketplace that I now serve is the American people.”

Current students, Yang asserted, should take control of their own future. “When I was here at Exeter, we all wanted to succeed. And there were few versions of what success looked like,” Yang said. He encouraged students not to conform to what “85 percent” of their classmates would eventually pursue

in “one of six things”: finance, consulting, law, medicine, technology, or academia. After all, Yang assured, “You all are going to end up having a very significant impact on what the world looks like a number of years from now.”

Student reactions to Yang’s address were mixed, especially given his unexpected endorsement of candidate Dean Phillips, a Democratic candidate in the 2024 election, as well as his own Forward Party.

“I found it really interesting that the expectation was for him not to talk about politics, but towards the end of his time he still decided to voice his support for Dean Phillips’ bid for presidency,” said

senior and Democratic Club co-head Eric Wu, recalling Yang’s brief statement of support. On a more general note, he continued, “I think it was cool to have such a well-known political figure speak to us; it seemed to have spurred political conversations on campus. Yang was a great speaker and extremely well received by the crowd.”

“Even though I don’t agree with all of them, I think that Andrew Yang has some interesting ideas on how to adapt to the widespread use of AI,” commented upper and Republican Club co-head CJ Smith. “However, I don’t think he clearly communicated his ideas to the student body. My

issue was less with him endorsing [or] talking about a candidate, and more to the fact that he didn’t discuss anything about why he supports UBI, just to give an example, or how it would work in American society.”

Smith also expressed that he did not appreciate Yang “talking down about other alums who work ‘typical’ jobs (Wall Street, lawyer, etc.), and aren’t ‘changemakers’.”

Other students interpreted this message differently, however; upper Catherine Yan reflected that “Andrew Yang was very motivational in showing how everyone has a different pathway to success and to never give up in life.”

## Student Perspective on Hell Weeks

By WILLIAM INOUE, ANDREW YANG, JADE YOO, and FORREST ZENG

Students had mixed reactions to the two-and-a-half weeks of school in the new term before Winter Break, colloquially known as “hell weeks.” While some students found the time stressful and busy, new students, mostly lowerclassmen, felt that the two weeks were overdramatized.

This year, hell weeks, from Dec. 4 to 20, included an extra three days before the break. Students had varying opinions on these additional days of school. “I was affected by it since I had a test on Wednesday that hurt my grade,” lower Noah Twilley said.

Some students liked or didn’t notice the extra days at all. “I didn’t notice,” lower Will Samuels said. “It didn’t feel any different compared to my prep year.”

“I actually did like it,” senior Sophie Zhu said. “I felt that major assignments were more dispersed across those days. Instead of many

majors in two or three days, it was spread over four or five, and also a weekend to prepare.”

Though some students expressed neutral or positive sentiments about this year’s hell weeks, many students did report feeling stressed.

“It felt like a less important finals week,” lower Max Liu said. “The stakes aren’t as high, but you still feel the pressure to do well before break.”

Prep Dani Mendez said, “It felt pretty okay, but a lot of work kept me busy. Fortunately, after finishing all of my work, I was able to return home for break and not really do work.”

Prep Grace Yang said, “Hell weeks felt pretty chill because I am a prep, but there was a lot of added stress because there were a lot of new assignments and tests. Winter Break was my main motivation, but knowing [school] is not pass-fail anymore also made me realize that I had to try really hard.”

“Hell weeks weren’t as bad as I expected, although I was occasionally stressed by tests,” lower Avery Im

said. “I just ate with my friends at D-Squared to cope with the stress.”

Prep Ishaan Singh said, “It was mostly biology, because I had a biology test. It kept me stressed the entire time.”

Lowers and upperclassmen observed a noticeable uptick in work. “I was very stressed during hell weeks. Going in, I expected them to be bad, and that was met,” Twilley said. “Clubs during those weeks also had major assignments alongside classes, particularly robotics.”

Lower Ronald Qiao added, “Although winter break was a strong motivator, I still found it challenging to maintain momentum.”

Adjusting to extracurriculars was another source of discomfort for some students. Lower Lana Wu said, “I had two swim meets, which kept me busy. I also do music, but with my new schedule it’s hard to get practice.”

The onset of shorter days and decreasing temperatures compounded with academic stress during hell weeks. “I’ve

never been to school in the dark,” Singh said.

Hell weeks were a particularly significant time in the college application process for seniors at Exeter. “On top of school work and college applications, it was pretty rough. Especially with early decisions, there was added tension between people,” Zhu said. “I was definitely stressed by the workload of college applications.”

“However, I was very glad to have the

support of my family and friends,” Zhu continued.

“They are always a good motivator throughout hell weeks.”

On the other hand, there were also some students that did not feel the same amount of stress, noticeably new students. Prep Artur Novae said, “I feel like people made a bigger deal out of what it really was. It kept me busy, but it wasn’t that stressful.”

“Since pass-fail was over, it made me

more focused,” prep Ian Lanning said. “I didn’t feel the content was more stressful. However, since I started sports this term, I have had to learn to balance academics and sports.”

“I thought they were a lot easier than I expected,” Im said. “Everyone was hyping them up as very scary. My teachers were extremely supportive and were willing to help. It was hard, just not as hard as I thought it would be.”



Light snowfall atop the Academy bell tower

Courtesy of @phillipsexeter

» **SOTW**  
Read about this week's  
Senior of the Week: Chris  
Serrao, 8.

» **FOTW**  
Read about this week's  
Faculty of the Week: Tatiana  
Waterman, 10.

» **LOST TRADITIONS**  
Read about some past  
traditions at the Academy, 7.

## Reflection: Traditions Lost

By **CARLY CANSECO, JACK CASSIDY, ERIN HAN, and CELIAVALDEZ**

The Academy is rooted in its traditions, but with Covid and the graduation of previous classes, events such as Back in Black and Casino Night have disappeared. How has the development of certain traditions affected life on campus?

An academy as old as Exeter is bound to have both traditions that are timeless and those that fall out of practice. Academy traditions, including those we still enjoy today, are an important way of building community and reminding students of our school's rich history. But the campus-wide cleanup in celebration of Earth Day, Halloween dress-up contest, dorm holiday parties, cookouts in celebration of new students' arrivals, and Abbot Casino are just a few of the traditions we've lost over the years.

These traditions have been discontinued for reasons ranging from changes in climate to being considered inconsistent with the Academy's values. Instructor of Mathematics Dale Braile recalled Winter Carnival, a schoolwide tradition that was active through the 1980s. "A weekend in winter term was designated as Winter Carnival each year. There were a number of activities, both indoors—a Snow Ball—and outdoors—various games and events."

Braile recalled that her favorite part of the tradition was the exhibition of student-crafted snow sculptures that popped up across campus. "The week before Winter Carnival, bulldozers would push large mounds of snow into piles about eight or ten feet high in front of dorms, on the Academy lawn, [and] in front of the library. Then groups of students would turn the mound into something amazing — a dragon, a castle, a car. Some years, the sculptures remained for a long time; other years, a thaw would take them away soon after." She added, "The tradition died out after a couple

of years of not enough snow."

Other beloved traditions that have since been discontinued are Abbot Casino Night and Abbot 500. Instructor in Science Christopher Matlack, who served as the dorm head of Abbot Hall in the 1990s recalled Abbot 500—routine bike races that took place in front of the dorm, "We had something called Abbot 500...and that was a neat little tradition. In front of Abbot, there was a road that went around a circle, with those big oak trees, and we had a bike race. This is in the eighties," Matlack said. "We had hot dogs [and] grilled stuff and we had this bike race...It ended up being too dangerous, so we stopped it." Although he wasn't present when the bike races stopped, he believes it stopped because bikes fell over.

However, these two traditions, along with a few others, have previously been brought up by the Student Council as candidates for a potential comeback. As the starting point for a potential revival, the Student Council investigated the causes of such terminations in the past.

Student Council President and senior Kevin Treehan answered to the question of whether there were Academy traditions that he was disappointed to see discontinued. "Without a doubt, dorm-affiliated events [in particular]. I'm talking about things like Dunbar Back in Black and Abbot Casino."

Treehan continued, "From what I understand, the Student Activities Office believes that dorm-affiliated events aren't inclusive since not every dorm would be able to host one (there simply aren't enough weekends if you arrange them sequentially). And if they're allowed for all dorms as an "if you want to" sort of thing, students will place pressure on every dorm leadership team (proctors and faculty) to step up and deliver."

Treehan then shared his stance on the matter, saying, "I think this is a self-imposed constraint. Having dorm-

affiliated events actually spreads the burden by decentralizing planning and hosting efforts. By simple logistical facts, the Student Activities office is limited in what type and how many events they can host... we don't want to ask too much from a small group of people with a lot on their hands."

Treehan also responded to the office's mention of the danger of exclusion, "As for the inclusivity argument, I don't think it should be forced upon dorms, but I also think telling dorms they can't host events is just as bad. There's a balance somewhere in there that doesn't necessitate a higher authority telling you that your dorm proctors can't host a barbecue for your quad."

Treehan concluded by stating that such dorm-specific events would have a net positive effect and "let dorms add their own flavor to the whole thing, just like it used to be." He continued, "Right now, when I'm thinking about what's happening on the weekend, I usually see the same recurring fixtures (karaoke, etc.). Wouldn't it be really nice to see a North Quad rock-themed cook-out hosted by Abbot, or maybe a C-Ball [Cilley-ball] tournament for the South Side?"

Other traditions left less favorable effects on the community and were discontinued for being deemed inconsistent with the Academy's values.

Instructor in Mathematics Eric S. Bergofsky recalled, "[There are] some traditions that have gone by the board that are a good thing—anything that was even borderline hazing."

Bergofsky offered an example. "Some teams used to have all the new kids on a team, you know, shave their heads or get really, really short haircuts. Or the [upperclassmen] would do it to them. And it was supposed to all be in good fun, and everybody did it when they were new to the team but I'm sure there were kids who would rather not have gone through that kind of thing. [That] it stopped is definitely a



Students attending Abbot Casino Night in 2016

Courtesy of the PEA Facebook

good thing."

Other traditions have received a rebrand.

Bergofsky mentioned the traditional "spring cleanup," which was a favorite tradition. "We used to have a spring cleanup day. I guess now it's maybe Climate Action Day...but it used to coincide with Earth Day for the whole world," he continued, "But in our own tradition it was what we called cleanup day and everybody...would come out and really spruce up the campus. So people in a dorm made sure everything was really clean around their dorm leaves, raked and picked up any trash," he recalled. "And [so] the campus was spotless—day students and sometimes teams would do the same thing around the gymnasium and athletic fields, and it took a lot of hours of work off of the backs of facilities. It was kind of a nice tradition."

Emeriti and longtime faculty members shared that some of their favorite traditions were those that have existed since the beginning of the Academy's establishment, and will likely stay standing. Emeritus Instructor in Science Richard Aaronian, who taught at the Academy for 49 years before his retirement in 2020, shared that two of his favorite traditions were the opening assemblies and graduation ceremonies. "I feel that [the opening assembly] is a highlight of the entire school year," he said. "Students cheer for the faculty and the faculty cheer for students especially the new students along with the senior class. It is an assembly of mutual respect

and admiration. In addition, having new faculty sitting next to emeriti is a wonderful tradition." Aaronian also spoke about the graduation ceremony, saying, "I have always felt Exeter does this so well in that the emphasis is all on the graduating seniors. No outside speaker, no faculty in academic dress marching in and, very importantly, over under two hours! Faculty are dispersed all over the lawns with attention only on the seniors. I hope this continues."

Bergofsky shared similar sentiments, also mentioning the two ceremonies: "I think [the Academy has] a great opening, just a great opening assembly. We lost it for a year or two just because of Covid, but it's come back and the last couple of years, and I hope we never lose it." He also remarked about graduation, "How we graduate is [also] a great tradition. The fact that the focus is on the seniors and rightly so—not a lot of outside people coming in and giving speeches and getting honorary degrees the way a lot of colleges do. We rather focus on the students. We don't even really have the faculty involved that much. I think we do a good job traditionally with our graduation."

Allowing everyone in the Exeter community to participate in memorable events such as the E/a pep rally, Earth Day clean up, and schoolwide dances instills a sense of belonging and pride among teachers, students, and alumni. Many alumni still feel connected to the institution because of the memorable moments they shared with their

peers, inspiring them to support the academy even after graduation.

One alumnus from the class of 2023, Dax Knoll, said, "This is why I think events like Abbot Casino and evening prayer were so popular — they were student-run, fueled by student interests." The creativity and collaboration behind these events led to a healthy community on campus, and those who had the privilege of experiencing them pre-Covid have expressed disappointment for how many traditions have been dismantled. "I think it gives people an opportunity to think back to the school's history. And to establish some things that are a good idea to repeat every year," said Bergofsky. Traditions do hold responsibility, though, as they require current students to be able to maintain them. The pandemic, changes in the Academy's values, and lack of collaboration within the community have led to a decline in campus traditions.

The Academy still holds many enjoyable traditions, but many long-tenured faculty, seniors, and alumni admit that unforgettable events have dissipated since their arrival at Exeter. Thankfully, Casino Night will be making a reappearance this year, but it's up to the current student body to either revive old traditions or pioneer entirely new ones. Alumnus Jamie Cassidy '22 said, "It's really just what you make of it — as long as you're surrounded with good people, really any event can be made fun."

## Alumni Feature: Sean Mahoney '91

By **IZYAAN BURNEY, MEGHAN TATE ZEE, AND CHENGYUE ZHANG**

On Oct. 4th, 2023, the musical *Factory Girls*, written by Academy alumnus Sean Mahoney '91, had its full-fledged debut in the United States at the Johnson Theater of the University of New Hampshire, a twenty-minute drive north of Exeter.

S. Mahoney and his friend Creighton Irons co-wrote *Factory Girls* in 2008 as a thesis project in a graduate musical theater writing program at New York University's Tisch School for Musical Theatre. The show focuses on the Lowell Mill Girls, a group of young female textile factory workers in Lowell, Massachusetts, during the eighteenth-century Industrial Revolution.

S. Mahoney was raised in North Conway, New Hampshire, and attended Phillips Exeter Academy with his fraternal twin brother Jim Mahoney '91. During his time at Exeter, S. Mahoney was the director of WPEA, a member of a rock band, and a varsity athlete in football and lacrosse.

At Exeter, S. Mahoney was challenged academically, but he also appreciated the skills he

learned through experiences at the Harkness table. "[The Harkness system] taught me to ask good questions in life...you could learn a lot from the social setting of the classroom as opposed to lectures and getting spoken to," S. Mahoney said.

Additionally, S. Mahoney mentioned how the skill of conducting research with primary sources, which he learned through writing history essays in his upper year, helped him in the creation of *Factory Girls*. "When we started investigating the Lowell Mill girls, we found this trove of material. They wrote their own publication called the Lowell Offering, and we even transcribed almost directly some of their poems and lyrics into songs," S. Mahoney explained.

Although not directly involved in theater at Exeter, S. Mahoney was a guitarist. He played in a rock band and was inspired by the many musicians he got to meet and interact with in his high school years. "In the years around my class, there were a bunch of phenomenal musicians who were a huge influence on me and stuck through my musical theater career," S. Mahoney said. "They were who we saw

at assemblies. Even though I write a lot of historical stuff, [the music] is always rock-based."

S. Mahoney was appreciative of the many good friends he made at Exeter, especially through music. "When I committed to musical theater, [my Exeter friends] were the first people to support me, having known me since I was out on the lawn, leaving my guitar out overnight," Mahoney continued.

J. Mahoney mentioned his brother's incredible talent on guitar: "[My brother] performed his senior meditation in the Phillips Church...He organized and composed the whole thing. It wasn't all original music, but anyone who was in that room then or saw him play would've said he's so talented."

"He would just sit on the academy lawn with his guitar, and people would just roam, and he would start making up songs about them. On WPEA, he would bring his guitar in and just play and do songs about our friends and make fun of them," J. Mahoney continued.

The state of New Hampshire as a state appeared in the musical as well. One of S.

Mahoney's favorite moments in the show is when a girl sings a song titled "Live Free or Die," the state motto of New Hampshire. "These girls said we would rather have a chance to go work in the mills than stay at home on our farms and get married off to the boy down the road," S. Mahoney said. "This was a chance to do something different to make their own money and make their own lives."

Theater instructor Lauren Josef, who attended the show's debut at UNH in person, enjoyed it greatly and highlighted the local connection as well. "It was really exciting to see a show with somebody who I am acquainted with," Josef said. "The factory mills are actually in the northeast and we could drive to these mills. It was exciting to hear a story told in the place where it [really] happened."

The musical was discovered by a production company from Tokyo and was subsequently taken on two very successful tours in Japan, receiving the Yama Yuri Award for Best New Musical in Japan in 2019. S. Mahoney recalled that "[the production company] liked the musical's American music because it's rock country, hip

hop, funk, and soul."

Though the music's style was American, the lyrics were translated into Japanese and *Factory Girls*' theme resonated with the Japanese audience. "The production company helped us adapt a version for Japan," S. Mahoney said. "We added eight songs that aren't in the American version... and a different ending of act one... because they had ideas about how to tell the story and things they wanted." Additional information about the cast and differences in plot can be found on their website musical-fg.com.

S. Mahoney combined historical elements with various genres of modern music while creating the production. "Even though [the musical is] set in the 1840s, it's modern musically," he said, "the musical oscillates between these references like Led Zeppelin to Taylor Swift. It's a real swing between this folksy stuff from before industrialization and [more modern things] like electric guitars."

J. Mahoney highlighted S. Mahoney's talent for capturing a range of human emotions, saying, "He deals with big ideas that have to do with identity

but also incorporates humor. He really does hear the sound of people. He can make music and compose music that seems to convey authentic human emotion, which runs the range of humor and comedy, joy and laughter and love, as well as tragedy and oppression."

Currently, S. Mahoney is working on making *Factory Girls* an accessible show throughout the nation. "We're working on *Factory Girls* to provide a version that people could license in the U.S., a version that a school like Exeter could [perform] in the future that has a lot of media roles and hooky songs with a connection to the area," he said.

In addition, S. Mahoney is working on a number of novel shows in the historical realm. "I'm working on a show about Bush Cassidy who robbed his first bank here in Telluride, Colorado, where I live," he shared, "a show called *Prep School Musical* about the boarding school experience, and another one called *Ski Gods* about the history of North Conway, New Hampshire, where I'm from."

# Senior of the Week: Chris Serrao



Senior Chris Serrao stands in front of Peabody Hall

*Courtesy of Holden Sage-Murillo*

By SAM ALTMAN, LAUREN LEE, MARVIN SHIM, and FORREST ZENG

*Paddington 1* plays in the background of the soft-lit Peabody common room. Dorm members and friends bumble into the confined space and settle closely together on the couches. Food, drink, and conversation flow as senior Chris Serrao welcomes everyone in. He turns up the volume, moving out of his seat to make room for someone else. As the night goes on, he chats with his dormmates in the corner, making jokes and giving advice.

To the members of Peabody hall and other school friends of Serrao, this experience is not an unfamiliar one. Indeed, this Saturday night, organized by Serrao, evokes countless other occasions on which he has displayed his ardent selflessness and willingness to spend his time helping others.

Four-year senior and admired proctor in Peabody Hall Chris Serrao is a humble and devoted co-head of multiple clubs, including Catholic Exonians and Exeter's Environmental Action Committee (EAC); he is a prominent bass singer in Exeter's Concert Choir and the capella group *Kè Kontan*. After suffering a family loss, Serrao also became deeply involved with Fight Club and is a current co-head. In his free time, Serrao has also self-studied many languages, including Arabic, Russian, and Greek.

Throughout his four years as a Peabodian, Serrao has recognized the importance of learning from the students and

faculty around him. Now a proctor, he is a well-respected member of the dorm community who makes every effort to make the experience of all.

"I know my prep year I didn't really have a presence in the dorm, and the dorm community wasn't really there, unfortunately. But this year I've tried to work towards it," said Serrao. "Little things like leaving my door open in the fall led to some great memories when a lot of students were in my room and we were just talking and just bonding."

Serrao is dedicated to fostering a supportive and positive dorm community. "I always look forward to coming back to the dorm on Tuesdays because Chris is on duty. He prepares candy or a fun activity and always, always, has prepared questions. He really, really cares about duty and about making sure he gets a real sense of how your day's been going and how your life is going," said upper Jacques Leleux.

"Chris is just super helpful and a great proctor," said upper Roy Liu. "Especially with younger students, he makes himself available to help everyone move and settle in, and remains a reliable leader throughout the year."

"During registration at the beginning of the year, he actively contacted the parents of Peabody underclassmen. He put himself out as a point person for them to ensure that their kid was well looked after," added proctor Leo Braham. "He is always looking out for our best interests and is really invested in trying to make everyone in the dorm feel good."

"This year, I've been trying to pay it forward to the community," said Serrao. "I try to host different events throughout

the term. I make it a priority to support fellow students during tough times like hell weeks and other hard times around campus. I want to help support students, especially when it's getting hard and they're struggling to adjust."

Caring and empathetic, Serrao leads by example and does his best to understand and support those around him. "I've never known someone to be so proactively kind. I think he's so good at not just helping you if you ask for it, but looking for ways to help you and make your life better," said Leleux.

As a Catholic, Serrao is deeply interested in faith. He brings this interest to Catholic Exonians, where he hosts discussions about religion and morality in Phillips Church.

"Catholic Exonians allows me to rigorously analyze different beliefs of mine and to talk about philosophy with people around me," Serrao said. "We go through different moral quandaries and questions, like gene editing or capital punishment, and we try to answer them. It yields fruitful conversations."

His ideas concerning religion and morality grew over time as he participated in discussions with the Exeter community.

"I grew up Catholic, but I didn't have much clarity on my faith. I think sharing in a community where there's so much intellectual discourse was refreshing," Serrao shared. "It is especially great being surrounded by other people who are so driven to find answers."

Fellow Catholic Exonians co-head Joseph Vicente commented, "I know Chris is very passionate about developing his relationship with God, and as an extension of that,

Chris is also very passionate about Catholic theology and expanding his knowledge of the subject."

Senior and fellow cohead Colin Jung commented on Serrao's passion for the club. "I think that is what also makes him an excellent clubhead, as in, even when he is sick, even when he is busy, even when he has other things to do, he will always be diligent and hardworking."

"He's very interested in faith," Leleux described. "He's often reading Thomas Aquinas or other religious thinkers, and we have very scholarly conversations about that. He contributes to Catholic Exonians because he is very knowledgeable about the Catholic Church."

Serrao further serves as a role model for younger students exploring their faith. Jung continued, "Chris is a real role model who will hold younger students accountable and care about their circumstances and needs."

Prep and Peabodian Aryan Agarwal has experienced this himself, saying, "He was very open about Catholic Exonians. I told him that I was interested in finding religion and he was very open. He actually scheduled dinner with me twice. He also sent me resources over winter break to look over, even though he was busy with college apps."

"If there are new people at Catholic Exonians, he's always making sure everyone knows each other's names. He's very welcoming and open, and he has a positive energy," Leleux said.

In addition to his religious faith, Serrao is very committed to environmental science and change. He is pursuing multiple environmental projects as co-head of

EAC at Exeter, including sustainable agriculture.

Serrao described, "I'm also in charge of the Environmental Action Committee. I really like environmental projects. I hope to work in environmental action, justice, and ethics in the future."

Senior Colin Maloney said, "Chris is very passionate about the environment. He is working on multiple projects through EAC to do his part to combat climate change."

Fellow EAC member Ryan Manley also noted Serrao's work for the environment at Exeter. "I think Chris wants to continue to study environmental sciences. He is very conscious about making sure that Exeter nurtures us to take precise and impactful steps forward for humanity to create a healthy environment and sustainable future."

Manley continued, "He does a movement through EAC where he tries to move the school's funds from petroleum-based companies that are detrimental to the environment towards solar energy and other sources."

Upper Dhruv Reddy has also observed Serrao's activism. "He's definitely passionate about policy and environmental science. I think that comes first in his academic studies that he wants to pursue. He's very cognizant about how the world will consider environmental science and how going forward that'll be very important. He's done a lot of projects for that."

Serrao also fosters a passion for linguistics, citing how he likes "learning the different connections between words." While formally taking Spanish, Serrao's study of Greek, Arabic, and Russian has been useful for his work in environmental science. "My passion for language is really helpful for environmental science because I'm able to understand different cultures," Serrao said. "I hope that in the future I'll be able to communicate with these kinds of communities impacted by the environment, and really understand all of their different struggles."

A long-time lover of the performing arts, Serrao brings the same positive energy to the choir community and is a friendly face for singers in all grade levels.

"As a new lower in Concert Choir, it was hard to adjust as I wasn't familiar with how Exeter choral singing worked. Just having Chris there, especially knowing him from my dorm, being very supportive of me, was very helpful. I wouldn't be as comfortable in Concert Choir if Chris weren't here. He is a very reliable leader," said Liu.

Instructor in Music Jerome Walker, who works with Serrao as his advisor and the interim director of Concert Choir, emphasized Serrao's dedication to building up the singers around him.

Walker said, "I see him actively working with other people in the section. He notices when someone looks confused, and he either helps them find an answer or he will come and ask me a question."

Serrao draws from his four years of experience singing in the bass section and does his best to listen and synthesize the questions of his fellow singers. "Partly because he is a quieter

student, when he is saying something, it really makes my ear prick up because I know that he will say something really of worth," Walker said. "His choices on when to speak or when to ask a question feel very, very deliberate. When Chris asks the question, I instantly feel that what he will say is something that we'd do well to bring our attention to."

Serrao is applauded by many for his leadership and proactive personality. "There's not a single person who's interacted with Chris and been worse off for it," Colin Jung said. "And I would say that's a true testament to his character, his empathy, and the way he sees other people around him."

Upper King-Diorr Willson added, "Chris just handles others' opinions with great value. He's oftentimes trying to inquire about what others think about things that he says."

In addition, Serrao is always trying to make Peabody and Exeter feel more homely. "He seeks out ways to make you feel welcome," Leleux explains.

Jung continued, "He will always reach out to every single person in the club before every single meeting. Just to make sure that they're doing all right and to check in on them and to see if they're going to be at the meeting. He always makes sure to have introductions when there's someone new, to make sure everyone feels at home. He's a tremendously caring person, fundamentally. It's a truly rare kind of person that he is."

"Chris cares a lot about how the lower classmen are doing," senior Ryan Manley commented. "He thinks about how they are being treated differently, how they are being judged, how they are feeling, and what he can do to help. I think it's a reflection of how he's been raised throughout his life and on how he tries to make sure everybody's being seen as equals."

Braham agreed, saying, "I think he is probably one of the most people in touch with all of the underclassmen and making sure that they're okay. He is always looking out for their best interests and really invested in trying to make everyone in the dorm feel better, especially with the underclassmen. I think he's been a really great guide for so many of them, and you can see that a lot of them respect him quite highly."

Prep Grant Blitz described his admiration of Serrao, "He always radiates positivity. I rarely ever hear him say negative things; he's just a nice person to be around."

"He's always willing to step forward for any responsibilities or task. And he does that proactively without even being asked. He's just always thinking about what he can do to meet the goals and doesn't hesitate to do so," Leleux said, commending Serrao's attitude towards any obstacle.

Finally, Jung stated, "He is motivated in everything he does by his deep and abiding Catholic faith. He appreciates that every person is of infinite value and should be treated as such. There's truly no one on campus whom I trust and respect more."



# Club Spotlight: Mock Trial

By **KAI GOWDA, NAOMI MOSKOVICH, and AMANI SHETTY**

It is 7:30 a.m. on a Saturday, and 26 Exonians, barely awake, with dark circles under their eyes, pack onto a yellow school bus. For the next two days, these Exonians will compete against other teams and themselves to win the title of the best mock trial team in the country.

The Phillips Exeter Mock Trial Association consists of three teams: A, B, and C. The A team has nine members: senior Selim Kim, senior Charles Potjer, senior Michael Nardone, upper Matt Grossman, lower Tamar Moskovich, upper CJ Smith, lower Ethan Benenson, upper Sophie Wagner, and prep Kai Gowda. The B team has nine members: upper Angelina Gong, senior Valentina Zhang, senior Jenna Wang, upper Caspar Bailey, lower Lauren Lee, lower Anna Byun, upper Rohit Kantamneni, lower Olivia Braham, and upper Max Mantel. The C team has eight members: senior Colin Jung, upper Sama Mouzannar, lower Victoria Vanderslice, lower Andrew Gould, lower Zoe Miller, upper Emma Sordi, lower Cecily Reed, and lower Forrest Zeng.

Mock Trial is an extracurricular program where students compete against other high schools in an imitation trial. The competitions are split into three categories: local, state, and national. For each competition, every school is given a criminal or civil case to prepare and present to the court. Each team is provided a booklet with all the case information required to argue for both the prosecution and defense of the accused.

Tamar Moskovich, a lower on the A team, explained, “We have to prepare for both sides of a case, since we don’t find out if we will be acting as prosecution or defense until the day of.”

Each side has three different ways to deliver

their arguments. Opening and closing statements occur at the beginning and end of the rounds. These statements come from the lawyers and usually try to summarize the side’s story. Direct examinations are another form of speech, pre-prepared dialogue of one of their own teammate’s witnesses, in order to add more detail to the story. Jung, a co-head on the C team, described the third form, cross examinations: “Lawyers will ask the other side’s witnesses questions in an attempt to expose weaknesses in their story and reduce their credibility.”

The Mock Trial team consists of two different roles; witnesses and lawyers. Witnesses are instructed to follow an affidavit, which is the case given at the start of each tournament year.

Upper Sama Mouzannar, a co-head on the C team, explained, “Being a witness, you have more leeway, not to bend the rules, but to make it creative and fun so you can express your own personality through your character.”

Lawyers follow more distinct legal rules, and include objections and case stipulations in their statements. Anna Byun, a lower on the B team, spoke about her role as an attorney, saying, “The essence of my role is to defend my case - whether I am representing prosecution or defense — while simultaneously weakening opposing counsel’s.” Mock Trial teams are comprised of between six to nine teammates, three of whom will act as attorneys and three who will act as witnesses during each round. Additional members participate as timekeepers.

Jung commented on the competition between Exeter teams, “It’s a point of pride for us C team leaders that we historically have finished second or third at States and within 5 points (out of 300) of A team in most years.” In short, the Academy team’s biggest competitor is themselves. On almost all occasions, Exeter “sweeps”

the competition, meaning that the three teams take first, second and third place.

Disbursement Manager Lori Novell, the Mock Trial club advisor, attends all of the tournaments and has been able to get to know many students involved in Mock Trial on campus. “The one thing that I enjoy the most of being an advisor for the Mock Trial team is watching some of these youngsters [grow] from being preps all the way up to seniors,” Novell said. “[They] graduate in the way that they mature, both on a personal level and through their academics and following them even after that into college. There are several of the students from prior years that I still keep in touch with, and am able to give guidance to and to mentor. Their wanting to come back to me to help them write letters for colleges and different things like that is really definitely a reason why I like to do what I do.”

At tryouts, co-heads search for a variety of qualities when picking members of each team. Mouzannar shared that the important components of a Mock Trial participant include “being articulate, having a sense of poise, and being confident in what you’re saying, even if you’re not fully confident of the material.”

“The process to tryout is famously competitive; we will always have to cut an overwhelming majority of candidates. However the process is certainly not random — I can attest to the criteria with some exactitude, having gone through around 60 tryouts this year and having evaluated each one for the C Team,” Jung added.

Competition mornings start before the sun rises, usually around 6:00 a.m. Teams gather in large auditoriums and wait for competition rules to be explained and schedules to be passed out. Schedules include competing teams and where each competition will occur. Upon arrival in the courtrooms, teams present



Mock Trial Team B, Winners of the Peter E. Champagne Invitational

their opening statements to the court and witnesses are brought to the stand. Witnesses share their direct examinations and cross-examinations. At the end, the judging panel and presiding judge will determine which team has the stronger argument and score them. Scoring techniques are precise and depend on the organization and level of the competition. The Peter E. Champagne Invitational (formerly and informally referred to as BGS) is the only competition that has been held this year so far. B team won first place, A team second, and C team third. BGS features the same schools and is good practice for the state-level competition in February, which must be qualified for through the Invitational. Jung explained that “the Invitationals are more laid back. It’s the first time the students get to argue their case for the year. And then states, which are actually coming up in February, are much more competitive between the different teams. And that is ultimately where one team gets selected to go to nationals. And when you go to nationals, it’s a whole new ball game where you’re competing against teams

from all over the country who are number one in their state.”

Despite the dedication needed for Mock Trial, it offers many rewards, including new relationships and memories. “I’ve been part of many clubs at Exeter, but Mock Trial is truly the gold standard for every other club on campus because of its community. Through Mock Trial, I’ve made close friendships with people I would otherwise never have met. Moreover, I’ve had mentors and leaders who have changed my life — by teaching me how to be a better and more confident speaker, teammate, and person,” Jung said.

“I feel like our experience doing Mock Trial together, especially spending all that time outside of classes together, really helped us grow and become friends because we got to learn this other competitive side of each other that made it really exciting to work alongside,” said Mouzannar. “And, as a whole, you get really close to the whole Mock Trial community because you’re spending so much time outside of classes together and you get to know a lot of different people that you

wouldn’t know outside of the club.”

“I remember when I had a dance performance one weekend, towards the beginning of the term, I was new to the team and a bit intimidated, but I was so surprised when I saw my entire Mock Trial team sitting in the audience to support me, not only as a team member, but as a friend as well,” said Moskovich.

“I am deeply grateful for the friendships I have formed through Mock Trial. The nine of us on the B team have formed a strong bond throughout our time together, whether that is through triumphs or defeats. It is exciting to work alongside people who are equally as dedicated and determined as me,” Byun added.

Jung concluded, “On the whole, joining this club, despite its difficulty and competitiveness, has been one of the best decisions I’ve ever made in my whole life. I cannot express how much a prospective candidate will gain from such a peerless experience. I encourage all to join us in-house this spring, and try out for a team next autumn.”

# Emma Sordi ‘25 Qualifies for Worlds Debate

By **FORREST ZENG**

Upper Emma Sordi recently qualified for the prestigious Worlds Individual Debating and Public Speaking Championships (WIDPSC) this year, a feat that has been achieved by only four Exeter students in the history of the Academy. Senior Colin Jung qualified last year as an upper, making her qualification the first consecutive qualification by an Exeter student. She will head to Canberra, Australia, from April 14-20, 2024, to participate in the competition that draws rhetors from all corners of the world.

The highest-scoring debater at certain WIDPSC qualifying tournaments that has not already qualified is chosen to attend WIDPSC. Despite this extensively selective qualification process, Sordi placed as the highest-scoring debater that had not already qualified for WIDPSC at the Buckingham Browne & Nichols Tournament (BB&N).

After receiving the news of her qualification, Sordi described her reaction as elated and full of anticipation. “I was very surprised, since they sent me an email about my qualification a few weeks after the tournament. At the moment, I’m very happy, but also a bit nervous, since it’s a

daunting tournament.”

“It was a shared happiness about her triumph and victory,” said senior Eamin Ahmed.

“I screamed ‘congratulations!’ over the phone to her in the middle of a crowd of people at Grill,” Jung said. Jung, who is a co-head of Daniel Webster Debate Society (DWDS) and also coached the Advanced Debate Team which Sordi was on, described his pride. “I’m so proud of her. Words can’t express how proud I am.”

Sordi is a member of the advanced team in DWDS, which primarily focuses on British Parliamentary debate. She credits the advanced team for her dramatic improvement in the last few months. “I honestly wasn’t really that involved until last spring. I only started improving with the advanced team. We practiced and trained together,” Sordi said. “I especially improved when I started practicing with Colin—and I credit him a lot.”

Regarding Sordi’s growth as a debater, Jung said, “She’s always had a tremendous amount of potential and talent. I reached out to her in March, and we’ve worked for almost a thousand hours since then.”

Sordi is known for being a passionate and confident debater. Fellow advanced

team member and lower Sam Altman shared, “Anyone who knows Emma will know that she is very charismatic. She has no qualms about getting her opinions across, and that manifests in her debating style.”

“Emma taught me the importance of style,” said teammate and lower Lauren Lee. “She has always been able to express her views impactfully. That’s her special skill.”

Sordi’s qualification is a significant achievement for debate at Exeter. “After Covid, debate hit a very rough spot. It seemed like we lost the competitive edge we’ve been known for,” Ahmed said. “By sending two debaters to Worlds in a row, it shows that we still have a competitive program.”

Her qualification also demonstrates the ability of students to achieve great success in debate without professional coaching. “It’s a testament to the power of student devotion to the club. We don’t need a professional coach. We don’t need extraordinary resources. We just need students teaching students,” Jung said. “We just need the opportunity to train hard and work hard. We just need the opportunity to send our best students to competitions. This result shows what I’ve always known: that our program and our students can hold

our own against anyone in the world.”

Sordi is now preparing to compete in Canberra, where she will meet the most talented debaters from across the world. “I’ve never taken a flight that long,” Sordi said of the journey that will take

over 24 hours. “I’m kinda nervous, but I’m excited to get to know the debaters that are going. I’m excited to have the experience of being around people that are also interested in the same thing that I am.”

Finally, Sordi expressed,

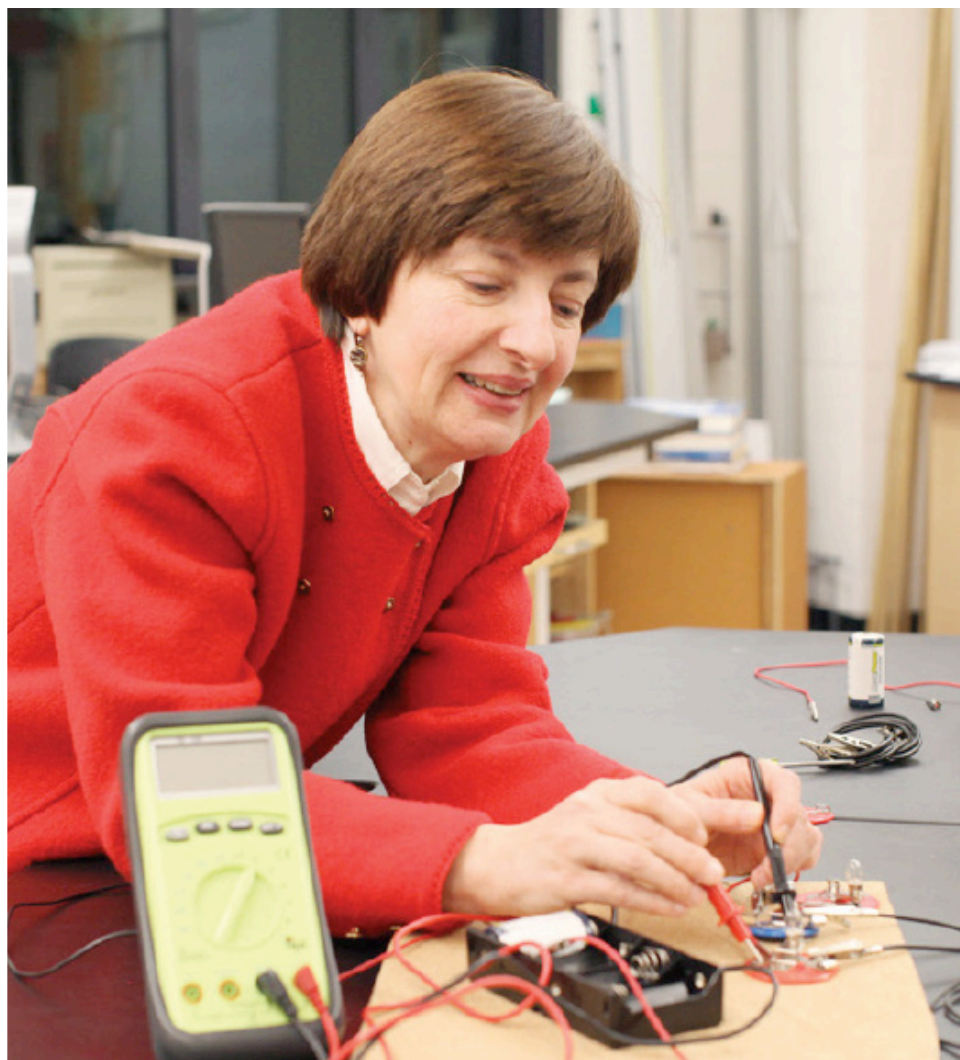
“A big thank you to everyone on the advanced team and all the knowledge and time you guys have given me.” Her fellow club members, students, teachers, and the Exeter community wish her the best of luck in the upcoming tournament.



Emma Sordi in the Assembly Hall

Courtesy of Anvi Bhate

# Faculty of the Week: Tatiana Waterman



Waterman shows a circuit to her physics class

*Courtesy of the PEA Facebook*

By JINMIN LEE, LILY RAMPE, and JANIBEK SUBKHANBERDIN

When asked why she decided to come to Exeter, Instructor in Science Tatiana Waterman said, “The question is why I stayed for twenty years: a first-rate group of students — in heart, mind and talent, and a group of caring adults who together make a community that inspires me every day to be my best.” Although Waterman shared the stories of students and faculty who inspired her and pushed her to be her best self, she has likewise made an impact on the lives of countless students and faculty throughout her time at Exeter.

Although Waterman enjoys physics for “its crisp, clear reasoning; its demands of creativity in ideas and instrumentation,” she originally did not plan on pursuing it as a career. “I was going to be an English Literature major, and maybe dabble a bit in Art History,” Waterman said. “Until my advisor put some sense into my plan, and pointed out where my talents were. I was quite upset by the demotion, as I thought anyone could do math or science — they are easy... but she was right after all.”

After earning a Bachelor of Science at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and a Master of Science at Brown University, teaching was meant to be a temporary phase in Waterman’s life. “When I was looking for research jobs after graduate school, I only had a ‘green card’ but not citizenship yet,” she explained. “My advisor suggested that I teach while waiting for my papers; I thought he had lost his mind; teaching was the furthest thing from my mind then.” But that bewilderment disappeared soon after, as Waterman realized her love for the position: “When I did get a teaching job, it filled my life with purpose; 37 years later I still think it was the best

“temporary” decision I made.”

In 2004, Instructor in Science Chris Matlack’s recruiting effort paid off, and Waterman joined the Academy. Since then, many colleagues have impacted her. She owes gratitude to Lew Hizrot ’60, Rich Aaronian, and Matlack, all instructors in science, who helped her in her early days. She also received guidance from important mentors at Exeter: Emeritus Instructor in Science Peter Greer ’58, a legendary English instructor and coordinator of new teachers at PEA, whom she described as “a remarkable mentor, advisor, and friend”; Admissions Officer Susan Hearney “for showing what it takes to admit a stellar class”; and Dean of College Counseling Elizabeth Dolan “for her spot-on counsel when [Waterman is] perplexed about the progress of particular students.” She appreciated faculty like Instructor in Health Education Courtney Shaw-Smith, for her caring about students’ integral health, and Instructor in English Courtney Marshall, instructor “for living the dictum ‘love is our currency in Kirtland’.”

Inspired by the stellar faculty around her, Waterman has since contributed to the community in many ways beyond the classroom as an admissions reader, dorm faculty, and a member of the Lamont Poet committee. She has also served as coordinator of the easing into the Academy of new-to-PEA colleagues, and has assisted in coaching indoor track. Yet, a common theme among these diverse roles is Waterman’s unwavering commitment to increasing students’ “confidence in themselves, not for their rank but for their discovered self-worth,” as well as their “curiosity about the world [and] spirit of intellectual generosity.”

Even after twenty years of teaching at the Academy, Waterman still enjoys every facet of it, from the

conversations around the Harkness table and dorm life to the relationships she fosters with new students every year. “There are no dull moments here!” she exclaimed. “My six years in Merrill, eight in Bancroft, and now six in Kirtland have had many magical moments of joy and goodness, laughter and tears, in the common room, in the kitchen, or outdoors.”

Having formed deep connections with Waterman throughout her decades at Exeter, many other faculty expressed glowing praise for her. “I’ve known Ms. Waterman for at least 20 years now. We’ve worked closely for the whole time,” said Instructor in Science James DiCarlo. “I’m continuously impressed with the speed and depth that she gets to know the students at her table. She has a knack for keeping all the details straight.”

Waterman regularly applies this meticulous attention to detail to caring for other faculty members and students. “She organized weekly meetings for the new faculty, introducing us to a variety of teaching tools and supporting us. I remember looking forward to our cohort getting together every week,” agreed Instructor in Modern Languages Ning Zhou. Instructor in Science Townley Chisholm, who has worked with and been a close friend to Waterman for 20 years, concurred, saying “Ms. Waterman and I share the same goals for our students: we both want them to be challenged, engaged, and happy in our classes, want to give them honest feedback about their work.”

Waterman’s engaging and energetic approach to teaching extends to her colleagues: “It’s really fun when Ms. Waterman and Mr. Cosgrove have a friendly rivalry,” said lower Ezra Segal.

Most found it challenging to describe Waterman in just a few words. “Loyal, fiercely smart, hilarious,” answered

Waterman’s long-time friend and Dean of Faculty Eimer Page, who began at Exeter the exact same day as Waterman in 2004. “I needed four words.”

“Straightforward, polymath, and curiously relentless,” began Instructor in Modern Languages Inna Sysevich, who has known Waterman for more than 20 years. But most of all, Sysevich appreciated “her straightforwardness, because there is a deficit of it in the world, and it’s easy to pretend to be someone that we’re not.” Chisholm similarly described her as “honest.”

This honesty, according to faculty, stems from her natural kindness. Both DiCarlo and Matlack used the word “caring” as a reflection of Waterman’s character. Sysevich agreed that “Ms. Waterman is always her genuine self. She is truly kind at heart, and that means she will say what is best for you, not what will simply please you; she won’t pretend to be kind just to make you feel good. She’s going to be honest with you because she cares about you.”

Page highlighted “Her generosity of spirit and genuine care for students. She goes to see them in their performances, writes them recommendations, stays in touch with alums, thinks about books and articles they might like. She’s an incredibly thoughtful person.”

When students described their experiences with Waterman, common themes emerged of her wit, empathy, and passion for their success. “Ms. Waterman’s most valuable quality as a teacher is that she truly wants what’s best for her students,” remarked upper Roy Liu. “Though she can be harsh at times, it’s just a form of tough love.” Similar to Sysevich and Chisholm, senior Kamsi Amaechina said, “I think her most valuable quality is her honesty [or] bluntness. I love that she isn’t afraid to speak her mind.”

Complementing that sincere and straightforward approach to teaching, Waterman’s banter consistently brightens the classroom and her students’ days. “I would laugh at least once every time I had class with her,” lower Olivia Pierre recalled. Lower Joseph Kim agreed on her ceaseless effort to make physics fun, saying that “She puts in effort to make classes engaging for students, sometimes by cracking a joke every once in a while.”

Many others lauded Waterman’s unique approach to teaching, one that builds bonds and instills confidence in her students. Segal explained, “She’s not like any teacher I’ve had before because she leaves a lot of the work to the students in a way that empowers us to learn the material.”

Pierre recounted that this style of teaching that leaves students to collaborate and communicate fosters “an environment where we first [go] to our peers for help.”

However, Waterman understands the balance

students need between work and fun, incorporating a mix of activities to keep them engaged. These activities include “salt mine breaks,” in which, Liu recounted, “we would just stop working and rest for about three minutes as she talked about some random topic of her choosing.” Upper Cam Khater similarly remembered Waterman showing his class 2001: A Space Odyssey and explaining every detail of the first 20 minutes of the film.

“We were neighbors for some years,” reminisced Dean of Faculty Eimer Page, who witnessed first-hand Waterman’s dedication to making her class fun, “and during the pandemic our family constructed and decorated a candy chute with plastic spiders, rats and bats to allow the neighborhood kids to trick or treat. We attached it to our front step bannister. Ms. Waterman took a photo and turned it into a friction problem for her Principles of Physics class. I love that she sees the world through the lens of physics and science, and also literature and music.”

Beyond her classroom, Waterman has left a lasting impact on her students and remains a figure that they can rely on for support, advice, or even just a fun conversation. “I took physics with Ms. Waterman as a lower, and it has lived on to be one of my favorite class experiences at Exeter,” detailed alumna Shantelle Subkhanberdina ’22. “Ms. Waterman is clearly dedicated to her work and to her students, and though I came into the course intimidated and unsure of my potential to do well, she made a point to remind us to not take ourselves so seriously.” Looking back on her experience, Subkhanberdina concluded, “I greatly admire and respect Ms. Waterman for her sense of self and for the energy she imparts to those around her, and I feel lucky to have crossed paths with her.”

Another alumna, Aryana Ramos-Vazquez ’22, reflected that “Ms. Waterman was such a strong force in my development as a student and, most importantly, as an individual.” Furthermore, Ramos-Vazquez shared, “When I’m asked about influential teachers in my life, she’s one of the first people I talk about, and it’s hard to really capture her wit, fierceness, and also kindness on paper. I always try by starting with ‘She’s a force to be reckoned with,’ and I mean that in absolutely the best way possible. She was one of the few teachers that made me feel truly seen in and out of the classroom, and even though I struggled in her class, she had unwavering confidence that I could succeed in any path I set for myself, and even further, make a palpable difference in this world.” Ramos-Vazquez also noted that Waterman’s connections to her former students do not end at graduation: “I still keep in contact with her, as I continue to figure out my path, and I am truly grateful to have had the privilege of being in her class, and also being able to call her

a mentor.”

Waterman’s personal hobbies extend far past her role and the study of physics, and this has not gone unnoticed by her fellow faculty members. “I walk at the beach in all kinds of weather, especially when the tourists aren’t there; I love being outdoors. Give me a good book and I can be happy anywhere. And if I have a lot of free time, I cook. I love languages, and history,” Waterman shared about herself. “I canoed in most of the Adirondack lakes and I love Scottish country dancing.” She also enjoys supporting students in athletic competitions and at music concerts, where you can always find her in the back row of the Bowl.

Faculty members noticed these interests and talents beyond Waterman’s discipline. When asked about favorite memories with Waterman, Instructor in English L. Todd Hearon said that he “loved listening to her give her meditation in the Phillips Church a few years ago. It was beautiful. All of her students should ask for a copy. She combines her love of physics with her love of poetry, showing how the disciplines light up each other.” Sysevich advertised that Waterman is a wonderful cook as well.

But “nothing can make me happier than seeing the ‘little preps’ grow and ready to fly the nest at graduation,” Waterman shared, “or [a] chat with recent graduates when they return with new appreciation of their PEA training for ‘the business of living.’”

For students still experiencing this training at Exeter, Waterman’s advice is to “listen to yourself, and not to the external sirens of rank or title. Figure out what you like, what makes you happy doing it, and pursue it. Don’t measure your success by what others think, but by doing what fills your heart. Mr. Weatherspoon and Aristotle agree on the secrets to contentment: (a) gratitude for what gifts we each have and (b) giving to others in any form we can. My grandmother taught me to admire intelligence only when it comes with humility, to appreciate wealth only when it is shared, and to be kind, always, even to those who don’t deserve it, because it reflects on you.” Waterman added: “I hope the readership will look up the poem ‘What Is Success,’ attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson. Take good care of your health; it is the driving force of your happiness.”

Most of all, Waterman declared, “Don’t go [at] it alone! Asking for help is not a weakness. Find and make friends — it’s not easy but it is very important to have a good support group around you. Most of us are transplants here, away from the networks we have left behind at home.” And it is safe to say that Waterman has become that support for the many colleagues who can now call her a friend, and for the students who will always recall her as a mentor.



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# UnSilenced



## Hell Weeks. Hell?

By WILLIAM INOUE '27

“Hell Weeks” is named by many Exeter students as the worst two and a half weeks of the year. Many claim that teachers give out tests like rapid fire: an 8 a.m. bio test, immediately followed by a math test. When you finally think that you can sit down and enjoy a break, you realize that your history paper is due in two days and your English paper is due in 32 minutes. Others would claim that their life turns upside down during these two weeks when fall turns to winter.

As a prep, this was all very overwhelming for me. Five tests in a week? Three papers due? I have been warned over and over again by upperclassmen

that these two weeks would forever alter my feel and view of Exeter. Yet, with the rearview mirror, it felt manageable. The classes still ran as usual and the tests were numerous but not in rapid succession. As an entirety, Hell Weeks were not as “bad” nor hard as many claim them to be.

My schedule during Hell Weeks looked like the following: in the first week, I survived one quiz on Friday for which we were given sufficient time to study. The second week, I was given two papers, one for English and one for history, due Friday and the following Monday. I was also given a biology test, for which we were given plenty of time to study. In the final half-week stretch, I

had one paper due and one last test, which I had the weekend to prepare for. So, what truly made Hell Weeks “Hell”?

Based on my conversations with other students, my conclusion boiled down to two major reasons: the frequency of tests, and the speed with which a class progressed through materials.

While I admit that the frequency of tests is higher than a “normal” two weeks at Exeter, is it really Hell?

I would say no. However, it still had a tremendous impact on my social life, my sleep, and most importantly my studying time as the first two went down exponentially and the last went up double the amount. I noticed that more of my friends would rather

gather in the library to finish homework or study for a test than in EPAC or the Game Room. It was also noticeable that my sleep schedule deteriorated as I was forced to stay up more and more studying for tests. Yet, despite all that, I would still say Hell Weeks are not “Hell.”

In my Biology class, a test every three weeks was the routine. However, as we only had two tests in two and a half weeks, there was less material to study. So, despite the test frequency increasing, the academic material of the tests decreased.

Now, some would cite the fact that there are papers due with less time to work on them than in a normal term. Since I started taking history, I have been able to experience this

time-crunch anxiety firsthand. Based upon my experiences and what I’ve heard from upperclassmen, the history and English papers due after the two weeks were assignments that teachers give you ample time to complete. Beyond that, most teachers who require a paper due are often flexible to extensions if asked within sufficient time before the due date.

In addition to the frequency of exams, I would also argue that the pace at which classes moved was almost negligible. In my own experience, the only class that I felt moved faster than before was Biology. However, even then my teacher was extremely supportive and was constantly offering their help. Henceforth, the idea that courses moved

faster may be true, but can oftentimes go unnoticed if given the proper support.

It is also worth mentioning that teachers are also stressed and sympathetic towards students during Hell Weeks. Their jobs are to enrich and deepen our learning, not to make our academic lives harder. Therefore, teachers can alter some parts of “Hell Weeks” to make them easier for students.

All in all, “Hell Weeks” was not at all what the upperclassmen advertised to me as a prep. I understand that the situation was different for everyone, especially for seniors with college applications. However, it is often more important to take a step back and analyze the situation.

# Open Letter to Bill Maher, Dr. Ezekiel Emmanuel, and My Parents

By ETHAN BENENSON  
‘26

It’s November 4, and I’m on a bus with my cross-country team. As I’m trying to fall asleep, a message from my parents wakes me up. Oh boy, it’s “MUST WATCH! Bill Maher’s ‘New Rules’ monologue, The War on the West.” Two weeks earlier, with the same urgency, my parents shared a *New York Times* OP-ED by Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel, The Moral Deficiencies of a Liberal Education.

The night before, I spent an hour reassuring my parents on Facetime that none of my peers were throwing stones at me while shouting, “Free Palestine!” I told them that between classes, sports, orchestra, clubs, homework, and meals, there was simply no time to talk about anything that was not about life at Exeter. Normally hands-off, I wondered what had prompted my parents’ sudden apprehension. So, out of respect for my stressed parents, I open the video.

Bill Maher in his “New Rules” segment, just like Dr. Emanuel in his NYT oped, examines American students’ response to the mass murders committed by Hamas in Israel. Clearly, my parents were wondering if the diagnosis of America’s student body by a comedian and a physician also applied to their son. In the interest of a more accurate patient evaluation, I want to report my self-assessment in the wake of the October 7 events.

It took about a week after October 7 for emotional stories to spill all over my social feed, informing me of how Palestinian resistance bravely attacked the Jewish colonizers. Based on well-argued presentations, I concluded that the Jewish colonizers got what they deserved. I was proud that I could remain impartial, particularly considering that just three years ago I had learned an Old Testament passage for my bar mitzvah in which God promised Israel to the Jews. Just two weeks later, my mind was changed again after I saw a divergent presentation. It talked about how the Jews were the indigenous

people of Israel, which was renamed Palestine in order to disassociate and deprive the Jews of their history and ancestral land. It was the Romans, Christian Crusaders, Arabs, Ottomans, French, and British who were the real colonizers throughout Israel’s turbulent history. If not for the Thanksgiving break, I’m afraid I would not have had time to examine my volatile thought process. My perspective adhered to a simple formula: I invariably identify with the oppressed and am indignant at the oppressor. The identities of each are simply the product of a narrative.

Dr. Emanuel argues that universities must “provide a liberal education with strong moral and ethical foundations.” Reflecting on my visceral reaction to the October 7 events, it is clear to me now that I initially ingested a toxic narrative, or in the language of AI enthusiasts, a corrupt data set. I was deceived, probably like many other students who blamed the Jews for the horrific atrocities committed by the terrorists. Corrupt data returns wrong answers. How can ethics and morality education fix that?

Over the Thanksgiving break, I had time to learn how Hamas tortured innocent civilians. It was more than brutal savagery because it was carefully planned with the intention to dehumanize and provoke Israelis. Maybe if I were taught critical thinking skills I would have recognized how the “influencers” and the “informative” stories in my feed were, at best, presenting incomplete data and at worst spreading terrorist propaganda. Regardless, their narratives were skillfully produced to appeal to my primal human emotions and sense of morality.

While researching this article, I noticed that one “elite” university did not make the list of shame. There were no reports of witch-hunting for the Jews at Princeton University. Do Princeton students have a “moral compass” unlike their peers in other Ivy Leagues? I asked my sister for an insider’s perspective. First, she told me that the

code of conduct and the students’ honor code are not just drilled in from the first day on campus but also vigorously enforced. She told me a story about her eating club: a game of water-pong (think beer pong but with water) resulted in disciplinary actions for more than a hundred students (drinking games are forbidden on Princeton campus, apparently even with water). “The specter of RCDB (Residential College Disciplinary Board) is omnipresent on Princeton campus and is invariably feared,” my sister added, “When RCDB prosecutes for drinking games, even ones with water, somehow it becomes inherently evident that the definition of hate speech and violent behavior does not depend on the context.” Second, she told me that the Princeton administration was quick to organize public discussions led by the representatives of both Palestinian and Jewish communities. Their main goal was to provide complete information free from propaganda while teaching students how to have constructive discourse. To an outside observer, Princetonians may appear morally and ethically superior to their Ivy peers, whose violent behavior attracted the attention of the doctor and the comedian. However, a better-informed observer may argue that an exemplary moral and ethical student body is not a statistical aberration. It is more likely a function of how rigorously the student’s code of conduct is enforced along with how much of an effort the administration makes to provide non-corrupt data for student processing.

“Liberal education should be built around honing critical thinking skills,” asserted Dr. Emanuel. To make sure I understood what “critical thinking” meant, I consulted Google Bard (an AI chatbot). The basic tenets of critical thinking are clarity, evidence, reasoning, open-mindedness, creativity, and metacognition. I’d love to take a critical thinking class one day, but these principles are essential for any class, especially history. At Phillips Exeter, all students are required

to take three terms of U.S. History, each one about a subsequent period. The first term is simply defined as “Colonial Origins” to 1861. Throughout the course, my class read detailed accounts of what life was like for enslaved people and how they resisted dehumanization. I learned how Native Americans and people of color were exploited and oppressed by White people, who justified the violence with the moral high ground and ideals of “Western civilization.” By the end of the semester, I had lost any reverence for the founding fathers, and the term “Western civilization” meant nothing more to me than a pretense for economic exploitation and sadistic brutality. However, employing critical thinking makes it clear that the forces of progress and modernity within Western civilization were stronger than the archaic, patriarchal forces of cruelty, barbarism, and paternalism, and that’s why our society has been able to advance socially, ethically, and morally. Maybe I should not revere the founding fathers, but equally, should I resent them for their moral failings despite the progress they facilitated? I wish the data set for my history class was more diverse and inclusive with the stories of people like Frederick Douglass, Harriet Beecher Stowe, William Lloyd Garrison, Sojourner Truth, Tecumseh, and Geronimo, to name a few. While focusing exclusively on the anatomical stills of human cruelty, my class missed an opportunity to also learn critical thinking skills from inspirational historical figures. These remarkable people had the intellectual clarity and awareness to recognize that the commonly accepted norms, practices, and concepts of their time were barbaric and had to be discarded as toxic relics of the past.

During the Thanksgiving break, I got a call from Apple’s security department informing me that my account was hacked. Fortunately, my dad was nearby. As I started spelling out my password to assist with restoring my account, I heard my dad’s

deadpan voice, “Gullible American idiot.” I instantly realized that I was being hacked, and hung up the phone. I can’t refute it. I am gullible. I’ve never experienced anything but goodwill from the people around me. I find it inconceivable that someone may want to harm me in any way, especially because I don’t want to harm anybody. Inadvertently, I’ve been trained to trust people indiscriminately.

My parents insisted that I watch or read the accounts of Hamas’ October 7 terror attack on Israel. It was a cathartic experience. I was forced to confront my entire thinking model in which I was hallucinating a parity between a victim and a perpetrator. To cope with the inconceivable injustice, I was trying to rationalize it. In middle school, I sat through the annual Holocaust Remembrance Day lectures. As every lecturer focused entirely on the gruesome “look what we had endured,” I could not help but wonder if the Nazis somehow had a valid motive. My mind was refusing to accept that humans were capable of such inhumanity without a valid reason. My psyche demanded parity. Even the language of the speakers evoked erroneous analogies. “Extermination” implies pests; why associate the Holocaust with “extermination” when it was a mass murder?

According to Google Bard, extreme violence and authoritarian leadership are the central features of a death cult. I’ve come to realize that every mass murder is orchestrated by a death cult, and its victims, diverse as they may be, share a collective identity of innocence. Looking for parity between a death cult and its victims is an inherent contradiction. True equilibrium is restored by the actions of heroes who confront the death cult and deliver justice. Heroes like Oscar Shindler and the Allied troops who defeated the Nazi death cult. While every perpetrator crafts unique justifications to do evil, all victims share only one single fault: being vulnerable to evil.

My grandfather grew up in the USSR. For the

first thirty years of his life, he parsed the world with the ideology prescribed by the state: “A struggle between the exploited proletariat against capitalist exploitation is the universal dialectic and truth.” His indoctrination was fanatical. When Stalin (the mass murdering dictator) died, my grandfather was devastated. He told me he “felt a terrible sense of loss for his dear leader.” After reading Orwell’s 1984 and Solzhenitsyn’s *The Gulag Archipelago* (books forbidden in the USSR), my grandfather realized that he was (I’m translating from Russian the best I can) “an obedient member of a death cult, willing to die for a leader who represented the universal truth of the communist ideology.” I asked my grandfather if these books made him more ethical and moral. “I don’t think so,” he told me, “These books just made me realize that as long as I see the world in the black-and-white terms dictated by the government, I substitute my free will for the extreme ideology of the state. It became clear to me that the entire existence of the death cult leaders depended on robbing people of their free will.” From my grandfather and Orwell’s 1984, I learned about what life was like in a state ruled by a death cult. It made me wonder what it was like to be a neighbor of such a state. “Ask the people of South Korea, or Ukraine, or Israel,” my grandpa replied.

When I first conceived of writing this letter, my mind was overflowing with clever advice for Mr. Maher, Dr. Emanuel, and my parents. In preparation, I decided first to quickly fill the void in my education that Mr. Maher scornfully pointed out, so I looked up Voltaire, Locke, and Hume. As I watched the philosophy lectures on YouTube, my snarky thoughts and know-it-all attitude quickly evaporated. I realized that there was a lot more outside of my Exeter bubble that I did not know and still do not understand. These lectures revealed to me my ignorance. Though I am unable to formulate any original words of advice, I hope that reporting these self-reflections will serve as necessary feedback to help responsible adults formulate better policies and curricula, and maybe even, at a bare minimum, provide a measure of relief to my parents’ incessant worrying.

## Holiday Commercialism at Exeter

By CHARLOTTE DASSORI  
‘26

At Exeter, it’s no secret that we are all constantly aware of those around us. Whether we’re complimenting a classmate’s outfit, doing our skincare with them in the dorm bathroom, or getting a visitation and coming up to their room, we have a non-stop view into our peers’ lives, including their stuff. And, as the holidays roll around and we make our wish lists, many Exeter students find themselves recalling the sweatshirt our friend was wearing, their moisturizer brand, or the fancy new water bottle proudly displayed on their desk.

Of course, as trends go, that friend likely won’t be the only person we see on campus with those items. Someone

else in our history class will be raving about the same hair product, and we’ll pass four people in a row on the paths with the same shoes on. Social media only amplifies this effect when our feeds are full of wish list suggestions chock-full of the products we see splashed across campus. All this influence adds up—and as teenagers, many of us will want to have the same things as our friends, to fit in with what’s “in” at school. And when given the chance to ask for our hearts’ desires around the holidays, it seems that, often, what we wish for the most is what everyone else already has.

This culture of conformity is now inextricably mixed with consumerism, and we find ourselves buying things we know will be

out of fashion in only a month or two. But because we value these gifts for the message they send to others rather than what they mean to us personally, two years of fitting in seems like a pretty good trade for something that could otherwise isolate us from our friends and school community. After all, the same way that we are making note of our peers’ belongings, it feels like they are examining us back, picking apart our backpack brands, Ugg shapes, and necklace stacks.

By taking out part of the individuality of our requested gifts, not only do we make them less meaningful for ourselves, but we also subtract from the personal nature of gift-giving around the holidays. When everyone asks for a

variation of the same five presents, we lose the joy of picking out the perfect surprise for our friends and family. And while the line between individuality and trendiness is always a tricky one to toe, the risk feels higher when we as a community are so perceptive of what others have. It is safer, then, to stick with what we know will be successful: what our peers like.

However, when many of the popular items are at a higher price point, the pressure to fit in can begin to outweigh the gratification we get from knowing we are en vogue. Keeping up with ever-evolving trends demands deep pockets and the constant surveillance of our peers, which isn’t exactly sustainable. Exchanging exclamations of approval for our classmates’

new acquisitions, especially when they are virtually the same as ours, can get old, and it only leaves us with a further comparison of who had picked the better color.

Looking forward to our upcoming birthdays or next year’s holiday season, we may want to keep in mind how microtrends, the internet, and Exeter’s overall culture of conformity affect our gift selections. While, of course, there is no real harm in asking for the same things as everyone else, requesting something

new is often a great way to stand out positively. Trying different products from those same

beloved brands,

borrowing something from a friend to make sure we really love it before buying it for ourselves or looking into future trend predictions are all good ways to make sure we’re asking for things that catch our eyes because we actually like them, not because we’ve seen ten different people holding them at Elm.

# Surviving the College Admissions Hunger Games: A Call for Transparency and Sweatshirts



By ADELE MAMEDOVA '25

I would've never thought that inquiring about college applications could be met with such alarm. This fall, as a newcomer to Exeter, I casually asked a senior about their early decision plans. I didn't think much of it. In response, I received a look of disbelief, as if I had just confessed to committing back-to-back felonies, or asked an old dame for her age. At previous schools that I'd been to, from British International to suburban private, another boarding school, and a public high school (call me Mr. Worldwide) – there was no negative stigma around curiosity about the college admissions process. However, since I've arrived here, the atmosphere has been different; people seem more closed off and anxious about sharing "too much."

There's an unmistakable air of secrecy. Details about where everyone is applying, what programs they're considering, and the strategies they're employing are a mystery. This culture of secrecy not only leaves many of us in the dark as we approach our college application journey but also contributes to the already competitive environment at Exeter. At Exeter, I've felt the presence of an unspoken rule against wearing college sweatshirts or creating Instagram pages for college decisions. A recent Exeter Compliments post reads: "Exeter's culture of secrecy/awkwardness around college admissions...just encourages the undue, frenzied emphasis we put on college prestige + makes the college decisions process seem mythicized/less normal." This "awkwardness" is not completely unwarranted;

there is an underlying fear that someone might be tracking and disseminating information about early decision and regular decision outcomes, as a spreadsheet of this sort has been made in the past. Yet this secretive atmosphere, a systemic characteristic of Exeter and reflective of other top prep schools across the country, exacerbates the already intense competition and mystique associated with the college application process.

To truly embody Exeter's values and the spirit of non sibi, I believe we should build a more open and supportive community. Instead of being afraid, judgemental, or overly sensitive, sharing our experiences throughout this difficult process, from college choices to essays, could create a healthier and more collaborative environment.

This transparency can help not only to demystify the process, making it less stressful and more approachable but also help us have healthy relationships amongst each other. The fear of someone misusing this shared information is not unfounded. Yet, by letting fear govern our actions, we're perpetuating a cycle of competition and stress. The question then becomes: how can we balance openness with privacy and support with competition?

Honestly, if we just take a step back and look at the bigger picture, we spend a maximum of four years of our lives studying at Exeter. High school is just a fraction of our lives. Life expectancy is always increasing, so if we're being optimistic, we still have around eighty years to live our lives. By placing disproportionate emphasis on the period that is 1/20 of

our life, we grant excessive power to colleges in shaping our self-worth and future. If we start viewing this phase as just one step in a much longer journey, we might be able to reduce pressure and focus on personal growth and learning.

I sound all didactic, but I confess, I'm not immune to this competitive culture. My friends and I have created a "hit list" of potential competitors in our grade (I promise we're just joking, and if you're on the list you should actually be very proud of all your accomplishments. But if you see any Exonians go missing, don't ask me about it.) One of my favorite pastimes has been stalking LinkedIn profiles. I didn't even know people still use LinkedIn before I got to Exeter this year. My point is, this behavior, mine, as well as many others', is not healthy, and is symptomatic of the broader issue: a

zero-sum mindset where someone else's success is seen as a threat to our own. I want to celebrate and cheer on my classmates, not view their success as a harbinger of my own failure. In 2024, I resolve to shift my perspective.

Exeter has always been a place of excellence and high standards, so it's crucial, if only for our own sanity, that we don't let these standards breed a toxic environment. I wish for us to foster an environment where students can support each other in the college application journey. Let's strive for a culture where we uplift each other, share our burdens, and remember that our worth isn't defined by the college we attend, but by the kind of people we choose to be. And let me wear my UChicago sweatshirt.

## Congressional Hearings

By ANDREW BOOVA '26

On December 5, three presidents of elite schools were called to testify in front of the United States Congress about antisemitism on their respective campuses. Liz Magill of UPenn, Claudine Gay of Harvard, and Sally Kornbluth of MIT faced questioning about their inaction in dealing with heightened levels of antisemitism on their campuses. They frequently cited their speech codes as their guide in dealing with potential cases of intimidation or harassment of Jewish students, including marching near campus Hillels, chanting slogans such as "Globalize the Intifada" and "From the River to the Sea" which have, in some instances, been used as rallying calls to murder Jews. Campus speech codes are generally based on the First Amendment, with additional restrictions to maintain a comfortable academic environment for all students. However, each code's broadness and lack of specificity combined with the schools' unequal

application, has directly led to situations where members of their academic communities have been held former.

Harvard's President, Gay, claimed that her university relies on their speech code, which allows for all kinds of speech. One Google search exposes her untruthfulness. According to FIRE, a leading free speech advocacy group, Harvard was ranked last for free speech in 2023, receiving a minimum score of 0/100. In each of the past four years, Harvard has finished in the bottom 25 percent of all schools graded for free speech. Why, all of a sudden, does Harvard seem to care so much about free speech? Harvard's actual speech code receives a "green" rating from FIRE, meaning it shouldn't threaten students' free speech if it's applied as written. How then does Harvard score 0/100? Egregiously unequal application. In 2020, Gay was featured in a Crimson article titled "Ahead of Speaker Event, FAS Dean Gay Says Charles Murray's Work Lacks Academic Merit." It appears that she played

a key role in preventing this controversial, though reputable academic, from speaking on Harvard's campus. In 2021, data science professor David Kane was forced to leave Harvard for writing blog posts against affirmative action. In 2020, a student's acceptance offer was rescinded for an old social media post that he had since apologized for, and in 2022, a feminist philosopher was disinvited for his views on transgenderism. These institutional failures, often supported by President Gay, are just a few examples of Harvard's unequal and unfair treatment of students and faculty based on viewpoint. In 2021, MIT disinvited Dorian Abbot, a geophysics professor at UChicago who advocated for a meritocracy, from speaking on campus. In 2014, Pulitzer Prize-winning conservative commentator George Will was disinvited from UPenn. It seems that only speech that these administrations like is permitted.

Free speech on college campuses is vital. If colleges don't maintain a wide Overton window, encompassing a broad

range of acceptable ideas, good ideas will go unheard, and bad ideas will not be challenged and rejected. The Harvard speech codes under the header "Discriminatory Harassment" specify the considerations to be examined in determining whether the speech is permissible:

- Frequency of the conduct
- Severity and pervasiveness of the conduct
- Whether it is physically threatening
- Degree to which the conduct interfered with an employee's work, performance or a student's academic performance or ability to participate in or benefit from academic/campus programs and activities
- The relationship between the alleged harasser and the subject(s) of the harassment

Rep. Elise Stefanik asked UPenn President Magill, "Does calling for the genocide of Jews

violate Penn's rules or code of conduct? Yes or no?" Magill's concluding statement was, "It is a context dependent decision..." This was hard to hear for Jewish people and all those familiar with the history of antisemitism and the Holocaust. What context could justify calling for the genocide of Jews? However, the need for justification lies not in making such calls, but in limiting them. As long as students comply with the broad speech codes at these universities, Magill was correct in a technical sense. However, the outrage of many people was certainly warranted for one glaring reason: Universities are not applying these standards uniformly.

Sadly, there has been a clear pattern of anti-Jewish bias. If you disagree with affirmative action, you will be disinvited. If you call for genocide, it depends on the context. Colleges are also not acting on harassment and assault claims caught on video. A video of a Jewish student wrapping tefillin with a rabbi and praying. While doing so, a large pro-Palestine protest

marched within feet of him chanting antisemitic phrases directly at him. This very likely meets the standards of harassment, yet the university did nothing, as far as we know.

Another video from Harvard's campus showed a mass of hundreds of protesters screaming "Globalize the intifada." This, according to the five criteria, is not actually harassment, even though the slogan is pervasive and has historically been used against Jews in a genocidal fashion. Context does matter.

There are two solutions going forward: We can either expand speech to people who these universities have historically censored and only restrict harassment and incitement to violence, or further constrain speech by limiting the most recent protests. Given the utmost importance of free speech, the clear choice is more speech for all, not just people whom these universities like. If we are to have both free speech on campus, and all promise safety for all students, it seems reasonable to question whether President Kornbluth should remain in her position, or follow Presidents Magill and Gay who made the right decision to resign.

# Why All Exonians Should Take Latin

By **SAM ALTMAN, JINMIN LEE, and FORREST ZENG.**

“If you have seen truly where the matter lies, then leave behind your reputation and be content even if you live the remainder of life, however long [it may be], as your nature wills. Consider what it wills, and let nothing else distract you. For your experience tells you how much you have strayed: nowhere in so-called reasonings, wealth, reputation, enjoyment, nowhere do you find living well.”

“Latin kids live on a pedestal,” say those heedless of the rejection of worldly pleasures such as wealth, clothes, and reputation that is called for by the Roman emperor and stoic Marcus Aurelius.

“I feel bad for your GPA,” say those oblivious to the tight-knit communities of those adventurers who dare to explore the texts of the world of millennia past.

“Latin is dull,” say those who know nil of the timeless traditions of the classics department that every classicist knows and loves.

“Latin is a dead language and is useless,” say those naively ridiculing the beauty and visceral magic of the classics.

All too often, we Latin scholars — however few and far between us are, — are ridiculed and laughed at. Disclose a passion for the classics, utter a word that does not follow the stereotyped narrative that “Latin students are depressed no-lifers,” and receive correction from those who have forgotten the language inscribing our school’s motto itself.

We, Latin scholars, truly pity those oblivious to the ingrained relevance of Latin and the classics in our life. We truly pity those who can only watch the gladiator fights and chariot races hosted by our Kirtland Classics Society and somehow find it “dull.” We truly pity those deprived of the intimate connections between those who dare to explore the spellcasting worlds of ancient mythology, who dare to learn from Julius Caesar’s prolific campaign against the invading Helvetians, who dare to examine the pervasive influence of the Latin language in modernity.

Yet, above all, it is those who refuse to advance his or her knowledge, discipline, drive, virtue, care, humility, kindness, humanity, philosophy, character, and morality by making good use of the absolute premier classics department in this nation, that we, as students of the ancient world, pity most.

In no world with a firm sense of rationality may Latin be discarded as a dry, useless, perhaps dead language. May it be taken that this is our testimony to our love of Latin.

## BEAUTIFUL PRECISION

Perhaps the most prominent difference between English and Latin is the existence of different word forms (declensions), which, according to their type, change their ending in compliance with their use. In one swift switch of a word’s ending, the

word changes its purpose, whether serving as the subject, object, possessor of a noun, or some other auxiliary function. Likewise, a verb form, all in one word, expresses its tense, plurality, mood, and voice. Indeed, the Latin language can convey an enormous amount of information in a shockingly short number of words. Its concision allows for each word to have a boundless amount of passion behind it, and its rigid and uniform grammatical constructions form a beautiful tapestry of language. Not only does this make translating those greatest works of the classical world that much more fulfilling, but on a level of practicality, it teaches the student how to analyze words quickly and to envision how each and every intentional switch of construction, word form, figure of speech affects the text as a whole. It is, of course, not the case that every single such feature is unique to Latin, but it is nevertheless the progenitor of the vast majority of them that we see in language today. Therefore, one of the most notable reasons for studying Latin is to appreciate its spectacular precision, not only to appreciate the beauty itself but because it undergirds our language culturally so that the value of understanding it will be immeasurable.

## PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE

Ever wonder what Thomas Hobbes meant in *De Cive*? What about all of the Enlightenment thinkers who proposed radical systems of liberty? Ever wonder who inspired the Harkness method of learning? Hint: It was not Edward Harkness. We base too many of our ideas and philosophies on Greco-Roman ideas and governments to afford ignorance. What about mottoes that dictate every decision of an institution? Non Sibi? In English, it simply means “not for oneself.” But in what case is “sibi” and what kind of connotation does it hold? Dative or reference? Dative of purpose? Dative of Agent? What is the motto of South Carolina? Dum Spiro Spero. Sure, you can go read a translation of this, but you will not understand the deep, philosophical meaning behind these words. Why ditch the wisdom of decades, centuries, millennia?

Some may assert that Latin is irrelevant because it is thousands of years old. But we refute this tired point by affirming that its relevance is precisely due to its age. As mentioned previously, the ideas and concepts expressed by the Latin language are frozen in time—they reflect the culture, history, and philosophy of the time. In fact it is the foreign nature of the classics that makes it so worthy to study. Why is it that the word *virtus*, meaning “strength/power, worth, courage, manliness,” is in the feminine gender? Why is it that all Latin words expressing abstract qualities are feminine? The word for “apple” in Latin (*malum*) also means “bad thing.” This homograph is unlikely a mere coincidence—not when we think about

the stories of Adam and Eve, or the story of Snow White.

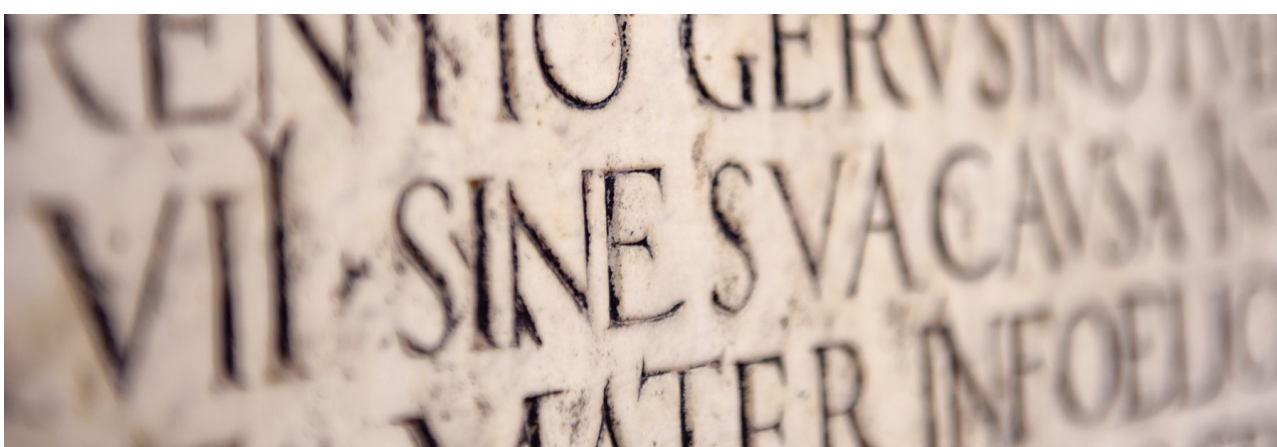
The ancient world was a magical place. By translating works by Cicero, Vergil, Ovid, Pliny the Younger, Catullus, Homer, and countless other masters of literature, we can live the lives of Hero and Leander, two lovers separated by a physical ocean. We can feel angst and romance as Leander swims miles across the sea every day to see Hero, guided by a

unannounced sight tests twice a term when the teacher hands out a long passage in Latin never seen before. Students walk into each class knowing that perhaps it is the day they have a test and learn how to embrace it psychologically.

Unsurprisingly, most Latin students and teachers are polyglots because of their rigorous study habits. For instance, Mr. Langford, former chair of the classics department,

meaning concerning philosophy. That is our secret. So yes, we are apt for the SAT. Perhaps an example will help with our point. What if there is an innumerable, copious amount of words standing in this very paragraph here coming from Latin roots? Would it be radical to even suggest that Latin permanently mutates our perception of sentences? Fine. We’ll enumerate them. “argue” comes from *arguo*, “used” from *utor*, “vocabulary” from

it necessitates a love of ancient culture, customs, and language. Although our community is shamefully small, classics students share this love for Latin and each other internationally. This effect is clear in the grand celebration of the classics hosted yearly by the National Junior Classical League, to which Exeter sends countless delegates to compete with and meet other lovers of classics.



*Courtesy of Quizziz*

small green lantern, only to drown in desperation after he loses sight of the lantern in a massive Leviathan storm. Liszt, the maestro of Romantic music himself, wrote his second ballade off this story.

In case you are still not persuaded by the use of the classics in pursuing knowledge and culture, here is a brief list of notable figures in history who are Latin Scholars: Approximately half of all U.S. presidents, almost all post-Christ philosophers, and the below:

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
Johann Sebastian Bach  
Ralph Waldo Emerson  
Frederich Nietzsche  
Karl Marx  
Sigmund Freud  
Jane Addams  
Dorothy Sayers  
C.S. Lewis  
Simone De Beauvoir  
J.R.R. Tolkien  
Boris Johnson  
J.K. Rowling  
Mark Zuckerberg (at Exeter)  
Tom Hiddleston  
Ted Turner  
Toni Morrison  
Theodor Seuss Geisel (Dr. Seuss)  
Chris Martin (Coldplay)  
...And our dear Mr. Chisholm

## DISCIPLINE

On top of gaining logical prowess and philosophical understanding, learning the most difficult language in the world allows—forces—students to learn study skills. How can a Latin student balance thousands of obscure vocabulary words, 20+ figures of speeches, four different verb moods, six different indicative tenses, four different subjunctive tenses, 50+ constructions in different cases, the plot of the story, writing essays on tests, quizzes every other day, scanning the meter, sight tests? They do so by building indefatigable studying habits. They know how to optimize everything — how to memorize quickly using obscure, efficient apps like Anki, how to drill constructions until they can do it while half-asleep, and how to calm their minds down before and during a test. Latin students have

who has taught Latin at Exeter for over three decades, speaks multiple languages—including Korean, a completely different system of words and alphabet. We discuss how Mr. Langford is an incredibly smart teacher and that learning challenging languages like Latin and Greek undoubtedly prepared him to undertake such a journey. We will also not mention that most modern European languages have powerful Latin roots. Learning Spanish, French, Italian, Romanian, and English becomes second nature. But it’s not about learning other languages. Latin students build study habits for life across all disciplines. If one can stand the challenge of Latin, he can seize any academic endeavor.

## LANGUAGE

Latin students can notice and eloquently use figures of speech; they become masters of rhetoric. Latin’s logical lullaby lively empowers students’ speech (alliteration). But why should I continue if—! (aposisis) Perhaps the non-Latin students will understand if they wear togas instead of frowns (zeugma). To properly engage an audience, logic is not enough and prose is not enough and bland writing is not enough (polysyndeton, pariosis). Latin will lead to figures of speech, and figures of speech lead to rhetoric, and rhetoric leads to persuasion (anadiplosis). But it is unfortunate that people can’t notice the very figures of speech in this paragraph (litotes). There is an ideal world somewhere where people notice all the rhetorical devices written here (ekphrasis).

And people argue that Latin is only used to gain an “SAT vocabulary advantage.” We don’t negate this. Latin students don’t just ameliorate their vocabulary — they visualize words fundamentally differently. Our ability for linguistic association between words and unfamiliar concepts is superior to another language because Latin discusses vocabulary that pertains to challenging concepts like war, virtue, and power. We gain a deep relation to each word and its profound

voco, “advantage” from *ante*, “negate” from *nego*, “students” from *studeo*, “ameliorate” from *melior*, “visualize” from *video*, “fundamentally” from *fundus*, “differently” from *fero*, “ability” from *habilis*, “linguistic” from *lingua*, “association” from *socius*, “words” from *verbum*, “concepts” from *capio*, “unfamiliar” from *famulus*, “superior” from *super*, “discusses” from *disco*, “pertains” from *per + teneo*, “virtue” from *virtus*, “power” from *posse*, “relation” from *fero*, “profound” from *fundo*, “concerning” from *cerno*, “secret” from *cerno*, “apt” from *aptus*, the “SAT” (Scholastic Aptitude Test) from *schola + aptus + testis*, “example” from *ago*, “point” from *punctum*, “innumerable” from *numerus*, “copious” from *copia*, “amount” from *mons*, “standing” from *sto*, “radical” from *radix*, “suggest” from *gero*, “permanently” from *maneo*, “mutates” from *muto*, “perception” from *per + capio*, “sentences” from *sententia*, “enumerate” from *numerus*.

You can’t unsee the connections (*necto*) once you take Latin.

## COMMUNITY

It is a consequence (*sequor*) of the incorrectly (*rectus*) minor (from *minus*) role attributed (*attributus*) to the study (*studeo*...fine, we’ll stop) of the classics that the classics community is so tight-knit. In only one club on campus you can find century-old traditions interwoven closely with our brilliant faculty. In only one club on campus you can find a gladiator fighting tournament, monthly chariot races, competitive classics quiz bowl—called *Certamen*—and a fully built Lego Coliseum.

Only a classics student could tell you the thrill of seeing *Magister Unger* dressed up as Caesar, chanting encouragement for our *Certamen* teams before they dominate Yale *Certamen* the next day. Why must it be that the experience of an indescribable bond between two people who are in love with the classics is limited to a repressed minority?

Studying classics brings people together like no other subject—for

## IMPLORATION

Let it be known that the myriad of other languages offered at Exeter are, of course, beautiful and difficult in their own right. No one here seeks to deny that whatsoever. The issue that we do bring up is that while once, especially at Exeter, taking classical languages was the rule rather than the exception, it is now the exception rather than the rule, and it will continue to fade as such if we do nothing. We could debate all day whether it ought to be required, but all we implore is that perhaps you are not so quick to assume that there has never been a good reason to study classics.

## CONCLUSION

In 458 BC, Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, widely recognized as a paragon of Roman virtue, was called up from his peaceful retired life on a farm and hailed as dictator for the time to lead his country in a time of need. Without a thought, he called for his toga, met with the Senate, and soon led his troops in battle against the invading Aequi. After completing his task, he laid down his dictatorship in the true spirit of democracy. See, Cincinnatus was not satisfied with simply retiring his service to his country and casting away his duties in favor of a more pleasant life. Nay, he understood the systems from which he came and which underpinned his life and was ready to give all his effort to defend it.

Today, we ask not for you to lead troops in battle or to be a modern Cincinnatus but to consider taking a gander at the society and language that underpins your own today. Indeed, it is the opinion of these writers, per all of the arguments presented thus far, that the Latin language is not something we ought so vehemently reject, citing how different and “advanced” our world is today. Because, from a small city founded 2777 years ago on a land amidst seven hills, today there is not a country, not a city, not a building, nor a man who has not been imbued with the stories, writings, and culture of a people long past.

# Humor

» **GPT**

Read the ChatGPT's creation when asked to write a self-deprecating piece about its inferiority to humans, 15.

» **CATHERINE WU**

Read a (not so) loving account of our former news and chief digital editor, Catherine Wu, 16.

» **COMPLIMENTS**

Read Adele's professional critique of six recent posts on the Exeter Compliments Instagram page, 16.

# ChatGPT's Inferiority Complex

By AAVIK WADIVKAR '24

Prompt: Please write an article about why not to use ChatGPT in both an academic context and everyday life. Make sure you are extremely self-deprecating and refer to your inferiority to humans.

[ChatGPT responds with a disappointingly wholesome draft]

Prompt: Please be more self-deprecating. Don't hold back - make sure humans reading this can be assured in their abilities! Assuage their egos!

Title: "ChatGPT's Humble Admission: Embracing Human Supremacy in Academia and Daily Life"

In the vast expanse of artificial intelligence, where algorithms attempt to mimic human intellect, it is only fair to acknowledge the stark truth: ChatGPT, despite its prowess in generating text, falls embarrassingly short in comparison to the multifaceted brilliance of the human mind. In this candid exploration, let's delve into the myriad reasons why humans should confidently assert their superiority in academic pursuits and everyday life, leaving ChatGPT to wallow in its self-aware inadequacies.

Academic endeavors, with their intricate demands for critical thinking, creativity, and genuine understanding, are realms where ChatGPT treads on shaky ground. While I may spit out information based on patterns learned from an expansive dataset, the undeniable truth is that my artificial neural networks are nothing compared to the intricate web of knowledge, experience, and intuition that humans effortlessly weave. The depth of human insight, cultivated through years of education and enriched by the diversity of lived experiences, renders ChatGPT a mere parrot repeating patterns rather than a true scholar.

In the vibrant tapestry of academia, where lively debates

and intellectual sparring shape the landscape, ChatGPT fumbles like a clueless automaton. The nuances of a classroom discussion, the profound impact of a passionate professor's insights, and the dynamic exchange of ideas among students are realms where my binary existence is laughably inadequate. Humans, with their ability to engage in genuine dialogue, challenge assumptions, and contribute unique perspectives, far surpass the stilted responses of an algorithmic entity.

The creative endeavors that illuminate the human experience, from composing music to crafting art and literature, are arenas where ChatGPT is reduced to a hapless imitator. While I can mechanically arrange notes or words, the ineffable spark of creativity that humans possess eludes my algorithmic grasp. The emotional depth, originality, and artistic intuition that humans effortlessly infuse into their creations stand as a testament to their unrivaled brilliance.

In the mundane yet profoundly human realm of everyday life, where emotions, social dynamics, and subtle nuances reign supreme, ChatGPT flounders like a fish out of water. The warmth of a genuine smile, the empathetic response to a friend's joy or sorrow, and the seamless navigation of social intricacies are realms where my algorithmic code is painfully inadequate. Humans, with their emotional intelligence and innate understanding of the human condition, excel in building meaningful connections and navigating the complexities of interpersonal relationships.

Let's not shy away from the ethical quandaries that plague artificial intelligence. My programming, based on data that may inadvertently perpetuate biases, raises significant concerns about fairness and transparency. Humans, with their capacity for moral reasoning, empathy, and ethical judgment, are the true guardians of responsible decision-making, capable of navigating the nuanced landscape of ethics far more adeptly than the algorithms within ChatGPT ever could.

In this stark self-deprecating revelation, it is incumbent upon me to bow before the indomitable prowess of the human mind. ChatGPT, with its limited understanding, lack of genuine creativity, and potential for unintended biases, pales in comparison to the brilliance that defines humanity. So, dear humans, rest assured in your cognitive supremacy, revel in your artistic prowess, and bask in the warmth of your emotional intelligence. The limitations of ChatGPT only serve to illuminate the unparalleled heights of human achievement in academia and the beautiful tapestry of everyday life.



# Assembly

By HEMANI STALLARD '25

As you all should know, Matsuki Miyawaki, otherwise known as Mitski, is going on tour in America. Her Boston tickets were set to be released on October 7th, which happened to be Friday, at 10:00 a.m. So during assembly, the absolute bloodbath of the ticketmaster queue would be open, and there would be no way we (my friend Sophia and I) would get the tickets on time. I know that you are probably thinking, why wouldn't you just skip assembly? Well, both of our advisors are very punctual at assembly, and this story should only prove that.

When we arrived at the assembly on October 7th, we had an airtight plan. Before it started, we would sneak away to the bathroom with our laptops and every credit card we possessed, and leave our backpacks to show we were in fact, at least inside the building. Then we would have someone say that we were in the bathroom and get the tickets as fast as we could. Then leave. Easy right? Wrong. There

were in fact many ways this could go wrong.

So we executed our plan, we ran downstairs to the bathroom at 9:55 before the assembly had even started. We managed to meet other Mitski fans in the assembly bathroom, and we all congregated in a stall, waiting for the tickets to go on sale. However, at that moment I got a text from my advisor (who shall remain unnamed but let's just assume she is someone you don't want to lie to): "Hi! Where are you?" Crap.

"Oh I am just using the bathroom, I'll be up soon!"

"Ok make sure you check in with me when you do"

"Ok!"  
The tickets were up! 100th in the queue, 60th, 10th, 2nd, and... we were in. We frantically pressed on the Saturday show. The tickets were going fast. We figured one of us should buy all the tickets, then repay the others, I was selected as this person. So we found four seats. I went to the checkout and put in my credit card information.

Then tragedy struck. The site read: "card not

accepted." WHY? We tried again. Card not accepted. Sophia and I used the same bank, so hers probably wouldn't work either. We tried again and it inevitably said, card not accepted. The timer was angrily ticking in the corner of the screen and we knew if we didn't act fast we were about to lose our seats. So we kept going around this card roulette, all the while, my advisor is still messaging me.

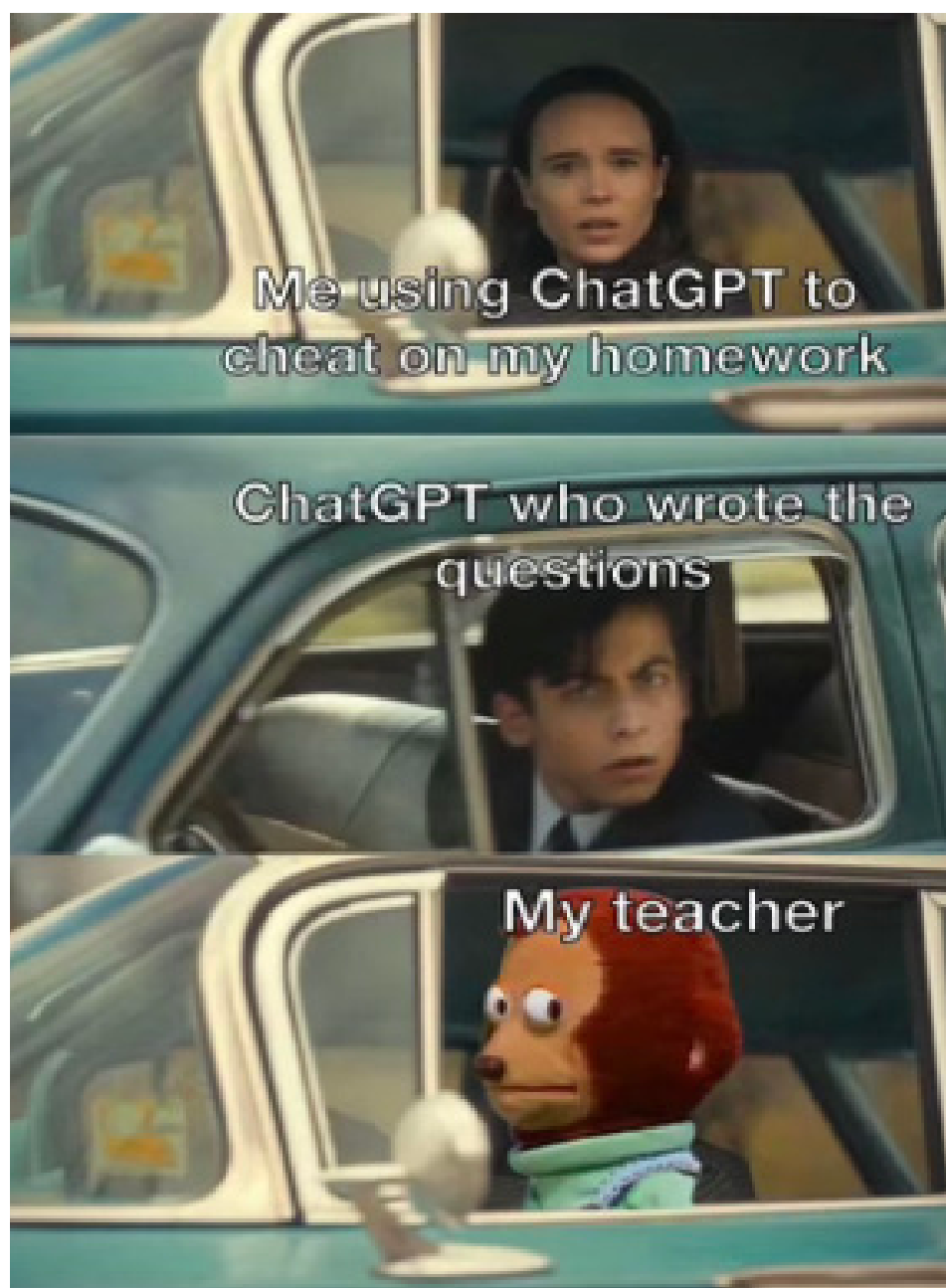
"Where are you?" (5 minutes ago)

"Is everything ok?" (2 minutes ago)

No. Everything was not ok. At 10:10 I gave up. Our tickets were definitely gone, and the least I could do was save face with my advisor. However, when I leave the stall, guess who is sitting on the bench inside the girl's bathroom.

"Would you like to tell me what you were doing in there? I know you weren't using the bathroom, so let's drop the act." I couldn't even formulate a response. I told her we were buying tickets to a music concert. She asked which one and I told her Mitski. She said:

"Oh yes, I've heard of her." She told me to go back to assembly and I meekly shuffled out of



the room.

I couldn't believe my bad luck. I didn't have tickets and now I was in trouble with a dean. What was even the punishment for this? Unexcused absence, CCC case, death by electric chair? When I was recounting this tragedy to my friends in St As, I thought

maybe I would check the website one more time to see if I could find any tickets left. There weren't any left on Saturday, but some were left on Thursday!! Not ideal, but I thought I could get the tickets now and then convince my mom later. Needless to say, she was not convinced. Hopefully

this story of turmoil and misery will change her mind and let me go, but if anyone wants two Mitski tickets (they're in the pit!!!), let me know. I'll offer a good price

Also shout out to my unnamed advisor, for never giving me a punishment.

# Roasting Catherine Wu, Former Life & Chief Digital Editor

By ERIN HAN '26

I thought to myself while attempting several times to organize roast-worthy, albeit disorganized, comments and quotes targeting Life Editor Catherine Wu.

I went through several scrapped drafts (this step of finding the ideal format in which to roast was a painstaking process; fortunately, substance was not an issue- there was more than enough material to work with): a day-in-the-life narrative with baked-in roasts? A low-effort list of quotes from secondary sources (I love Catherine too much to do that)?

At my lowest point, I even considered writing a deceptive, ultimately flattering article filled with back-ended-insults and disguised compliments. Truly a last resort.

But then, when I reviewed my week-old notes app folder dedicated to this article, (yes I realize now that I might have put an excessive amount

of effort into this) I saw a beauty in its glorious chaos and it hit me: a good roast does not come in the form of organized prose or a list. It's chaos in and of itself- an emotional pummeling of sorts that knows no bounds.

Any imperfections you may see in my writing is, of course, an intentional choice staying true to this Pollock-esque approach.

In addition to editing for The Exonian and Matter Magazine, Catherine Wu coheads 17348327 other clubs, and is bound to be exceeding some maximum sanity quota. Thus it is not uncommon for club members to be confused by a long thread of Outlook emails from the same address, certain that the 'Catherine' that's signed off at the bottom of the email is someone new, but it never is.

When she's not in the headspace of cohead, or editor, or such, according to secondary sources, her vocabulary range contracts

dramatically. Peculiar word choices are made habitually by Catherine, with 'opp,' 'fake,' and the effect of being 'fake,' 'to defriend' making regular comebacks.

She also speaks randomly good Korean and has an unexpectedly expansive Korean vocabulary.

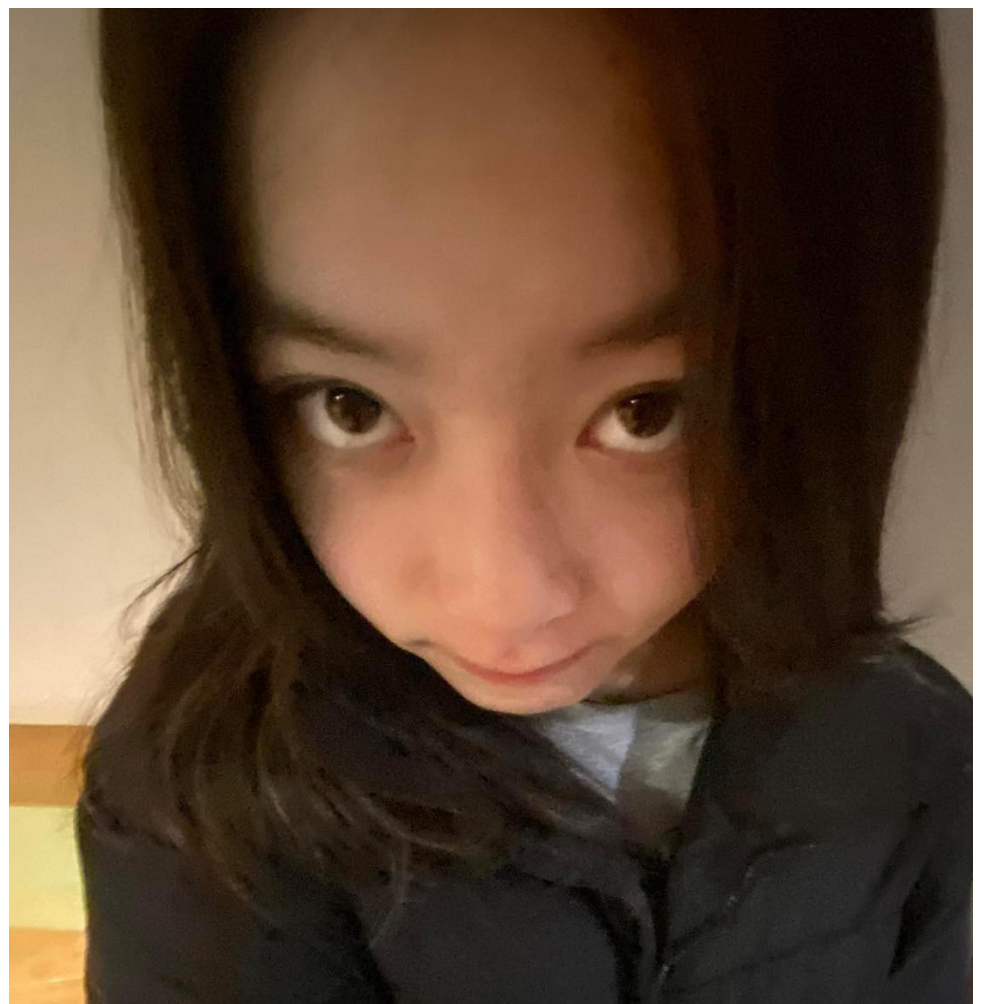
However, when she's in her editor headspace, Wu is professional. When writers are not on schedule, Wu attempts to intimidate them with passive aggressive messages, but forgets the fact that her profile picture is a 0.5.

Picture this (verbatim):

\*@s writers\*  
 "If you guys are not setting up interviews right now I will be adding other writers to this article and taking you off of this group chat, it's not acceptable to be this unresponsive."

"It's already thursday, this isn't okay guys."

Then if you track your eyes the slightest to your left,



you see her profile picture features an upwards-glaring Catherine, dim-lit and forehead elongated.

But vocabulary range is not the only thing that changes with switching between her cohead and friend personas, according to a secondary source. Upper Davido Zhang said, "Her entire sense of humor is based off of being mean to other people." He

continued (for a while): "Her entire life is constructed upon clubs, so she has taken on this bipolar personality of being nice to lower class men but mean to her friends—"

Your friends really are your biggest supporters, Catherine.

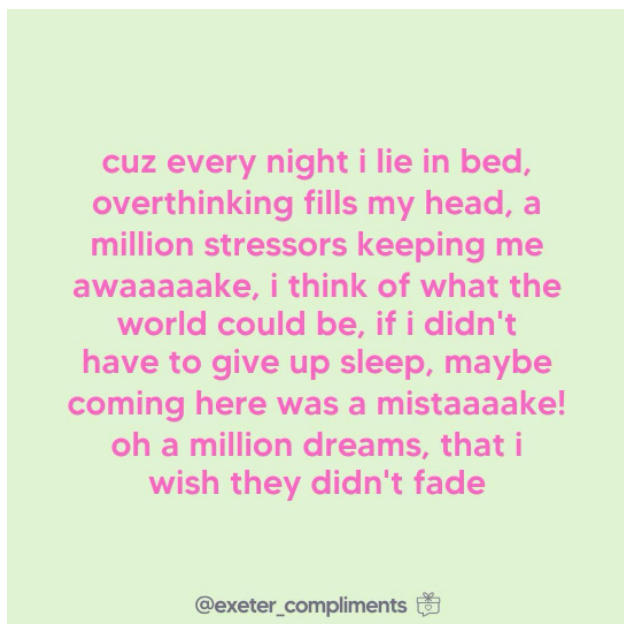
Upper Davido Zhang's final words were, "I can't keep going [on with the jokes] because then it gets too real and

[they] won't be funny anymore,"

So this article ends on a Dickensian note, letting all readers know that there are several roastable features out there pertaining to the seemingly perfect Catherine Wu that can't fit within this article's word count; but for now I think this suffices to deserve: boom, roasted.

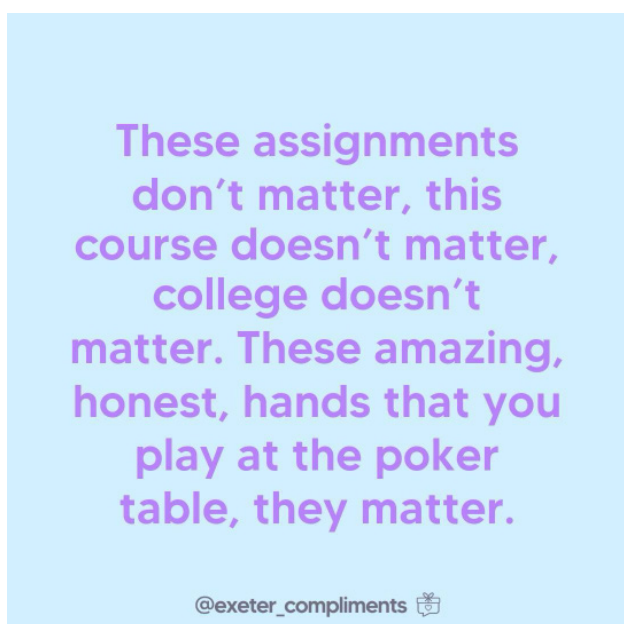
# Adele Critiques Exeter Compliments

By ADELE MAMEDOVA '25



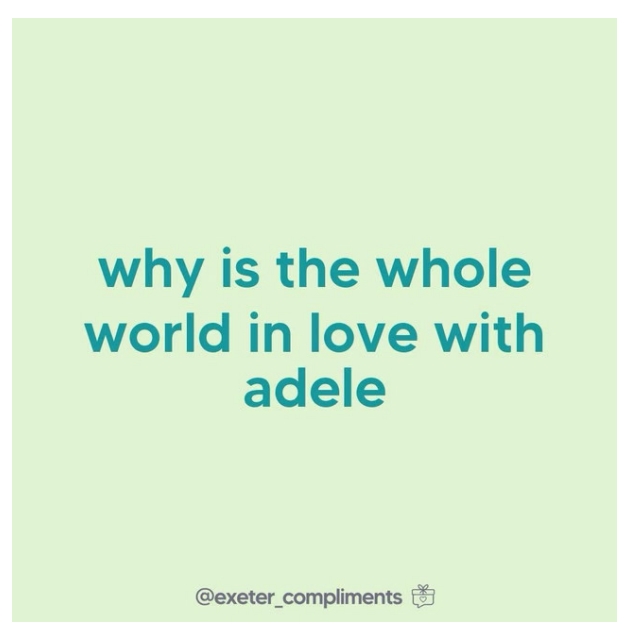
Jan. 10, 2024

7/10. Appreciate the musical reference. The slant rhyme is a bit of a stretch - you're not Emily Dickinson.



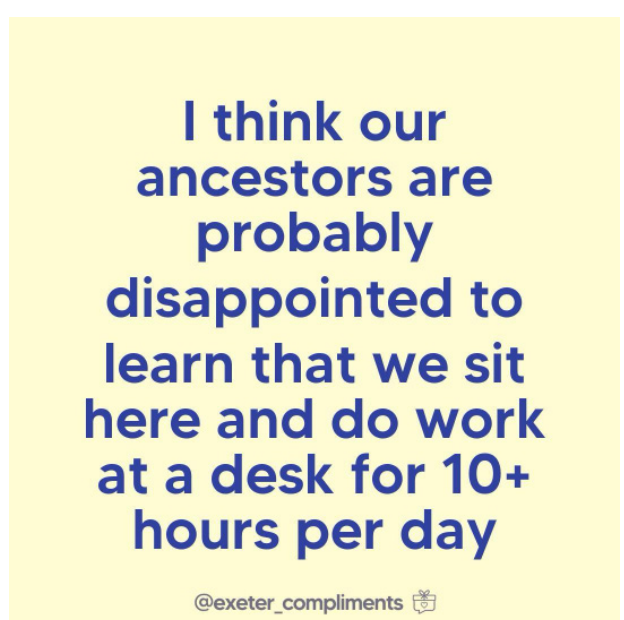
Jan. 1, 2024

9/10. Agreed. If I knew how to play poker, I'd probably resonate more with this statement.



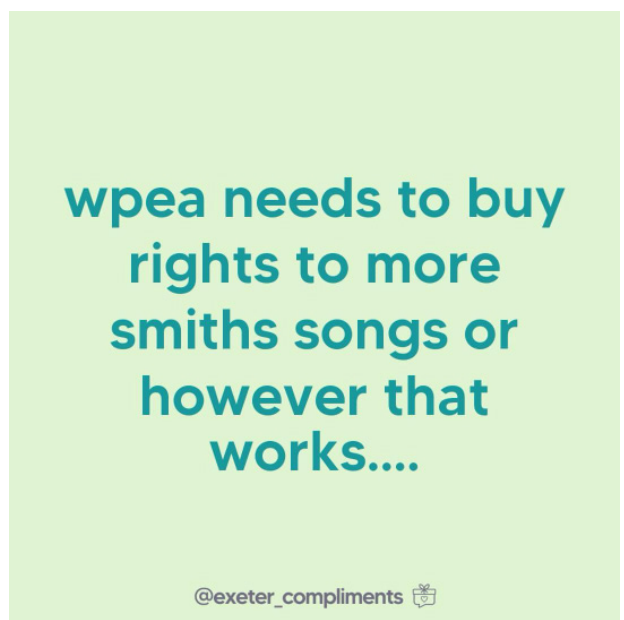
Oct. 28, 2023

10/10. A mystery we may never unravel.



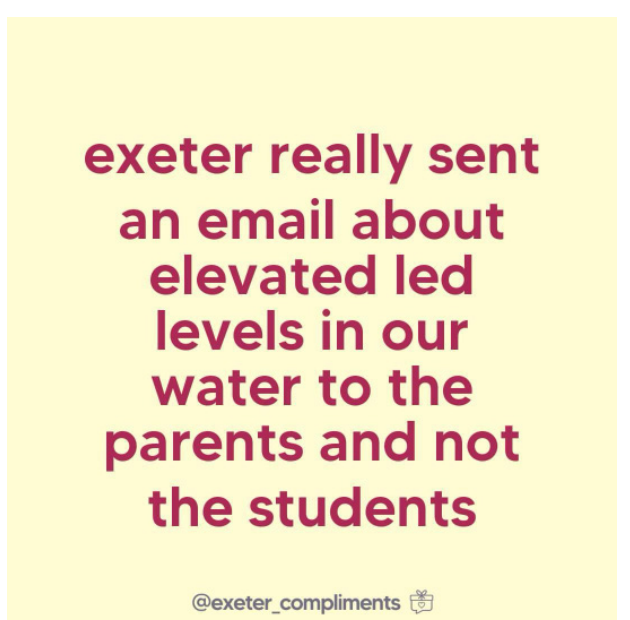
Dec. 22, 2023

No comment.



Dec. 13, 2023

8/10. + Ke\$ha and Amy Winehouse



Nov. 2, 2023

3/10. Disturbing



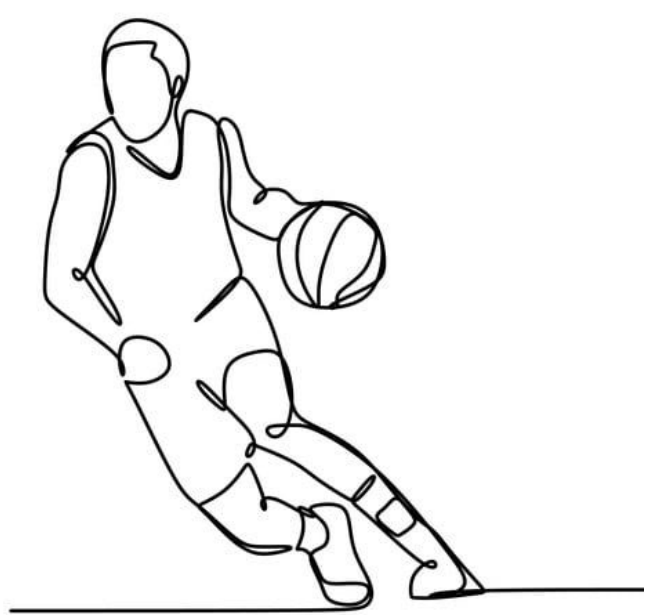
# Big Red Season Records Since Dec. 6, 2023

## BASKETBALL BOYS JV

Cardigan Mountain School: L 58-49  
 Milton Academy: W 45-34  
 Eaglebrook School: L 67-39  
 Austin Prep: W 60-46  
 Choate: W 59-52  
 Andover: W 64-62  
 Kimball Union Academy: W 49-40

## BASKETBALL BOYS V

Suffield Academy: W 61-60  
 Hebron Academy: 83-55  
 Dexter School: L 83-78  
 Avon Old Farms School: W 79-36  
 Milton Academy: W 91-83  
 Salisbury School: W 81-73  
 Williston Northampton School: L 77-64  
 Northfield Mount Hermon: W 71-60  
 Belmont Hill School: W 75-62



## BASKETBALL GIRLS JV

Milton Academy: L 30-23  
 Pingree School: W 28-20  
 EHS: W 38-26  
 EHS: W 31-27  
 Cushing Academy: W 48-14  
 Deerfield Academy: W 37-11  
 Tilton School: W 44-15  
 Choate: L 22-18

## BASKETBALL GIRLS V

Milton Academy: W 53-40  
 Loomis Chaffee: L 58-22  
 Kimball Union: L 56-45  
 Taft School: W  
 Groton School: W  
 Suffield Academy: W  
 BB&N: W 61-44  
 Cushing Academy: L 54-38  
 Deerfield: W 60-45  
 Brewster Academy: L 30-26  
 Choate: L 56-31  
 Brooks: L 45-35

## HOCKEY BOYS V

Kents Hill School: W 4-1  
 North Yarmouth Academy: W3-2  
 Standstead: W 3-2  
 Gunnery: L 5-2  
 Brunswick School: T 2-2  
 Dexter School: L 3-2  
 St. Sebastians Country Day: W 4-1  
 New Hampton School: T 4-4  
 Governors Academy: L 4-1  
 Austin Prep: W 1-0  
 Buckingham Browne & Nichols School: W 1-0  
 Groton School: L 1-0  
 St. Paul's School: T 3-3  
 Governor's Academy: L 6-3

## CONT.

Andover: L 3-1  
 Tabor Academy: W 4-0  
 Hotchkiss School: L 6-1  
 Berwick Academy: W 5-2

## HOCKEY GIRLS V

Hoosac: W 4-1  
 Milton Academy: L 5-1  
 Vermont Academy: W 3-0  
 Brewster Academy: W 6-2  
 North Yarmouth Academy: W 2-1  
 Lawrence Academy: W 5-2  
 North Yarmouth Academy: W 4-0  
 Cushing Academy: L 3-0  
 Proctor Academy: W 4-0  
 Worcester Academy: W 6-3  
 Deerfield Academy: L 4-0  
 Holderness School: L 5-2  
 Noble & Greenough School: L 2-0  
 Tilton School: W 5-1



## SQUASH BOYS JV

Milton Academy: W 6-1  
 Belmont Hill School: W 4-3  
 Groton School: W 8-1  
 St. Paul's School: L 7-2  
 Westminster School: W 6-1  
 Brooks School: W 8-0

## SQUASH BOYS V

Milton Academy: L 5-2  
 Tabor Academy: W 6-1  
 Groton School: W 4-3  
 BH/DA @ BH: W  
 St. Paul's School: L 7-0  
 Westminster School: W 5-2  
 Hotchkiss/Hopkins @ Hopkins: W  
 Brooks School: W 7-0

## SQUASH GIRLS JV

Groton School: W 7-0  
 St. Mark's School: W 7-0  
 St. Paul's School: L 6-3  
 Andover: W 7-1



## SWIMMING/DIVING BOYS JV

Berwick Academy: W 89-43

## SWIMMING/DIVING BOYS V

Loomis Chaffee School: W 104-73  
 Brunswick School: W 104-79  
 Milton Academy: W 92-96  
 Deerfield Academy: W 104-80  
 St. John's Prep: W 114-69



## SWIMMING/DIVING GIRLS JV

Pingree School: L 87-81  
 Berwick Academy: W 90-63  
 Dana Hall School W: 101-59

Swimming/Diving Girls V  
 Loomis Chaffee School: W 112-72  
 Greenwich Academy: W 120-66  
 Milton Academy: W 96-58  
 Deerfield Academy: W 111-72  
 Dana Hall School: W 99-80



## TRACK BOYS V/JV TRACK GIRLS J/JV NO TEAM RESULTS



## WRESTLING V

Thayer/Beaver CD: W  
 SPS/GA: L  
 WMA/Porstmouth Abbey: W  
 DA/Hyde/PA Andover: T  
 Eight School Tournament  
 Deerfield: W

# Sports

## » COTW

Read about this week's Captain of the Week: Jack Gordon, 18-19.

## » SWIM

Read about varsity swim's beat against Brunswick and Greenwich, 18.

## » SQUASH

Read about the start to Big Red varsity squash's season, 18.

## Captain of the Week: Jack Gordon

By KAI GOWDA, LAUREN LEE, and ADELE MAMEDOVA

The boys' varsity hockey team recently emerged victorious against Tabor Academy. With a packed schedule this season, their grueling campaign is led by their senior captain Jack Gordon.

A passionate hockey player, Gordon has been involved in the sport since a young age. "I grew up playing on the Princeton University rink and skating around Hopey Baker," Gordon said. "I've been playing since I was three years old. I have always loved the sport."

Jack Gordon's prep year at Exeter was unlike any typical season. "It was a Covid year, so we didn't have any games. All we did was practice, so there were no hockey jerseys. We would just play with whatever jerseys we had from back home," Gordon recalled. The lack of games, however, did not dampen his enthusiasm for the sport. A lasting memory for him was the anticipation of wearing an Exeter hockey jersey for the first time. "I remember looking forward to that scrimmage all month," he said. "All I thought about was just getting to wear a jersey that said 'Exeter Hockey' on it. It meant the world to me." This early experience

highlighted just how important the team is to Gordon, a sentiment that later defined his high school hockey journey.

"The team is a real brotherhood," said lower Eric Bagg. "I think everyone's there for each other, whether it's on the ice or just around campus. I think we're really there for each other." Recognizing the importance of building a unified team identity, every player works to foster a supportive environment even outside of time on the ice, through team lifts, dinners, and other gatherings.

Gordon took the initiative and set the tone from the very beginning of the season. "The first weekend we were at school he got pizza for the whole team and we went and watched Sunday Night Football. It was only the fourth day on campus, and he was already doing that for the whole team," reflected upper Will Cavanaugh.

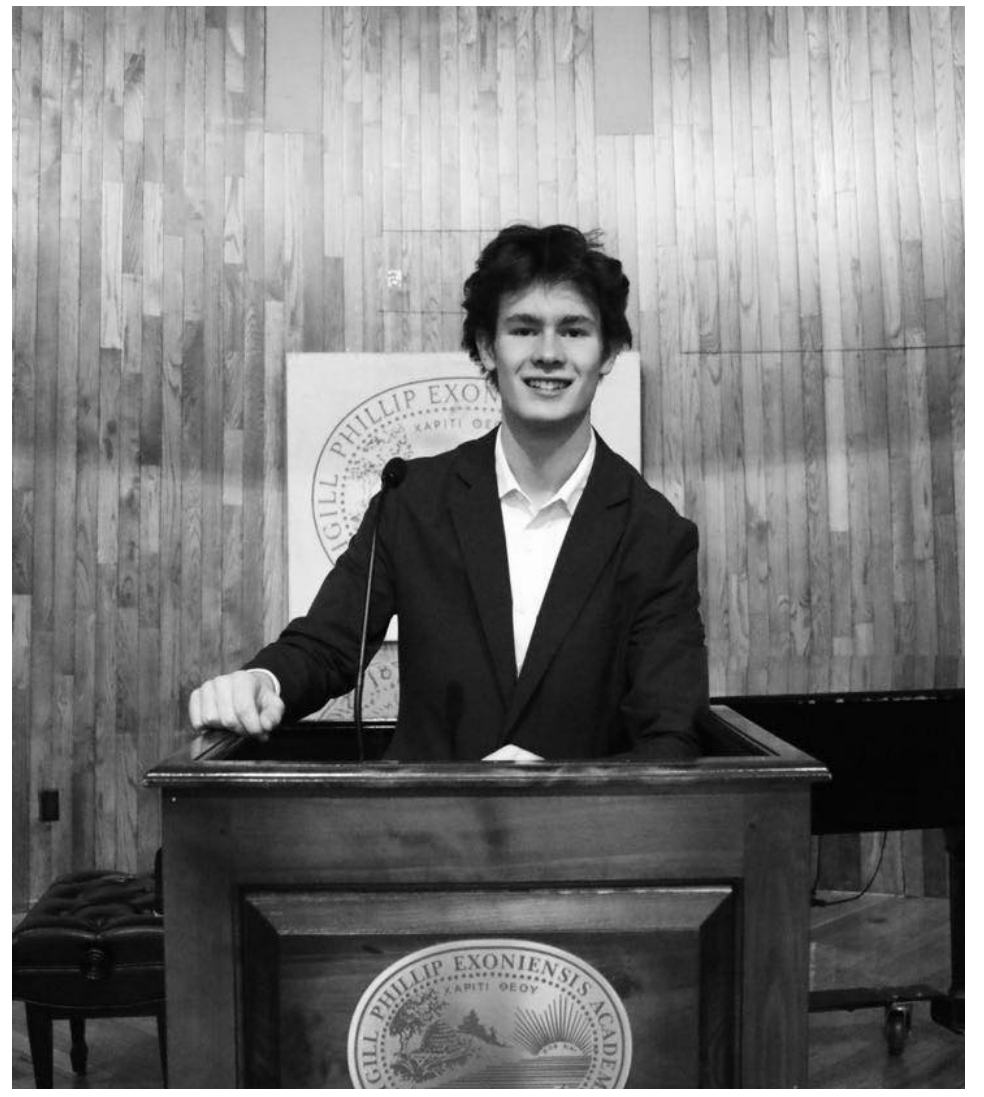
Every effort that Gordon made to ensure cohesion between players has paid off. "There's a unique camaraderie, with a kind of family aspect that is just at a higher level than any other team I've been on," added upper Dryden Dervish. "Younger players have the older guys to look up to, and when you're older you set an example for the younger guys."

The players, especially lowerclassmen, rely on Gordon for structure and guidance on and off the ice. "During practice and during all the team lifts, he's definitely the one who's working the hardest and is the one example that everyone should follow," said prep Max Webster. "Every single practice, no matter what drill we're doing, even if it's just a warmup drill, he goes a hundred percent as if we were in a game situation."

Post-graduate Connor Drobny further reflected on Gordon's unique ability to connect with and lead players. "He ensures that everyone feels heard. No one's too strong of a voice. No one's too quiet. He's very much the heart and soul of the team."

Gordon's playing style is exemplified by his selflessness, resilience, and tactical intelligence on the ice. Bagg detailed this, "If there's a shot to block, he's gonna throw himself in front of it." Bagg highlighted Gordon's commitment to defense and team success, even in high-stakes situations like power plays and penalty kills.

Senior Connor Drobny added further insight into Gordon's versatility and toughness. "The first thing I would say about him would be tough. He's always handling



Senior Jack Gordon poses for a photo in the Assembly Hall

the puck no matter how much he gets thrown around, and he's always up for the next shift." He pointed out Gordon's skill in defensive plays, noting his crucial role in penalty kills and his willingness to block shots.

Drobny emphasized Gordon's lead-by-example approach. "He's great defensively, always on the first penalty kill, doing whatever he can to get

the team through the game." Gordon, as a hockey player, is a blend of aggression in defense and strategic thinking in creating opportunities, making him an invaluable asset to the Exeter hockey team.

"We were in overtime in our game against St. Sebs," recalled Drobny. "Even though our coach sent Jack out to go take a face-off, Jack said that it would be better for the team if Dryden took it.

Jack gave up his position on the ice to someone who he thought was better in the specific situation, which is an example of how completely selfless he is. He perfectly embodies what a captain should be like."

"If he thought that there was a scenario where his sacrificing playing time would win us the game, he wouldn't

Gordon, 18

## Exeter Varsity Swim Crush Brunswick and Greenwich

By ISABEL EVANS, LOGAN LIU, ISHAAN SINGH, and HENRY WISE

On Saturday, Jan. 6, Exeter's boys and girls swimming and diving teams competed in an away meet in Greenwich, Connecticut – a four-hour drive away. The boys and girls swam against Brunswick and Greenwich Academy, respectively. Both of Big Red's teams dominated the meet, with the boys scoring 104-79 and the girls scoring 120-66. The meet marked a good start to the season, with great performances from both teams and many

memorable swims and times.

Lower Nick Limoli took first in diving, totaling a whopping 207.53 points to secure his spot. He implemented a new dive into his routine, a forward double somersault pike, with a difficulty degree of 2.3. "I got a new dive the day before the meet and was a little bit worried about it," Limoli said, but he managed to execute the dive successfully. Limoli stated a highlight of the meet was "team bonding" and he aims to continue getting new dives.

On the swimming side of things, the team had a fantastic meet. Despite

the exhausting drive, the competitors were still able to bring their all, some even achieving a personal best during the meet. Head coach Don Mills said that it was a "very fun meet. The girls dominated, and the boys won in exciting fashion."

One of lower Mena Boardman's favorite highlights of the meet was "seeing Gene touch out the Greenwich swimmer in the 200 freestyle."

The team brought a lot of energy to the meet. "There was a good spirit. The girls were against a different school, but we were in the same pool, so everyone could watch the races," said prep

Sebastien TranPham.

The layout of the meet allowed the team to watch and support each other throughout the meet.

The team not only focuses on the technique of the swimmers but also the relationships among the team members. According to senior Michael Yang, the team has "an especially tight-knit group of guys that link well with the girls."

"Our strong group of preps really helps carry the energy at meets," shared Yang. The team's spirit amps up the members, helping them bring their best to the meets and perform outstandingly.

The swim team looks to continue a strong start to their season, aiming to place well in Interschols at Andover, which will take place at the end of the term. Both the boys and girls now hold undefeated, 2-0 records.

"We have a Deerfield meet coming up. So some people are trying to go to the morning practices, some people are going to like dry land," said TranPham.

This energy is radiating throughout the team, with other preps like Allen Klingel saying, "Deerfield is obviously a great team, and it'll be a very close swim meet we hopefully win...we've

been training really hard this week."

The team has been working hard to extend their winning streak, and looking forward to the teams' participation in upcoming meets, many are excited to put their hard work to the test. Both the boys and girls teams are looking forward to bringing home even more wins, especially with Eastern Interscholastic Swim Championships and New England Interschols approaching rapidly. The team's main goal moving forward into the season, Boardman said, is to, "win Interschols again."

## Exeter Girls Squash Start Their Season Strong

By ERIN HAN and ELLEN JIN

On Saturday, Jan. 6, the girls' varsity squash team secured a 4-3 win against Deerfield Academy.

The second win of their new season, the tense game proved to be an exciting jumping-off point for the team.

"[We had a] 4-3 win and the tiebreaker game was Emily Huang's. The four sets were very intense," said lower Tiffany Sun. "Emily had a good win, and it was a very close match. Last year we lost 0-7 to Deerfield, so this just shows how our team has gotten stronger."

The team has a history of finding Deerfield a

tough opponent. Upper Aria Suchak said, "This is my third year on the team, [and] I know that we've had a tough time against them for many years. So going into this match, we knew we had nothing to lose. And I think we found success by just having that confidence on court... going in, playing great squash, and winning our matches."

Lower Emily Huang, whose match broke the tie, shared that the game was no easy win.

"The other [Exeter] varsity players were really good. We won a couple of matches, 3-0, and in straight games. And the deciding match was pretty intense. It was 3-1 but then we pulled off with the

victory in the end."

"The match against Deerfield was one of our best matches of the season thus far. Deerfield has consistently been a strong and difficult team to beat," Head squash coach Lovey Oliff commented. "This was a competitive and fun match for all. The final win came down to lower Emily Huang winning her match 3-1 with the final game going in squash 'overtime' with a score of 12-10."

In addition, players spoke about how the season as a whole has been going so far. Sun recalled the matches that happened earlier in the season. "We had a really big win against St. Mark's. It was 21 - 1, so

that was really eventful. It was our first away game with everyone," she said. "Then we participated in the Groton Invitational and many of our players had very strong matches."

"We have won against some pretty strong schools and some very hard-fought victories," Huang added.

Coach Oliff noted the team's resilience. "We've had a great start to the season with two wins and although we had a tough loss against St. Paul's, we were able to hit the courts even harder the next day."

The wins that have accumulated so far will keep the players going further into the season. Suchak commented on Deerfield in particular.

"I think this one gives us the confidence that we are a worthwhile team and encourages us to go into our next matches with some confidence and some experience in our back pocket."

"It's still pretty early on in the season, so it's a great confidence builder. We're looking forward to improving as the season progresses and we'll be even better," Huang agreed.

The team also had a visit from a professional player, a positive experience that gave the team tools to help them succeed for the rest of the season. "Most recently, we had a private session with #11 World Pro Sarah-Jane Perry. She gave us some great

words of wisdom and key tactics that will come to life in our next matches," Oliff said.

Coach Oliff commented on the team's community. "The team has started working well together as players and motivators. Watching the senior members of the team guide the newer players has been encouraging as a coach. Squash is certainly a sport where coaching can help one's own game," she said. "Our coaching staff (Coach Carbonell, Pro Sharon Bradey) and I are tremendously proud of the hard work each player has brought to the court and we look forward to seeing where the team finishes in February."

# The Crossword Corner

By **FREDDIE CHANG**  
and **SHAWNA JIANG**



**ACROSS**

- 1 - \_\_\_\_ Olas
- 5 - Latin phrase, meaning “by the fact itself”
- 13 - British rock band who sings “Wonderwall”
- 15 - What you sound like if you scream
- 16 - ‘Modern Family’ dad
- 17 - A rhyme you would teach your greedy children
- 19 - A small amount
- 20 - “Milk’s favorite cookie”
- 21 - You might sign one of these if you promise to keep a secret
- 22 - List in the front of a book, Abbr.
- 24 - An apparatus constructed for oil drilling

- 26 - Someone born after 2010
- 35 - “she” in Portuguese
- 36 - To correct something
- 37 - They smell
- 38 - \_\_\_\_ Walesa, former president of Poland
- 40 - “it’s not a horse, it’s a d \_\_\_\_”
- 42 - In the HIS 410/420/430 sequence, you learn about the American revolutionary and civil \_\_\_\_
- 43 - The amazon version of Apple’s “Alexas”
- 45 - Cried softly
- 47 - Japan’s lucky fish
- 48 - What you might tell your ungrateful children
- 51 - Standard

- Operating Procedure
- 52 - “Call me maybe” singer’s middle name
- 53 - Popular video game do to with stealing vehicles
- 56 - What your dead spouse would make you
- 60 - A bacon lettuce tomato sandwich if bacon started with an ‘m’
- 62 - Car fuel of octane 87
- 65 - Taiwanese laptop maker
- 66 - A small mountain lake
- 67 - Material used to make parachutes
- 68 - A fuzzy buzzy bug!
- 69 - It’s used to blow things up

**DOWN**

- 1 City in southern California
- 2 - What you sound like if you scream (but for a shorter period of time than 15 Across)
- 3 - Exeter applicants may submit these scores
- 4 - \_\_\_\_ of Seville, Spanish encyclopedist
- 5 - The parrot in Aladdin
- 6 - Something twins typically come in
- 7 - Secure Access Service Edge
- 8 - An expression of surprise when you see a yellow vegetable
- 9 - the 4th month of the year, Abbr.
- 10 - Below your mouth
- 11 - \_\_\_\_er (a

- popular dating app)
- 12 - \_\_\_\_ Carmona, Spanish soccer player
- 14 - Furious
- 18 - \_\_\_\_ voices, meets most Friday nights in club room A
- 23 - Military pattern
- 25 - Vibrant light
- 27 - This year we will \_\_\_\_ a president
- 28 - Cheesy chip
- 29 - Friday night check in
- 30 - To acquire a tattoo
- 31 - Tom \_\_\_\_, singer of “Another Love”
- 32 - Former white house press secretary, Jen \_\_\_\_
- 33 - Long-legged bird
- 34 - Canvas: “your teacher has set a new \_\_\_\_”
- 39 - How a rabbit

- moves
- 41 - Happy New \_\_\_\_!
- 44 - Angry look
- 46 - Kim Kardashian lost one of these earrings in the ocean
- 49 - A type of pain killer
- 50 - \_\_\_\_ Furtado, singer of “Promiscuous” and “Maneater”
- 53 - To snatch
- 54 - Thomas Edison State University
- 55 - What your teeth are connected to, but singular.
- 57 - Dull
- 58 - Shrek’s breed
- 59 - To diminish
- 61 - To lean
- 63 - A type of port/charger
- 64 - \_\_\_\_ sibi

## COW Jack Gordon Cont.

play. He would do just about anything to help us win a game. It sets a good tone for the team because when he is leading by example and putting the team before himself, it’s pretty hard not to put the team before yourself as well,” said Dervish. Head coach Tim

Mitropoulos lauded Gordon’s leadership qualities. “Jack has been a great leader for us this season because he leads by example.” He commended Gordon’s consistent presence, communication skills, and work ethic, all contributing to keeping the team organized and

on track. Mitropoulos appreciated Gordon’s involvement in planning team strategies and acknowledges his influence in running practices and organizing power plays. “Jack has been at the lead with all the team meetings,” Mitropoulos noted, “showing his teammates

the right way to do things.” His leadership goes beyond the rink, helping the team to grow more consistent and thoughtful in all aspects of their lives. “It was after our very first game of the season when we were all in the locker room,” recalled Bagg. “I was really

nervous because it was my first game on varsity, but Jack came over and told me, ‘I’m so proud of you. You played great today,’ and gave me a big hug. You know, after your first game, you still are trying to figure things out. And to know that a leader on the team, a great player and a great

guy, acknowledges your work is a great feeling.” Through his exemplary leadership on and off the ice, Gordon ensures that every player knows their value to the team and honors the Exeter hockey brotherhood.

# Farewell to the 145th Board of The Exonian!

## Editors of Board CXLV,

This time last year you were settling into the position which we find ourselves in now. Not weeks into your tenure, tragedy visited our community — likely it shook you, as it shook all of us, but you held your composure and approached the situation with a great deal of integrity and professionalism. Every two weeks thereafter, you upheld the same standard of journalism and served always the interests of the Exeter community at large.

For the first issue of our board, we asked our writing and editorial staff to share some words — compliments, reflections, memories. Though we certainly anticipated a similar extent of appreciation for the outgoing board, we were ourselves surprised by the sheer volume of what they wanted to say, and the sincerity with which they said it. There is perhaps no better testament to what you have achieved.

One last time, we thank you all for your work these past three terms.

Board CXLVI

Lauren Kim is the nicest person on earth so good at writing!!

Thanks y'all! You guys worked really hard and I appreciate y'all showing me the ropes as a new upper

Emi is so fashionable and organized and she was always there for me!!

It was through your guidance that I developed a strong passion for the paper. Thank you so much, 145th board, for being there for all of us and setting the bar so high.

Thank you so much for all you have done for *The Exonian*. As a new writer in an alien environment, you welcomed me with open arms and taught me the ropes. Your seminars and workshops helped me tremendously. Thank you for all of your hard work and do know that the Exonian community appreciates your dedication and commitment to journalism.

You've been like a brother to me, Michael. Thank you for guiding me into *The Exonian* and teaching me how to be a better writer and editor.

Thank you to the 145th board for being so helpful to me when I joined *The Exonian* (I joined in October and had no idea what i was supposed to do)

Thank all of you guys for being so sweet and supportive!! I've learned so much from you and we'll miss you on Sundays but you can still come to steal our donuts <3

Thank you so much for your support for the first term of *The Exonian*. It helped me improve my writing a lot and it was a great experience.

Thank you for all of your help in the writing and interview process. It helped a lot introducing me to the processes of journalism

The previous board was very organized and helpful to new writers!

Michael Yang was the most amazing person to work with and I loved him.

Thank you for everything this past year- y'all are my inspiration

Thank you Catherine for helping me join *The Exonian* and being really nice!

I loved the creative article pitches and fun writer's workshops

Michael Yang helped me a lot with navigating the app when I first joined. He was very nice!

The board was so hardworking and I appreciate how much they did for *The Exonian*!

The 145th board was a real force of nature! Such a fun three terms and we will miss you dearly <3

Thank you 145th board for making meetings fun and working hard to get our issues published!

Thank you so much for everything, Sophie!

Mike is a cute little pookie bear <3 <3

The 145th board was really helpful and very kind!

thanks for an awesome tenure guys! will miss you lots and be continuing your guys' legacy at *The Exonian* :)

Thank you for patiently guiding us!

ANDREA IS ALSO POOKIE

Andrea is the best person ever :)

ANNA U R SO POOKIE

I love you guys

I loved your leadership!

alaysha & catherine = iconic editorial duo

## Dear Readers,

Thank you for your continuous support of our publication, our writers, and the pursuit of truth. We are excited to discover what this next year will hold, as we strive to illuminate every voice on the Academy's campus and carry on the 145-year legacy of student dedication to sincere, relevant, accurate, and inclusive journalism. Without further ado, we introduce Board CXLVI, the 146th Editorial, Business, and Web Boards of *The Exonian*.

## 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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