

**EARLY**

Read about the newest Exeter Cum Laude Society inductees, 1.

**SOTW**

Read about this week's senior of the week: Vera Aimunmondion, 6.

**STUCO**

Read about Student Council's new proposed visitations policy, 1.

## GOP Presidential Candidates Speak to Town of Exeter



Austin Desisto / The Exonian

By **ETHANDING, KAI COWDA, WILLIAM INOUE, LILYRAMPE, ISHAAN SINGH, and FORREST ZENG**

For the first two weeks of October, news organization *USA Today* hosted five Republican presidential nominees at the Exeter Town Hall.

Exeter students visited Republican candidates Asa Hutchinson, Nikki Haley, Doug Burgum, Mike Pence, and Vivek Ramaswamy as they talked

about their policies and beliefs. Asa Hutchinson was in Town Hall on Oct. 10, Nikki Haley on Oct. 12, Doug Burgum on Oct. 13, Mike Pence on Oct. 13,

and Vivek Ramaswamy on Oct. 14. All candidates were scheduled at different times, ranging from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Each Town Hall began with opening statements from the candidates. Haley used this time to overview her policies and what she stands for, starting with her position on the National

## PEA Students Attend Local Select Board Meeting

By **ERINHAN, BELLA JIN, and ROX PARK**

When they can find time in the hectic schedule of classes, clubs, and sports, many Exonians take the short walk into town to grab dinner at Capital Thai or a smoothie from Me & Ollie's. They may drop by Water Street Bookstore or browse the many local shops and boutiques. Although Exeter's campus may seem like a private oasis of brick buildings and ID-entry doors, extensive collaboration between leadership at the Academy and in town is what makes these small excursions possible.

On Oct. 12, Principal

Bill Rawson and Instructor in History William G. Jordan's class participated in the town of Exeter's Select Board Meeting, submitting questions for the Board to address and gaining a better understanding of the cooperation between the Academy and the town. The members of the Select Board, each serving for three-year terms, are elected annually in March and form the main governing body of the Town of Exeter, working with a variety of boards and committees to ensure that everything from traffic organization to energy conservation runs smoothly. Currently, the

Board is composed of Niko Papakonstantis (Chair), Molly Cowan (Vice Chair), Julie D. Gilman (Clerk), Nancy Belanger, and Daniel Chartrand.

The meeting began with a reference to the traffic flow problem directed at improving pedestrian safety. After a brief promise to address the problem later on, Papakonstantis explained the difficulty of balancing townsfolk requests and technological difficulties. "One of the things I've learned since I've been on the board is, I thought you talk with folks around town, and they tell you that a crosswalk might be good here or a light might

## Student Council Presents New Visitations Policy at Assembly

By **ANNA BYUN, JOONYOUNG HEO, MARVIN SHIM, and TANIA LUCHAK**

The Student Council is working to pass a new visitations policy which would allow closed-door visits in other dormitories for approved seniors in an effort to promote privacy and student safety.

The Academy's E-Book currently states that "all interior and exterior room doors must be fully open" when guests, defined as visitors unaffiliated with the dorm, are present in a room. The Student Council's proposal, presented to the student body during their assembly on Oct. 3, advocates for closed-door visitations for students starting in January of their senior year.

Since then, in response to feedback from members of the community, the council has amended the proposal to only allow closed-door visitations for seniors whose parents have signed a consent form. Another potential addition is a strike system wherein students who act irresponsibly and break policy can receive a "strike." Two strikes would revoke the privilege of closed-door visitations for that student.

As presented during the assembly, the Council's primary focus within the sphere of the

school visitations policy is the intersection of student privacy and safety, both of which, they argue, will be advanced by the new proposal.

"The system right now basically leaves no room for privacy through legal visitations," senior and Student Council president Kevin Treehan said. "So students often resort to getting illegal visitations, which are obviously less safe."

"Only having open-door visitations has led to students seeking illegal visitations, which creates uncomfortable situations if one party wants to leave," lower and Policy Committee co-head Forrest Zeng said. "A student obviously doesn't want to get caught, so they won't leave. However, with closed-door visitations, this privacy can occur under a much more controlled environment with faculty nearby."

So far, the Student Council has worked to communicate with dorm faculty and hear feedback. As it stands, the visitations proposal is the product of these kinds of discussions.

"We've met with three dorm heads and one affiliated dorm faculty," Treehan said. "All the conversations have been very productive, and the proposal we have right now is a result of all those conversations, building up

and adding points to it."

"The Student Council Executive Board has done a lot of research," Zeng said. "We're also planning a meeting with Dean Cahalane to talk about this. We've taken all of this feedback and modified the proposal with it."

Fortunately, for the council, much of the dorm community has given a positive reaction, emphasizing the importance of this work and how much progress the council has made.

"I really admire how Kevin is advocating for the wellbeing of relationships," senior and Webster Hall proctor William Weber said. "I think we have to recognize that, to form meaningful connections with people, environments of privacy and safety are crucial. I love that the basis of everything Kevin is proposing is grounded in providing those elements through trust and responsibility."

"I like the proposal," senior and Front Street proctor Oliver Liu said. "A lot of the other policy pushes have been pretty ineffective, and I think it's good that we're going for something a little more specific and more reasonable-sounding. They've done good work so far."

Many students have given similarly positive feedback. "The council is

## Early Cum Laude Inductees Announced

- |                  |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Benchley, Eloise | Levine, Emi      | Soloviova, Sonia |
| Fock, Beeke      | Lu, William      | Tronnes, Finn    |
| Gantt, Hope      | Ma, Sophie       | Tyagi, Riya      |
| Gordon, Jack     | Potjer, Charles  | Wang, Ellie      |
| Ivanova, Daria   | Rajaram, Achyuta |                  |
| Langer, Sylvia   | Shrestha, Vir    |                  |

# News

» **HHM**

Read about the Academy's celebrations for Hispanic Heritage Month, 4.

» **BOARD**

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» **GOP**

Read about the GOP Presidential Forums at Exeter Town Hall, 1.

## Board Meeting Cont.

be good there, and it sounds good, but I've learned that sometimes these things that sound good even make it more dangerous," he said.

Following a question on polarization, the Board agreed that it has improved significantly since the pandemic. During the pandemic, according to Cowan, Exeter, being one of the first towns in New Hampshire to issue a mask ordinance, faced pressure and isolation. Several members of the Board received threatening letters and nearly got their personal property confiscated. Gilman added that Zoom conferences made communication difficult and that even if they did face-to-face meetings, the representatives were spread so far out in an open space that it made any discussion difficult to comprehend. Gilman then concluded this discussion by saying that the spreading of misinformation via social media also added to the chaos during the pandemic.

The Board also confirmed several of the substantial projects that they expected to be on this year's warrant. These included a plan to construct a second public safety building, several water and sewer improvements, and changes to the current police and fire stations. The stations were built nearly five decades ago, and the town has faced issues with catering to the old-fashioned facilities. For instance, the town has had to custom-order smaller-sized fire trucks to fit the current public safety building that was built in 1978. Cowan commented on the situation with a laugh, "It would be nice to stop having to special order these small trucks [and] would be an economic saving in the long run."

Following this discussion, senior Luca Shakoory, a student in Jordan's class, posed a question to the Board, asking what they saw as the best way to inform voters about important issues such as the safety complex and to make sure that they were well-informed of all of the various factors involved.

Cowan and Papakonstantis first spoke about the troubles they had faced in the past: organized walkthroughs, listening sessions, and other town-hosted events that were unsuccessful due to a lack of attendance and general interest. Cowan elaborated that "it can feel really frustrating... because oftentimes people are just looking at the huge price tag [attached to a project] and [naturally disregarding everything else.]" She continued, "The Communications Advisory Committee has worked tirelessly to come up with new ways to communicate with voters and residents. We are on social media, send out newsletters, and we publicize meetings." Papakonstantis and Cowan then shared some of the methods that had shown better results, including a 15-minute video organized by Cowan detailing the Board's plans regarding the safety complex.

In addition, the Board members referenced sustainability projects they are exploring for the coming years. One such example is the replacement of sodium street lights with LED, which are considered to be more energy and cost efficient. Gilman described that the town's Energy Committee has involved Exeter in the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire, a non-profit group that purchases energy for multiple communities in bulk and distributes it at a lower cost, as well as allows the town to choose sustainable sources for the energy to be generated from.

"They might use gas-fired burners to create the electricity or biomass," Gilman said. "With this program, you can ask for your energy to be coming from a place that uses 50% Renewable Power or 100% renewable power. You're not going to see it divided up like that, but you want the company that we use to be able to provide the energy in different ways."

The conversation then shifted to the expansion of store hours, a topic that

many Exeter students have debated. Most retail shops in town close by 5 or 6 p.m. on weekdays. Restaurants close by 8 or 9, which students, who attend classes and sports practices until close to 6 or 7 everyday, claim do not give them enough time to visit the stores or eat dinner if they happen to miss dining hall hours.

In response, the Board members acknowledged the inconvenience for students, but also the difficulty for store owners to meet those demands. Chartrand, the owner of Water Street Bookstore himself, mentioned that although his store has been well staffed and can accommodate hours extending to 8:00 pm, many other business owners in Exeter are single-person proprietors, and staying open later might not be possible for them. Gilman added, "A couple of businesses closed during Covid either because they didn't have help or they didn't get enough customers because people were going out of town for food."

Intriguingly, Chartrand shared that the presence of the Academy in Exeter is actually what historically originally limited store hours, as well as restaurants serving alcohol or having night events, in consideration of student safety and concentration.

Finally, a student asked the Board members for their perspective on the relationship between the Academy and the town. Papakonstantis answered that "before, PEA would come in periodically, but since the pandemic and since it's ended, Principal Rawson has come in several times a year to give us an update, and we have conversations back and forth. Obviously, that's something we're interested in, and I know he's interested in it as well."

The Academy-centered portion of the meeting concluded with Principal Rawson giving a ten-minute briefing to the board on Academy updates, encompassing the school's sustainability, construction, and event accomplishments.

Jordan's students who attended the Select Board

meeting reflected on the valuable experience of seeing a real-life example of what they were learning about in class. "In class, we've examined what polarization at a national level has done to local politics," senior Andy Seals said. "We've [also] learned about topics including... the press and the evolution of the American political system into what it is today."

Shakoory also detailed the atmosphere of the meeting: "The Select Board meeting felt very relaxed and friendly. I could tell each board member genuinely cared about the Town of Exeter... While the environment felt relaxing, the work they were dealing with was still important, and with every issue they approached, they ensured all their decisions would be supported by voters." Shakoory elaborated that voters had a ballot input on the decision to apply for a grant to assist the town authorities in removing the Pickpocket Dam due to flooding concerns.

"The Select Board was very excited to have us listen in on their work and ask questions," senior Abby Waritu said. "A lot of us didn't get to see all that they discussed that night, since the meeting was hours long, but we were all there to listen to their answers to our questions... [those] answers showed how united and determined to help the town they were."

"I was very impressed with how honest the Select Board members were," Seals echoed. "They seemed to genuinely care about their constituents, and they wanted the best for the town itself."

Papakonstantis shared a similar sentiment during the meeting. "I think if you ask each of the five of us, we're here because we love our community," he said. "When we walk through that doorway to come into these meetings, we are not our individual selves. We are Select Board members serving the best needs of the community and I'm very happy and proud to serve the community."

The Board also expressed gratitude for the presence of volunteers in the town's government. Cowan explained, "What I would say as somebody who, you

know, works in politics is that New Hampshire is a state that is largely run by volunteers... New Hampshire would fall apart if it were not for volunteers." Cowan detailed the presence of volunteers in elections, zoning and housing boards and other sectors, saying that "even the expertise of our water and sewer system is run ostensibly by a volunteer. There is such important work that happens with volunteers every day that keeps our state afloat."

According to Rawson, he and the school's administration are regularly involved with the Select Board's decisions and meetings like the one on Oct. 12. "I appear before the Select Board periodically and typically consult with the Town Manager concerning what information the Select Board might like to hear," Rawson shared. "We also have regular interactions with other town departments. Our Facilities Management team frequently communicates with the Town's departments of public works, planning and building, tax/water/sewer, economic development, and parks and recreation. Campus Safety meets regularly with the Exeter Fire and Exeter Police Departments to discuss, among other topics, what events are taking place on campus and in the town and how the events might impact the school or town."

Director of Facilities Management Mark Leighton commented on this frequent collaboration between the Academy and the town government's various departments. "We communicate and collaborate frequently with [the] Department of Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and several other departments with normal operations," Leighton said, "The majority of our major capital projects will involve some sort of permitting, so we work closely with the town's planning and building department throughout this process so that the permitting is successful."

In return, the Academy offers as much assistance as possible in town, including providing input for studies, supporting programs such as the Exeter Police Department's (EPD) comfort dog program, and assisting

the EPD with traffic control when they are short-staffed. Rawson acknowledged the interconnectedness of Exeter's Academy and the town: "We are a large school community and a large physical presence in the town, so we naturally are affected by any important decisions regarding traffic or other infrastructure. That is why the town reaches out to the school for involvement, and why we try to be helpful."

Students agree on the value of communication between the school and the town. "I've learned that Local Government is probably more important in the day-to-day lives of Exonians than the state or even federal government," Seals reflected after the meeting.

Rawson also shared his hopes for Exeter students' involvement with the town: "I want all students to take advantage of what the town has to offer and feel welcomed and appreciated by local businesses, just the way other local residents do," he said. "It is always a plus when we participate in town events and activities – whether eating in local restaurants, attending a book signing or political event, or attending a festival, celebration, or rally in Swasey Park."

He further advised students that "simply showing courtesy to town residents, such as by picking up our pace and waving when we cross the street, is always important."

Students said the Oct. 12 Select Board meeting was a meaningful union between the students at the Academy and the town, providing Exonians with an opportunity to voice their questions and opinions for the community. In the coming months and years, students can expect to see the Select Board members tackle ambitious projects concerning sustainability, traffic, construction, and public safety that will continue to change and improve the Exeter experience.

"We are an important part of the town and I want everyone — students, adults and their families — to enjoy [what the town has to offer]," Rawson said.

## Visitations Policy Cont.

being much more proactive than in previous years to do the work and gain trust from the faculty," upper Derrick Chu said. "It's a good policy that allows for more freedom and private spaces that are hard to find at Exeter, and we can mitigate the number of disciplinary cases on campus as well. Kevin has the right approach this year and I'm hopeful for success."

Others, however, have pushed back on the proposal precisely because it would allow for increased privacy. "It's regrettable that this is the kind of thing the council is promoting," senior Colin Jung said. "It's actively harmful because it promotes sexual activity among high schoolers, which is exactly the opposite of what you want to do, especially with students away from their parents and who are already susceptible to negative peer pressure."

"We need to think about what's good for students in the long term, not what they want at any given moment," Jung continued. "The policy will lead to regret for many people. The adults should have the moral responsibility to keep it from being passed."

Jung is a co-head of Catholic Exonians, and he and several religious leaders on campus have protested against closed-door visitations. They are joined in opposition by some faculty members, including dorm heads.

"Before we even look at this proposal, we might ask what the Student Council is doing to cut down on illegal visitations in the first place," head of New Hall and Instructor in History Troy Samuels said. "Student leaders don't always seem to be stepping up to create an environment where we're following the rules as they are, which should be a priority before

we make any changes. I'm not inclined to be positive toward any change until there's a little more respect for the rules we have now. As it stands, the proposal seems to be in part saying, 'We're going to keep breaking rules until we get what we want.'"

Given the Academy's vertical housing system, Samuels raised another issue. "Visitations are not designed for intimacy, but the role of visitations is often blurred, and it could be a real problem when we have young people living next to seniors," he said. "I think it's understandable why the parents of a 13-year-old wouldn't always be comfortable with their neighbor having closed-door visitations. Our walls are not thick."

Taking their feedback into consideration, the Student Council made some amendments, including the parental consent form and the two-strike system.

Though some opposing student leaders remain dissatisfied, they are willing to compromise.

"I appreciated Kevin's responsiveness to our concerns," Jung said. "While we reaffirm our opposition to the policy, we won't actively work against it given the compromise of parental consent and transparency about the possibility of sexual activity — but we will continue to urge parents to refuse consent, and students to make the right decisions."

For his part, Samuels is not opposed to change itself — only how the student body is going about it. "I get where students are coming from, and I understand," Samuels said. "I think change is good, but if it's turning people off who are generally in support of this, it's not being approached correctly. If you want more responsibility, you have to show that you can

handle it. This is not the first visitations reform proposed in my time here, and they've all done this the same way of 'We're not following the rules, so change them for us.' I do not think that is ever going to get faculty approval, and it's not a productive way forward."

"We need some deep thinking of why we want this change, and not just ask or get mad at a policy that exists for a reason, but show faculty that we deserve a new policy," Samuels continued. "And when we think about how we can create the best community possible with what we have in place now, we can start saying, 'Hey, you're doing an awesome job. Let's move forward.' That mindset is a lot less entitled and helps us move in new directions."

The Student Council has not yet addressed some of these concerns, including the problem of vertical housing, but it plans to continue what it has done so far — working closely with dorm heads and proctors to put forward

the ideal visitations policy. As Samuels suggested, the council hopes to have productive discussions that do not frame a "students versus faculty" position.

"Our next steps are to continue having conversations with dorm heads, just as we are now," Treehan said. "The executive board plans to host a banquet where we can gather all the dorm heads and provide a space for free discussion. I think having everybody in one room to talk things through, instead of talking individually to all of them, will be really productive. Then we can table it for a vote."

"We don't want to take this policy and just shove it in the faculty's faces, as we essentially did in previous years," Zeng said. "This year we are trying to create a better working relationship with the faculty instead of sending policies back and forth. We want this policy to take off, and it's looking good so far."

# GOP Presidential Candidates Cont.

Debt. “We’re \$33 trillion in debt. I would love to tell you that Biden did that to us, but our Republicans did that to us too,” she said.

Haley then went on to talk about the current crisis in Israel. “It is really important that America has a president and that our country has moral clarity at a time like this,” Haley concluded.

For lower Dushant Lohano, attending the forums was a way to hear candidates talk about their background and personal experiences. “Once I realized that [Haley] was Indian, I thought it’d be actually really good if I went, because since I’m also Indian, I want to see candidates that share the same similarities between us. That’s also the reason I also went to Vivek Ramaswamy as well,” Lohano said.

On the issue of immigration, former governor of Arkansas, Asa Hutchinson, took the opportunity to interrogate President Joe Biden’s immigration policies. Hutchinson explained, “The key challenge with immigration is that President Biden opened it up...He’s tried to reverse policy, but it has no credibility.”

Hutchinson continued, “I will send a clear message that is unequivocal and consistent: that our border is closed. I support immigration. It adds to the vibrancy of our democracy. But we cannot demonstrate unlawfulness, and I would submit to Congress a border security bill that would add resources there both to our processing of asylum and building infrastructure.”

In his Town Hall, Hutchinson also voiced his opinion of former President Donald Trump. “I was very clear and outspoken in the first debate. I was really the only one that sat there and said that I’m not going to support Donald Trump if he’s a convicted felon, and that’s not a very high bar to get over,” Hutchinson said.

When asked about Hutchinson, senior Clara Peng shared, “I was not satisfied by the way he responded to questions about climate change or school safety — primarily due to his lack of clarity.”

Former Vice President Mike Pence was also one of the candidates to have a Town Hall talk in Exeter. During his session, Pence was questioned about his perspective on accusations of election fraud in the 2020 election. He responded, “Despite the fact the former president had been convinced by a group of crackpot lawyers that I had some authority to overturn the election, I made it clear to him that I did not. I knew what my duty was that day.”

Pence also spoke about the situation in Israel, sharing a similar opinion as Haley. “I believe America should speak with one voice at this moment. We will stand with Israel,” Pence said.

One of the final Republican candidates to be hosted by the Exeter Town Hall, Vivek Ramaswamy, started his open forum by mentioning his experience of the “American dream.” Ramaswamy said, “Following our faith, putting an emphasis on education. That is the American dream and I am genuinely worried that that American dream will not exist in the future.”

Later, when asked about his lack of qualifications for president by an attendee, Ramaswamy responded with confidence in his lack of experience. “If we want to address the corruption that takes place in that system of funding political campaigns, then yes, I do think it will take an outsider,” Ramaswamy said.

Many students who attended the Town Hall forums expressed their satisfaction for the organization of the events, describing the atmosphere as respectful and professional. “There were a lot of people there running the event, and it started and ended right on time,” Peng said. “There were even ushers.”

Lohano shared similar sentiments, saying “The staff was very helpful. It was easy to ask questions and all the presidential candidates were very nice. It was all well organized. It was a good experience.”

Prep Eliyas Koch-Manzur agreed. “I think they tried really hard. I went to the Mike Pence event, and it was pretty organized.”

Upper and Democratic Club co-head Aven Burney attended both Pence and Ramaswamy’s hall talks. “I decided to go because I wanted to see the people who are, and will be leading our country,” Burney said. “The candidates that came were all really famous, and I thought it would be cool to get to see them in person. The events were well organized, and I thought the candidates did a good job of promoting their message.”

Despite most Exeter students being unable to vote and the forums taking place during Academy appointments, many made an effort to attend the forums and ask questions.

For Peng, the forums were an opportunity to hear the candidates speak in-person. “It’s super important to be politically involved. Even though my personal values are not necessarily reflected by every candidate, I believe that it is a valuable experience to hear them speak and learn more about them than what is accessible online,” Peng said.

Burney agreed, though she also noted some of the inconvenient aspects of the Town Hall forums. “I really enjoyed going to the talks, despite some of the challenges. I had to stand in the back for most of them, and there wasn’t enough time for my questions to be answered,” Burney said. “Also, because of my schedule, it was hard to find a time when I was available to go see most of the candidates.”

As the 2024 presidential election draws near, students look forward to more opportunities to hear about candidates’ platforms in close-proximity. Peng noted, “I think it’s great for Exeter to have opportunities to learn about the people influencing politics today. Being a student here makes it convenient too, and I would love to see more candidates come.”

“As a local, I think it’s good for the school. It’s a good opportunity for the press and the candidates, especially considering that New Hampshire is a swing state,” Koch-Manzur added.



# Academy Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

By LUCY JUNG AMYLIN, and ELAINE QIAO

The United States National Hispanic Heritage Month (HHM) starts on Sep. 15 and ends on Oct. 15.

On a national level, the month is a form of tribute and recognition regarding Hispanic Americans' contributions to the United States. On the Exeter campus, Hispanic Heritage Month means an abundance of celebratory events that foster warmth amidst the cooling temperatures by bringing the community together. In addition to the assembly planned by La Alianza Latina (LAL), an affinity dinner for Latinx students was held at Principal Rawson's house on the following Saturday. Both events are in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month.

Faculty and students shared what Hispanic Heritage Month means to them. "To put it simply, it's a time to emphasize the pride we have in being Hispanic," upper Maemi Carrillo said.

*"Being from Newark, New Jersey, everyone was surrounded by Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Cuban culture so it was already in our daily lives. Exeter, however, is of course a different story as I went from a predominantly Black and Latinx community to a predominantly white community. So, representing my culture is huge for me."*

Dean of Multicultural Affairs Sherry Hernandez added, "To me, Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month is about making our Hispanic/Latinx students and adults feel seen, and strengthen their sense of belonging. It is highlighting their contributions and

experiences at Exeter over the years and celebrating those who are in the community today."

"I hope this doesn't come as a surprise, but believe it or not we didn't really celebrate HHM," senior Joseph Alvarez said. "Rather, we celebrated our culture over the course of the whole year. Being from Newark, New Jersey, everyone was surrounded by Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Cuban culture so it was already in our daily lives. Exeter, however, is of course a different story as I went from a predominantly Black and Latinx community to a predominantly white community. So, representing my culture is huge for me and I look to HHM to allow others into our world with events like movie screenings, our *Día de Muertos ofrenda*, and the *Día de Muertos* festival."

The assembly presentation directed and led by the LAL co-heads was one entertaining way of celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month on campus. "We wanted our video to be informative and representative about how Hispanic students at Exeter felt about Hispanic Heritage Month and about their culture. But we tried to do it in a telenovela sense because that way it would make it more interesting than just people talking. So it would increase engagement with the audience and also, as a side note, kind of show a different aspect of a culture," LAL co-head upper Laura Saldarriaga said.

Carrillo added, "Our Alianza Latina board did a lot of brainstorming for our video. We wanted to involve as many Latinx students as we could. We then decided to take on a telenovela-esque style with our video, to highlight this special type of media in Hispanic culture, while also making it fun for our audience to watch."

The affinity dinner hosted by Principal William Rawson on Saturday "was one way for

Latinx students and adults to get together with the Principal in the Principal's home for good Latinx food, fun conversation, and to simply enjoy being together in community," Rawson said.

Rawson continued, "I certainly enjoyed the laughter around the table and hearing students share a bit about their Exeter experiences. Inviting students to my house helps me get to know students better and supports a strong sense of belonging for students who are able to come. My impression from the students who attended is that the dinner was a success in all these ways."

*"While the Latino population on campus is relatively small, it makes celebrations like these and clubs like LAL all the more special. In the coming years, we'll hopefully see more admitted Latino students."*

"Dinner at Principal Rawson's was beautiful. Food just really brings communities together. So, it was lovely to be at his house with so many different kids from different Spanish-speaking countries and just eating as a family, because that's what LAL is. It's a family," Instructor in Modern Languages Jacqueline Flores said, recalling the night.

"You could see by their faces that they were happy to be there. What I loved most was watching the kids eat and celebrate. We ate Mexican food, and it was beautiful to see students enjoy what is close to home. Although the food may be totally different from Dominican food, Puerto Rican food, or Colombian food, the food still connects us. We're different, but at the same time we're one," Flores added.

"The food was really good. It was Mexican food. It was nice and we all sat together and laughed and spoke and

it felt like a nice family dinner," Saldarriaga said.

"The dinner at Principal Rawson's house was wonderful. The food was delicious (shoutout to Vida Cantina) and the company was great. Students were able to chat with some Latinx teachers as well as connect more with our principal," Carrillo said.

Students and faculty members both see room for improvement regarding Latinx visibility on campus. "While the Latino population on campus is relatively small, it makes celebrations like these and clubs like LAL all the more special. In the coming years, we'll hopefully see more admitted Latino students," Carrillo said.

Flores shared her views on the representation of the Latinx population on campus. "Because we live in Exeter, it's unfortunate that we don't have a lot of time to not [only] educate people, but to expose people to our culture because we are so many from the Spanish speaking world and not everybody's represented on campus."

"It would be nice if students know the differences between a Mexican and a Bolivian or a Venezuelan and a Salvadorian, making sure that our community knows that we're very diverse and we're part of the American continent," Flores added.

"I would love to have a speaker come to speak at the assembly, someone well-known or someone who can talk about his or her profession and talk about what it's like to be Latino," Flores suggested. "[I would also love] more presence. Maybe we [can] have our flags up in EPAC [to show] we're just so diverse. It's unfortunate it's only one month. We have so many famous people who have already left us, but did they make huge contributions to the Latino culture? Absolutely. We are a lot of famous people, and [they're] powerful in every area: in the arts, in Hollywood, politics, the sciences, you name

it, there's a Spanish-speaking person, a Latino in each field. And I'm very proud to call myself Latina."

*"It would be nice if students know the differences between a Mexican and a Bolivian or a Venezuelan and a Salvadorian, making sure that our community knows that we're very diverse and we're part of the American continent."*

Hispanic Heritage Month activities on campus were designed with the purpose of increasing this visibility. In addition to the assembly and dinner at Principal Rawson's house, "there was also a viewing of the 'In The Heights' movie, a Broadway show turned film by Lin-Manuel Miranda, a proud Puerto Rican artist who has created other works like *Hamilton* and scores for movies like *Moana* and *Coco*," Hernandez said.

Hernandez spoke on Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA)-sponsored events related to the Latinx culture that will follow Hispanic Heritage Month. "We have been partnering with [the Afro-Latinx Exonian Society (ALES)] co-heads since spring 2023 in preparation for the upcoming ALES 55th celebration on [Oct. 28 and 29]. We are very excited about this upcoming event that continues to center and amplify the voices of our Afro-Latinx community. In addition, our LAL members and OMA proctors are busily putting together *Día de Muertos* celebrations including *La Ofrenda* at Phelps Commons from [Oct. 29 to Nov. 3] and *Día de Muertos* Festival at Thompson Gym on [Nov. 3]. The intersection of celebrating Latino and Indigenous cultures for this event demonstrates to our community our focus on intersectionality."

Assistant Director of Equity and Inclusion Kevin Pajaro-Mariñez shared, "I have passed through the *Día de Los Muertos ofrenda* or offering space on campus in past years. And, for me, that display helps to capture how different Latinx groups process their identity. More broadly, the *ofrenda* shows the entire PEA community one of many practices related to what it means to honor people, especially the dead. I think it's really cool how the *ofrenda* exists as a symbol for commemorating and remembering the histories of people — our loved ones, family members, and others — who came before us.

When asked about whether the Academy's HHM celebrations were reflective of Latinx culture and cultural experience, Pajaro-Mariñez responded, "Latinx culture is always evolving. How people understand Latinidad within themselves and in relationship to others is always shifting. What I will say is I believe our school community, especially the Office of Multicultural Affairs, is always thinking about how to be inclusive of all cultural groups on campus through programming and events. For me, I look at Latinx Heritage Month as an opportunity for the Academy to see how Latinx people honor who they are by way of food, art, dance, culture, and more. Like any school community, we are not perfect and there is always room to grow. At the very least, however, I believe our school's programming around Latinx Heritage Month helps to bring awareness to the Latinx experience. My hope is that Latinx Heritage Month on campus sparks a broader curiosity to engage across difference and learn from one another in ways that build meaningful and authentic relationships."



Students pose for a picture at the Latinx dinner.

Nataly Delcid / *The Exonian*

## » SOTW

Read about this week's senior of the week: Vera Aimunmondion, 5.

## » FOTW

Read about this week's faculty of the week: Alia Haskins, 7.

## » DHALL

Read the Elm Street and Grainger Dining Services spotlight, 8.

# Staff Spotlight: Dining Hall Services

By JOONHYUNG HEO, ELLEN JIN, ALLEGRA LAI, and LAUREN LEE

Seven days a week, for breakfast, lunch, snacktime, and dinner, more than a thousand members of the Academy community stream in and out of the dining halls. The lines are long, the plates are loaded with food, the tables are packed — and when they come back for the next meal, everything is as it was. The tables are clean, the salad bar is full, and fresh food is on the menu. Behind it all is the Dining Services team, hard at work to make sure that Exeter is fed.

Elm Street Dining Hall and Grainger Auditorium, the latter of which will be used temporarily until Wetherell Dining Hall is scheduled to reopen in fall 2024, are the Academy's two dining halls on campus. Both locations share a similar structure in terms of staffing: a general administrative group oversees subdivisions of cooks, bakers, and dishwashers, among others. Elm Street, which opens during the week and through the weekend, employs a larger team than Grainger Auditorium, which only opens on weekdays.

On a regular school day, the dining staff spend much of their time preparing meals. The end result — a ready meal — is the product of many different roles, from manual to organizational work.

Supervising the entire operation is Director of Dining Services Melinda Leonard. “I provide leadership and support for the team and Exeter community,” Leonard said. “I provide resources for our department and communicate within Dining Services and the wider community. I consider myself very fortunate to work with such a talented, committed group of individuals.”

The Dining Services

Manager in Grainger, Heidi Dumont, also spoke to the administrative side of preparing food. “I manage all the employees in my dining hall and I'm part of the general leadership group, which is the Dining Services team as a whole,” Dumont said. “We have biweekly meetings to talk about upcoming events.”

“In terms of my daily schedule, I start by polishing the menus and checking in with the staff,” Dumont continued. “Then we have a pre-meal, an informational meeting to go over allergens for that day. I also have to look two weeks out and forecast what our menu should look like, and our menu system generates recipes and places an order for the food. The rest of the day is basically moving food from the mobile kitchen down to the service line and working with the production team and front of house to make sure we have all our supplies.”

Dining Services Manager Jeffrey Perrotta in Grainger, working alongside Dumont, manages production. “Typically I start by doing my rounds with the back-of-house staff and check in with everyone,” Perrotta said. “I make sure the products I ordered have come in and check whether there are any shortages or products that need to be refused due to quality. Then I work with the culinary team and see if they need any help with recipes or cooking methods. In the afternoons, I prepare my orders for the next day and walk through my storage areas to make sure I have all the ingredients the culinary staff need.”

On the other side of campus, the Assistant Unit Manager in Elm Street, Rebecca Bolton, performs a role similar to Dumont and Perrotta's. “I give my team a pre-meal to start the day, basically going over any updates or changes we might have with the menu or big dates,” Bolton said. “Then I'm here to help them

on the floor. You might see me running around during lunch service, after service trying to get my paperwork done, and throughout the day putting out any small fires. I do another pre-meal for the dinner service crew. I try to help the team in any way I can.”

Complementing the kind of administrative work that Leonard, Dumont, and Bolton perform, the kitchen staff spend their time physically preparing the meals — everything from revising menus to cooking at the stove.

“First thing in the morning, I check in with employees front and back of house to ensure everything is on track,” Executive Chef Pierre Gignac said. “I connect with dining hall managers, food purchasers, and the dining director and manage catering orders. When time allows, I work on menu planning, recipe editing, and production team scheduling.”

“Each meal is created from menus established months ahead,” Gignac continued. “Recipes are generated and ingredients are ordered through the managers. Ingredients are delivered every day from multiple vendors, and meal preparation generally starts two days ahead and finishes the day of to get the freshest food. It takes the whole team to make this happen, from the manager and food handler to the cooks, the front-of-house team, and the dishwashers and custodial.”

Dishwasher and Compost Manager Frank Brienza is one of these people who complement Gignac's work in the dining space. “I start work at nine at Grainger after breakfast,” Brienza said. “My job is to take care of the dining, the trash, and the compost, and to assist people on the front line if they need it.”

Of course, this is only the day-to-day operation behind school meals. For such special events as Fall Fest, Family Weekend, and the Lunar New Year

celebration, the dining staff go through another extensive process.

“These events are often planned months in advance and engage multiple departments that elevate the events via student and community participation,” Leonard said. “As a department, planning these events is just as much fun for us as putting them on. They truly reflect our spirit of community and give us some fun throughout the year.”

The staff often refer to previous iterations of these events in planning ahead. “We try to base our information off of years past,” Bolton said. “If we tried something two years ago and it didn't work, we know we shouldn't try it this year, and we know something works if people loved it previously. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. But we also try to add different things each year to make things a bit more special.”

Indeed, these events are often a creative outlet for members of the dining team. “Fall Fest is a good example,” Dumont said. “We started planning that in the summer and came up with the idea of the Volkswagen bus from weddings Ms. Leonard had attended, so that created the seventies theme. On the night of the event, we got to see everyone enjoying themselves. It may not be the healthiest food, but it's just a fun thing for one night, and it gives us the opportunity to create something stress-free for the students that's also community-based.”

Beyond all the hard work that the dining staff put in every week, what is most striking is just how much many of them enjoy being at the Academy.

“I've been with the Academy for three and a half years now, and I really enjoy it,” Bolton said, even having spent an entire career in various restaurants and hotels. “This is honestly one of the

best places I've worked at, and I'm hoping to be here for at least the next 25 years into retirement.”

While a part of the Exeter appeal is the opportunity for creative expression in planning for special events, perhaps more significant is the sense of community that Dining Services staff enjoy — not just amongst themselves but with the Academy community at large.

“I love the interactions I have with students and staff in the dining hall,” Perrotta said. “It's great to see how the food we produce brings the community together every day.”

“I still have a thank-you note from a student from 2006,” Dumont said. “I've been here for 21 years, and sometimes you just make those special connections. My favorite part is really when we can make those great relationships with students and faculty.”

“My favorite part of the job is the people I meet,” Brienza said. “I feel like I get a lot of respect here, and that really does mean a lot to me. And I hope a lot of people know I respect them. I remember two years ago, the senior class bought me a jacket — a black windbreaker-type jacket, with ‘Exeter’ on it. That really brought a tear to my eye. I still wear it every day.”

Certainly, working at Exeter has not come without its fair share of difficulties. For the team formerly in Wetherell, the transition from their old dining hall at the end of winter term in 2023 to Grainger as a temporary space was an obstacle. Nevertheless, the staff have risen to the challenge.

“The infrastructure was a problem in the beginning months,” Gignac said. “But now it's operating to its capacity. It is no doubt a difficult kitchen to work out of, but we have a very dedicated team. Of course, it doesn't compare to Wetherell for

its functionality, but it will do until we are in our new environment.”

“With any move into a new production space, there are always going to be challenges associated and it took a great team effort to pull it off,” Perrotta said. “There were equipment issues at first, but we received a lot of support from the Academy to get what we needed. I cannot be more profuse in offering gratitude to our staff for the effort they put into making things run smoothly.”

The dining staff's work and their consistency have not been lost on the Exeter community itself. Students found plenty to be thankful for.

“They always make sure to clean up after us,” lower Sam Altman said. “They also replace the food quickly so people don't miss the things they run out of. Not only do the staff complete their tasks efficiently every day, they also make an effort to get to know us. I really am grateful for what they do.”

In particular, Altman mentioned Brienza as a staff member who gives his all in a personal and professional capacity. “I love Frank,” Altman said. “Every time I'm putting my plate away in Grainger, he's always there to help. He says thank you and cheers me up, even when I have chemistry in the next block. What a great guy.”

Lower Alva Carlston reflected on similarly positive experiences with the staff. “I interact with them at least once a day,” she said. “They're always kind and curious about what's going on in my life.”

From planning special events to preparing meals on a day-to-day basis, the Dining Services team spends every week feeding the Exeter community. Their hard and earnest work has not gone — and never should go — unnoticed.

## A Brief Word!

From Amber Zou

By KAI GOWDA, KEVIN THANT, MEGAN TATEZEE

ariston flowers & cafe after allen ginsburg's american sentences  
stack peonies ranunculus hydrangeas on floor-to-ceiling shelves  
follow fiddle figs money trees and crane neck at sweet pink and white sky  
trace pointer on crisp wildflowers dried color sucked to sepia  
lift lemongrass candle to inhale wick to light raindrop in hand  
smell sugar and sugar and flour and realize flowers are not all  
so let's walk five feet let's nibble on olive feta honey bacon  
sip delicately iced matcha oat milk please a dash of agave  
pretend you've had your fill dab lips with folded napkin hide stomach growl  
bare teeth in pseudo-smile thinking of \$18.50 swallowed in two  
bites now back through floral jungle wallet dented stomach 1/4 full  
but at least at least rose petal scent dallies on skin and memory

Word! (Exeter's poetry club) is now publishing one short poem in every issue of *The Exonian*. Email [ledavis@exeter.edu](mailto:ledavis@exeter.edu) with your submission and come to meetings at 7:00 on Tuesdays in PHLH203!

# Senior of the Week: Vera Aimunmondion



Senior Vera Aimunmondion smiles for a photo in the library.

Amelie Hespel / *The Exonian*

By AMY LIN, BELLA JIN, and ELAINE QIAO

Amidst the frenzy and thunderous cheering of the pep rally, all eyes are on the Love Gym floor that has transformed into a dance stage for Afro Shade — Exeter’s first and only Afro Beat dance group. The audience zooms in on senior Vera Aimunmondion, the lead dancer, dressed in a beautiful purple dashiki, hair pulled back with a matching headband. A glistening necklace of the map of Nigeria bounces around her neck as she sways to the rhythm and dances to the beat of the blasting music.

Tracing back Aimunmondion’s roots, she and her family moved from Nigeria to Newark, New Jersey when she was four. Her family consists of her mother, father, older sister, and younger brother. “I’m the middle child, and I think that is a part of the reason why I really love the number three because we’re three siblings and we’re three years apart from each other,” Aimunmondion said.

Each member of her family played an irreplaceable role in who she is today.

“Growing up, I definitely always looked up to my older sister and [I] still do. I copied her so much and I wanted to be everywhere that she was,” Aimunmondion recalled.

Her younger brother on the other hand “brought out more of her goofy side.”

Aimunmondion recognized her mother’s impact. “I can see myself in her, [and] she can see herself in me, because we both have really soft hearts and we’re both emotional in the sense that we feel a lot and see beyond the surface.”

Meanwhile, Aimunmondion and her father share a love of storytelling. “I appreciate it when I hear stories because it feels like it gives me an opportunity

to connect with a younger version of my dad,” she said.

“I really am grateful for all of the sacrifices that my parents have made for me. I mean one of the biggest ones was leaving their lives in Nigeria to start a new family here. And that came with its own challenges ever since. But they’ve never given up on my siblings and me, and they’ve always sought for us to have the best lives spiritually, physically, mentally, emotionally, and education-wise as well,” Aimunmondion said, acknowledging gratitude for her parents.

At the core of the Aimunmondion family, their Christian faith and relationship with God bring them together.

“One of the greatest gifts that [my parents] gave me is Christianity, because I can proudly say that God has saved my life,” she said. “Coming to Exeter was an opportunity for me to test and take ownership of my own faith.”

Aimunmondion’s journey to Exeter began in seventh grade. Prior to that, she had no knowledge of boarding school besides the childhood TV series *Zoey 101*. It was a conversation in her local church one day that presented her with a whole new outlook she never thought was possible.

“Reverend Glenda told me and my mom about boarding school and that her grandson did it. He loved it. She was telling me about all the opportunities he had, sports-wise, travel-wise, and extracurriculars. That really sounded impressive to me because even though my middle school did the best that they could, I definitely knew there was a disparity and that there was more out there,” Aimunmondion explained.

For Aimunmondion, her boarding school journey started with getting accepted into the Wight Foundation, a program that assists students in New Jersey to pursue higher education. From

there, Aimunmondion began juggling the weight of her middle school academics and her boarding school application.

“So basically, I was doing two schools. I was doing regular middle school and then I was taking math, English, social science, and SSAT classes with the Wight foundation.”

While touring, she noted her first impression of the Academy: “I was overwhelmed with joy, wonder, and amazement. And I was like, wow, this place is really beautiful. I just knew I could see myself spending the [next] four years here.”

Since arriving on campus as a prep, Aimunmondion has been an active participant in the wide range of clubs the Academy offers. Along with being the co-head of African Students Association and Afro Shade, Aimunmondion also leads the CVP: Young Investors Group. Following her love for dance and appreciation of her background, she describes her exploration of these clubs when she was a prep: “Some uppers reached out to me about Afro Shade, and I got super excited. I’ve always loved to dance, and I was super excited for this opportunity to dance to Afrobeats. And I loved the club so much that I was dedicated to it and loved my performances.”

Aimunmondion then continued to lead the club starting lower year, and had motivated many others to engage in this side of dancing and community that they may have not noticed before. Upper Beverly Oleka reminisces on her experience entering Afro beats, introduced by Aimunmondion: “She was a co-head at the time because she’s so, so good at dancing. Especially Afrobeats, she’s so good. And I remember her telling me, ‘You should join! It’s a great way to connect to our roots.’ And I was like, ‘I don’t know about that. I don’t

really dance. I don’t have much rhythm like that.’ And she’s like, ‘No, just try it out. See for yourself, you might actually end up liking it.’ And so I went and the vibes were immaculate. Everyone was so sweet. She was such a great choreography teacher. And I continued it till this year.” This year, Oleka is co-heading along Aimunmondion, which she describes as a blessing.

On campus, Aimunmondion was introduced to the African Students Association. “I remember the warmth of having African students on campus to look up to and like having older brothers and sisters. It was just really inspiring, and I remember feeling safe in that space and having fun and feeling represented.” Driven by the hope to foster the same feeling for future incoming students, Aimunmondion dedicated her time to the club as first being an apprentice in lower year, then officially leading the club in upper year.

Another community space that Aimunmondion has assisted in strengthening is Christian Fellowship. She recalls a day when two seniors led her on a prayer walk following a tough week. That moment of community and kindness remained a beautiful memory in her mind. To Aimunmondion, seeing Christian Fellowship expand over the course of her four years here has been a blessing.

“I’m really happy to see how it’s grown as a community and it’s been an anchor my whole four years, to explore my faith and to grow in faith with community members at Exeter, especially when times are really rough. So I’m really grateful for that space,” Aimunmondion expressed.

Growing up, Aimunmondion always had a knack for creating. “I was always the kid that begged my parents to save cardboard boxes and random trash so I could create stuff or save fabric to create anything from a fake MacBook to a denim skirt or something like that.” Her zeal for creation spilled into her love for YouTube.

“I love making YouTube videos. I started my channel at a very young age, around eleven or twelve years old. When I came to boarding school, I created another channel, KweenV Tv, and I post boarding school content and lifestyle advice on there. Just a lot of fun, engaging, and informative content. And whenever I have free time, that’s what I do. I also post

reels and YouTube shorts,” Aimunmondion shared.

“I’ve realized that my YouTube channel and my social media presence have been a big part of my legacy at Exeter, an extension of serving people and spreading my light to the world. And I realized this when new students would come up to me last year and this year telling me, ‘oh my goodness, you’re that girl from YouTube. I love your videos so much.’ And just the excitement on their faces would be such an honor for me and so exciting as well, that they got to meet somebody that they watched their videos before coming to this school, just like I watched videos of people such as Phoebe Weil and other boarding school content creators. I think this year especially was important because I was not expecting the amount of reach that I would have.”

Aside from creativity, Aimunmondion demonstrated her passion for service to her community through the CVP she initiated at Exeter.

“My love for community building has also spilled into the work I’ve done this year in terms of financial literacy. I started exploring financial literacy for myself because I realized that I was blatantly uninformed and uneducated about financial literacy. Knowing the systems that have created wealth inequality in the United States and knowing that I’m from an immigrant family, which comes with its own struggles, it scared me knowing that I didn’t know or understand anything about money,” Aimunmondion shared the incentive of her project.

“So that’s what led me to financial literacy. I started off by reading books like ‘Rich Dad Poor Dad’ and watching YouTube videos. I was self-educating. I was learning on my own and then I realized that I needed to share it with other people. So that has become my passion at school. Last year, I created the Young Investors Group, a fundamental financial literacy project,” she continued.

“Last year, Vera approached me because I teach economics, and she asked if I would help her facilitate a CVP on some intersections between identity and finance. I loved hearing her rationale for doing this and working with her on this was really transformative, I think, for both her and me,” Instructor in History and Aimunmondion’s advisor Meg Foley recalled her first encounter with this brilliant idea that stemmed from Aimunmondion’s valuable intentions of reaching out to her community.

“I would say that CVP became much more than just a personal finance CVP, it became really about generational stories about wealth and occupation and how people can, if they wish to, shift those stories for themselves,” Foley shared.

“She knew she was interested in economics and finance, and then in watching her lead the CVP, I saw her realize sort of a deep reasoning behind that and she became really cognizant of how knowledge in this area could be transformative,” she continued.

Alongside the CVP project within campus, Aimunmondion also brought this knowledge back home by creating a financial literacy and wealth inequality workshop for an annual back-to-school event called Books and Breakfast. Not only is she passionate about learning financial literacy for herself, but she’s also devoted to sharing that knowledge with people and changing the systems.

A witness to Aimunmondion’s pursuit of her passions, Foley noted, “She is a person who is willing to step into unfamiliar spaces, whether it’s an activity or a class, and give things a try. She has really impressed me with her willingness to start with things that aren’t necessarily her strongest talent or her first interest and just give them a shot and really take note of how she improves in those areas and how she takes a liking to things that maybe felt a little different at first. She’s willing to put herself out there.”

Aimunmondion’s enthusiasm and commitment towards her extracurriculars and hobbies are reflected in the presence she holds in the classroom.

Her interest in subjects expanded through the transition from the curriculum in middle school to the vast range of courses in high school.

“My favorite classes right now would have to be my History 999 called Civil Rights and the Black Power Movement. It’s taught by Mr. Matsumaru and created by Sophie Ma,” Aimunmondion said. “I love the class and our discussions. We’re covering very important history, having very candid discussions, and grappling with a lot of tough history about race and power dynamics as well as sex and gender in the United States.”

Along with her interest in history, Aimunmondion discovered the doors that the Spanish language has opened for her. “I really, really struggled my first year in Spanish. It was really tough and there were ups and downs,” she recalled. “But now I’m at a place where I am almost fluent in Spanish. I’ve been emboldened to talk to strangers in Spanish and have really good conversations with people — people I see on the street, at the doctor’s office, people I just see everywhere. I’m able to talk to people from Spain, the Dominican Republic, Brazil too. It has truly been a gift. I love what the Spanish language has done for me and have exposed [me] to Latin American culture and also Spanish culture.”

Instructor in Modern Languages Pérez Serrano, one of Aimunmondion’s Spanish teachers, speaks highly of her performance at the Harkness table. “There’s just that tremendous humility to her. She probably doesn’t know this, but you can feel it at the table. She doesn’t feel like she’s better than anybody, so people respect her because of that. She’s so willing to learn and ask questions — she has a deep curiosity about so many things, so that’s an amazing asset to have in class.”

Aimunmondion has not only been a motivator to her friends on campus, but she also brings that openness and engagement into her classes. As Instructor in English Sahar Ullah commented, “Vera is an active participant and listener who approaches literature and her classmates with openness, respect, and curiosity.”

Aside from the passions she discovered and courses she explored on campus, Exeter has left a profound impact on Aimunmondion.

“Exeter has changed my life by opening doors that were once shut and revealing to me paths I did not know anything about. It also gives me the boldness to dream,” Aimunmondion said. “Exeter was the first time I was the only Black person in the room. In my prep year and lower year, at times it was very daunting because Exeter forced me to look at myself in the mirror and confront the messages of racism and colorism that I inherited growing up. Being exposed to this new and more

# Aimunmondion Cont.

diverse environment with people from all over the world just forced me to unpack those things. At the same time, diversity has also been a blessing. There are so many lessons that I've learned here that I would not have learned if I remained in my hometown. There are so many people I have met that have impacted my life greatly."

"There's teachers I've met, there's people I've met for one day on the street that I haven't met again, but they've left me with such wisdom and beauty. There are club meetings I've had and which I've walked away learning something new and also feeling more connected to a certain part of my identity or culture," Aimunmondion reflected. "I have just been exposed to so much knowledge and the possibilities aspect, the opening doors aspect is in the sense that Exeter has enabled me to dream and know that I can be great and I do deserve to be great, and I do deserve to dream."

Seeing people at Exeter with diverse talents and exemplifying their boldness by "daring to do things, to create and try and fail," deeply resonated with Aimunmondion.

"That's a gift that Exeter has given me, knowing that I'm not too young to make an impact on the world because people right here that are my age or younger than me are already doing that in small and large ways."

In the same way, these people have influenced Aimunmondion and her time at Exeter, she has left an immense impact on their lives.

Those who know Aimunmondion recognized something special from the very first encounter they had with her.

"I first really got to know Vera over Zoom when there was remote learning due to the pandemic. And she, even on Zoom, brought just such a wonderful presence and an ability to connect with people. Of course, I wasn't surprised when I met her in person and she was really able to do that," Foley shared.

Oleka shared her first meeting with Aimunmondion.

"I met Vera through E'3. She was my E'3 mentor. I remember when I was moving in, my family and I went to D Hall to grab some food. And it was there where I met her. [Vera] was just so sweet and she made me feel so much at home because she was African and I'm also African, so we had a connection that way. My parents felt a lot better leaving me with her, because she seems like a very sweet person."

"If you speak to Vera for literally two seconds, it's so obvious from the very start that she just has so much light and goodness to share. She is the most open-minded, well-spoken, grateful, patient, curious, thoughtful, and beautiful person you'll meet," senior Amber Zou said.

"I first met her in a Spanish class. I usually use a lot of songs in my classes. I remember her really getting into the beat of the song when we were singing it. I thought to myself: this is someone who is uplifted by music and the arts, and she also learns through them." Dr. Pérez Serrano recounted Aimunmondion's creativity right from the beginning.

"Best birthday gifts ever," senior William Weber shared. "She knows I love homemade gifts. Vera isn't even an art-focussed person but she put the time and energy into making this beautiful multi-layered card with little notes of appreciation for me from different friends, dorm mates, and my favorite seniors and faculty."

Aimunmondion didn't expect some connections that would form and ties that would merge Exeter. "I didn't know how much I would be graced with relationships with staff. And what I mean by that is I was not expecting to get as close to staff as I have, and not only academic staff, but [also] staff as in, people in the dining hall, people that clean our dorms and clean our pathways at school—and that has been a great blessing to me."

Dining Hall Services staff Keith Humphrey shared, "The personal writing she has done and shared with me is heartwarming, so insightful, so honest, so genuine! Vera wrote a thank you card to

me last year, thanking me for being a positive person in her life. The card was so nice; I told her she was going to make a grown man cry — which I did! I will always treasure that card!"

Throughout the years that people have gotten to know Aimunmondion, they had the opportunity to witness her growth.

"Throughout the time I've known her, she has become a much more confident person in herself. I think she used to have a fear of what other people thought of her. She sort of would have this fear in the back of her head, like 'Oh, what if I do this wrong?'" senior Yoeku Sam recalled, "But as I've really seen these past couple of years and this year, she has become her own person. She has this personality that is really distinct to her and it's unapologetic. She lives her life the way she wants to live it."

Zou agreed, "I think she has gained confidence in herself and honestly there is so much emotional growth that we have done together, but I would say the biggest thing is her confidence in herself."

"My first impression of her was that she was perky and fun and really interested in how language was connected to its culture and its people. Fast forward to Vera now, I don't think she's changed a whole lot, but she's a much more grounded, mature person. I know that she's gone through ups and downs like every student. I appreciate her profound faith. I think it offers a real grounding to her life" Dr. Pérez Serrano noted.

Ullah agreed, "She celebrates who she is and from whom and where she comes from — which shows in her confidence and her engagement with others. She is an excellent student, a passionate learner who offers sharp analysis during discussions and in her writing, and a young leader who will have a positive impact wherever she goes because she cares."

Senior Colin Maloney said, "I think this is a bit of a cliché, but she's taken on more leadership roles. Taking on more of that mantle over

the years. I'd say she also definitely has developed a deeper connection to the community, like many of us have, over the years."

"Huge growth," Weber shared. "Vera has really become more herself, if that makes sense. Or more confident being herself, and sharing that with the world. She also has this really strong balance between deep care and consideration for other people, but being unapologetically true to her authentic self, in any dimension of life."

As Weber described, "Huge source of light in this world and community. Her smile and attitude light up the room. Whether it is a new student or a behind-the-scenes staff member, Vera is not afraid to make an authentic connection and take someone under her wing, making a new friend in the process. Now that I think about it, Vera is a behind-the-scenes community builder."

Weber continued. "She tends to her own world really well, which then resonates out into the community. She's also able to step outside of her own life and truly listen to you in the moments you need someone. Vera is a big source of kindness in my life and an inspiration of how I want to engage with the world."

"Three words to describe Vera - genuine, ambitious, joyful!" shared Humphrey. "Vera radiates a genuine joy on this campus! I have had the pleasure to know a multitude of students during my long career here at PEA, she will be one that I will always remember! Vera deserves senior of the week because she exemplifies the connection between knowledge and goodness!"

In her final year at the Academy, Aimunmondion shared lessons that she had learned along the way and would impart to the Exeter community.

"My advice to people at Exeter or coming into Exeter would be to embrace the discomfort of not being the best," Aimunmondion shared. "I think it's important that we're going through that now in high school because it forces us to go through that discomfort of feeling like we're not the best, but then realizing we don't need to be the best. Also, there isn't really

an objective best because people are so different. And that's the beauty of it. You discover what about you makes you you, and that's something nobody can ever take away from you. Then you start to lean into that beauty and discover that it's okay to be who you are and still not be the best at everything."

"You should not think that if someone brings turkey to the table, you're less than for bringing rice. I want everybody coming in to know that you are beautiful, you are great in your own ways, you are talented. You can do things that other people can't do, and people can do things that you can't do. And you should embrace that diversity and not feel like you lose your voice in that, but rather that you find your voice in that diversity."

The legacy that Aimunmondion leaves is powerful and one that would influence many who come after her.

"I think that's really important in a place like Exeter where you need to have integrity and something that holds you—whether it's your faith, or your family, your friends, or a sense of belonging to something bigger than yourself— something more important than where you are at or where you are going next. Vera leaves behind a genuine desire to learn through the process and a willingness to be present, even as she aims high. I believe that is what Exeter should be about and she truly embodies it," Dr. Pérez Serrano said.

"I think when anyone interacts with Vera, they would say their day is better for it. I think that's a true legacy that she really cares about each and every person she's interacting with. She takes time for them, she listens to them, she connects and shares, and you always feel deeply seen by her," Foley shared. "It's not her responsibility to do that, but I think she just feels like humans are worth getting to know. And if you're the person she's getting to know, it just feels wonderful because she's such a caring and warm person."

"She's just so personable and kind to everyone, not just the people she's friends with. She's so outgoing and she'll introduce herself to anyone.

And I just think that's really admirable and it brings the community together," upper Eli Pratt said.

"I feel like she definitely leaves a very huge and impactful spiritual legacy. For a lot of Christian kids on campus and in Exeter because it's so easy to get lost in your religion and like, just your culture too. I think she also brings an African legacy in making sure that we keep up with our culture and our languages and our dances and just everything that relates with our identity," Oleka said.

"She leaves behind the reminder that it's challenging, but you can get through it. Everybody's lives have a different purpose, so she leaves behind the legacy that no matter what you're going through, you will make it out and you can accomplish anything that you want to accomplish," Sam shared.

"Light," Zou said assuredly. "Vera truly is just a ray of light. There's no other way to describe it. Even when she may not be at her best, her heart is just so pure and it's so obvious. I appreciate her emotional and overall maturity so much and her ability to be non-judgmental. She inspires me to constantly grow as a person."

A i m u n m o n d i o n immediately thinks of Matthew 5:14-16 when reflecting upon her legacy and the positive impact she left on Exeter.

"The way that I've been a light at Exeter these past four years is by sharing my smile. Whoever I meet, whether it's somebody I know along the paths or a stranger, I always welcome people. I always say hi to people with a smile just because it's nice, it's beautiful, it's kind and you don't know how much that smile could mean to somebody," Aimunmondion said. "I just really believe in loving people and caring for them because they are people, and they deserve love, respect, and kindness. I remember a new upper telling me that I just made her feel so much at peace and so welcome at this school. And it means a lot to me when people tell me those sorts of things. I can directly see how my kindness, my love, and my servitude have impacted their lives for the better.

# Students Reflect on Fall Campus Events

By **SAM ALDERMAN, ISABEL EVANS, CHLOE LIND, ADELLE PITTS, and LEOZHANG**

As the first term of the school year, the fall can be daunting for many; acclimating to Exeter's frenetic schedule, sleepless nights, and Academy life is no easy feat. The myriad of events offered every term by the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA), Student Council, and the Student Alumni Relations Council (STARS) alleviate the stresses of the Academy's academic rigor.

On Sept. 29, Elm Mezzanine buzzed with activity as crowds of students darted in and out, tasting various flavors of mooncakes, Korean pancakes, and Japanese candies and snacks. Some tried their hand at fan-painting or grabbed bunny stickers to go. This was the Academy's first celebration for the Mid-Autumn Festival, Chuseok, and Tsukimi holidays, widely observed in China, Vietnam, Korea, and Japan respectively.

"Planning the event within the short, three-week timeframe between the holiday and when I first returned to campus for student leader training was definitely the most difficult part," senior Sophie Ma, who organized the celebration as her OMA proctor project, said. "I'm so grateful to Ms. Tinsley and the Asian Advisory Board for all their help, especially since this was the first iteration and we had

no idea what to expect."

"Thankfully, the event turned out wonderfully," Ma continued. "I was so surprised at the turnout — we ran out of Korean pancakes in the blink of an eye, and the nearly 400 mooncakes we ordered were gone in an hour. It made me really happy to see people enjoying themselves and students from all over campus learning about this holiday or being excited that we were doing something for it."

"I hope someone will take over organizing the festival when I've graduated," Ma added. "It's a pity I could only make it happen in my senior year, but it's so precious to me."

On Sept. 30, the first dance of the fall term, the Neon Dance, took place in Thompson Gym. Senior and Student Council Recreation Committee co-head Nhan Phan described the context behind the dance. "This fall term, we have planned two dances, the Neon Dance being the first, informal dance. We've always held dances in Thompson Gym because our experience with past venues usually hasn't worked. The neon theme seemed to resonate with us, and we thought that could be our first informal dance," he said.

Phan also explained how successful the dance was at attracting students and providing them with high-school memories. "The dance had good timing because there weren't a lot of other things happening on

campus at that time, [excluding] sports games," he said. "But ultimately, it was a successful event because of the amount of people that showed up, but also in keeping with the theme: it was fun. It was a fun way, especially for new students to just go out and hang out with their friends for the first time. It was the expectation for kids coming into a high school setting to know that they'll have dances and a stereotypical high school experience."

Recreation Committee co-head and senior Gigi Lannon agreed in part, but upon reflecting on the dance, said, "If I could improve something from the dance, it would have been either promoting it sooner so people could be more aware and dressed in theme or changing the theme to be easier." Lannon added that it was a very promising event, but that it probably did not honor the public's wishes. "[Those] events might not appeal to every audience which is where it is challenging to get everyone excited and involved."

Just a week later, students were treated to Fall Fest, perhaps the most anticipated event of the term, which featured autumnal fair snacks, recreational activities, and a Photo Booth, among other things. "I think Fall Fest was awesome," Lannon said. "Tons of people went to the venue because the food was good, and so were the activities." Lannon described the process as

very involved, the Recreation Committee having to meet with the three coheads, and listening to voting members' requests at Student Council meetings every month.

Prep Connie Thomas agreed with the voting member requests, stating, "I liked the Fall Fest because it was really diverse, and had lots of things to do with incredible food and lots of different activities."

The events brought students together for a fun, exciting time while following past obstacles. Phan emphasized past failures at events: "The spring formal last year that we held in the wrestling room had to be canceled because the floor was shaking. Other dances were limited due to Covid restrictions or bad turnout."

A recurring problem for Phan has been hiring a DJ. "We can't get our DJ perfect because it's an external venue and something we're not able to control. We can give out suggestions as to what music we would like, but the DJ's choice is the DJ's Choice. That's something we don't have jurisdiction over. So when people complain to us that the DJ wasn't good, or [ask to have an] exact DJ come, we don't have control over that."

Thomas raised concerns about the neon dance, like many students. "It's not that the DJ was bad, but he was just part of a different generation."

During the fall this year, construction projects have been

occurring all around campus, such as the geothermal wells in front of the Academy Building and the renovation of Wetherell Dining Hall. Phan highlighted how the limited amount of space has affected events. "With different events related to alumni admissions and athletics, we are facing a real pickle in terms of our spacing," he said. "That forces us to be creative in terms of what space we use for what event. And plus not all spaces are suitable. It has to be enough to contain the capacity of people that we expect to come. We just have to make sure that whatever we do in event and programming, we pay attention to how the space will influence how someone perceives an event."

The main conflict with these events though is scheduling. "There are always scheduling issues, right?" Phan said. "But then that usually is something that... we foresee beforehand. Usually we try to plan events on nights where there are no conflicts or at least very little conflicts... We've been facing a problem in terms of scheduling because of insufficient space, as well as other events competing for our different audiences."

Lannon spoke to how more students can become involved in event planning on campus. "The Recreation Committee only meets with the three co-heads, but every month or so we have people offer ideas in Student

Council. If students want to pitch event ideas, they should come to Student Council meetings and offer their opinions," she said. "We also have an email list of people who we can reach out to when we need help with setting up. But for the most part, we haven't had that many huge events yet, at least ones that are student run. I also think that there are more events happening than people realize. Based on the schedule I've seen, there is at least one thing happening every Friday or Saturday night of the term, and the Recreation Committee works to make sure that remains true. Those events might not appeal to every audience, which is where it is challenging to get everyone excited and involved."

Whether it's attending the Neon Dance, stopping by the Fall Fest or Moon Festival celebration for a tasty treat, or witnessing a magical duo in the Assembly Hall, there has proved to be an event for everyone to enjoy this fall. Student leaders across campus have worked extremely hard to organize and schedule these events that give Exonians some much-needed space to let loose, enjoy some tasty food, and spend time with their friends. As the fall term comes to a close, Exonians have the Fall Formal to look forward to, as well as many more events in the winter.

# Faculty of the Week: Alia Haskins



OMA Intern Alia Haskins poses for a photo outside EPAC.

Austin Desisto / The Exonian

By **TEDDY CAPPOZI, ETHAN DING, ERIN HAN, and LILYRAMPE**

Although this is her first term at the Academy, Administrative Intern of Multicultural Affairs Alia Haskins has already made her presence known to the Exeter community. Whether discussing matters over the Harkness table in the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA), chatting with students in the Dunbar Hall common room, or on the paths listening to her favorite music with earphones in, she is always a source of compassion and warmth. In the time that she has been Exeter’s newest OMA faculty member, Haskins has established herself as a unique

voice and comforting presence that has become appreciated by many students and faculty on campus.

Before coming to Exeter, Haskins completed her undergraduate studies at Bowdoin College and graduate studies at Columbia University. “At university I worked on my master’s degree, which was in Latin American and Caribbean studies. I knew that I wanted to work at a school after I finished, and I also knew that I wanted to work in multicultural affairs, Diversity Equity Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ), or in some other similar capacity,” Haskins said. “When I looked into Exeter and saw that they were hiring interns, I did some research and saw that

they had similar values as I did and that it was a fit for the kind of environment I was looking for. I knew that it was an incredible institution beforehand, but after I visited the school for my interview and I saw that everyone was so friendly, I knew that this was exactly where I wanted to be.”

“This is my first full time job, and I honestly could not have asked for a better one,” Haskins continued. “So far, I have to say it’s been a very nice transition from working through my graduate school work to now being able to implement a lot of the things I had been learning about and researching here at Exeter.”

Despite being new to the Academy, Haskins has

already become an important part of various communities across campus. As an OMA intern, her days are mostly spent on the first floor of Jeremiah Smith. “Each day is different, and varies a lot. My job definitely isn’t boring, and there’s always something interesting and new to do, which I am very grateful for,” Haskins said. “Usually I’ll be focusing on emails and I’ll help plan or do some social media posts if there’s a big OMA event coming up. I’ll generally be out at the Harkness table at OMA, and I’m always open to chat with any students that come in.”

Students and faculty alike commented on the bright presence Haskins brings into any room she enters. Senior

and OMA proctor Rowan Flanagan shared, “Ms. Haskins is such a kind, reliable, and funny person. She really listens and takes into account others’ voices.” He added that “her bright personality and humor makes work less stressful and fun, and they constantly make an effort to be open and make connections with students and faculty alike.”

“I think a lot of people will really appreciate the positive energy she brings to the community,” senior Stacy Chen, another member of the OMA team, said. “OMA is a special place for many Exonians and it’s always extra comforting to know there’s faculty who are there to help you out or simply just check-in and talk. I can tell she cares a lot about the students.”

Flanagan commented that their conversations with Haskins often reached beyond work in the OMA office: “I love how at home our conversations at the OMA table make me feel. Whether we are talking about DMV culture, halloween costumes, or our favorite sauces, we can connect over the simplest topics and bond.”

Lower Anushka Noori, who started as an OMA proctor this fall, also spoke about how Haskins’ personality brightens up the OMA environment. “[Ms. Haskins’] kind and fun-loving personality adds to OMA’s inviting atmosphere,” she said. “I’m grateful to her for the support that she has given me throughout this term and look forward to having many more conversations with her around OMA’s table this year.”

In addition to her important role in the OMA office, Haskins also is a member of the dorm faculty in Dunbar Hall. She does dorm duty there on some nights and has brought her kindness and approachability to the Dunbar dorm community as well.

“She’s a really cool person, and conversations are always interesting,” senior and Dunbar proctor Defne Koyluoglu said. “She’s really close with a lot of the students, and I think the fact that she’s

on the younger side [of] faculty members helps with that. She just finished getting her master’s, so she totally understands the struggles of being a student. Being so familiar with the student perspective, she’s really easy to talk to about classes, tests, and other challenges that students face. One aspect of that is how familiar she is with the college process. It’s been helpful, especially as a senior going through it right now, talking about her undergrad and grad school experience. She brings a lot of insight from the other side of what a lot of us are getting into right now.”

“In addition to being approachable, she’s also great at keeping conversation going,” Koyluoglu continued. “I’ll go into the common room from time to time with my friends, and she’ll make room for people to add to the conversation. Having Ms. Haskins in the discussion always results in a more engaging conversation.”

Day by day, Haskins has become more integrated with Exeter. She has been working to, and plans to become a more active member in the school community. Each step of the way, she’ll work to bring her values to all the spaces she joins, seeking to make them improved and more equitable. “I’m working on the Martin Luther King Jr. committee this year, which has been really exciting. Once a week I’ll attend the planning meetings and it’s been a great experience to be a part of it and help out. I’ve visited classes and so I’m getting a sense of what Exeter life is like, especially for the students,” she said.

“Genuine, easy to talk to, honest, and funny,” were the words International Student Coordinator Jennifer Smith used to describe Haskins. She shared, “Ms. Haskins offers to help with anything — she has even jumped in on things that were last minute — something that may seem like a small task but were crucial to the big picture. She has such a positive attitude and is a true team player.”

## Prep Summer Reading Book Review

By **KAI GOWDA, KEVIN THANT, MEGAN TATE ZEE**

Each year, the incoming preps start their summers with an assigned reading as a class. On June 16, Exeter’s newly accepted class of 2027 received an email from Katie Brule, Instructor in English and 9th Grade Program Coordinator, asking students to read *This is My Brain in Love*, by surgeon and author I. W. Gregorio, by the start of school.

“*This is My Brain in Love*” touches on aspects of Gregorio’s own life. The story is centered on how protagonist and Asian-American teen Jocelyn Wu navigates her junior year of high school. Wu runs her family’s restaurant, partaking in a relationship with her fellow coworker Will Domenici and discovering her own mental health issues. The book explores topics of

race, mental health, and self-acceptance and also covers cross-cultural romance.

Brule shared why this book was picked as the class of 2027’s common read. “We ultimately chose this one I think for the number of sort of what, what might we call it, but like on ramps I guess from different perspectives, like the fact that there’s the discussion of mental health, but it’s also centered on teenagers, which I think is more like relatable in some way.”

“There is talk about generational differences, there’s socioeconomic differences, there’s race and ethnicity, there’s romance, which also feels important in some ways,” Brule continued.

“And thinking about ability and just different ways that whether you felt like you were struggling with mental health or not, whether you were of a certain

socioeconomic status or not, you would be able to relate in some way to something that was going on.”

Prep Roxanne Debbouzi shared, “I liked reading the book, it was good at the start and the story was pretty good. And then after, it just went downhill and I didn’t like it.”

“I liked how they talked about mental health in a way that was more discreet. They didn’t really put it out there. And we saw with Jocelyn’s journey, how she realized that she had mental health problems and how sometimes it’s not always super upfront,” prep Amani Shetty said.

For prep Naomi Moskovich, “I dislike the fact that it was, it overdid the aspect of mental health in which everyone had, challenges and struggles, and I felt it wasn’t really relatable.”

“I kind of thought that

the plot wasn’t that great, but it was all right ‘cause it was about mental health and that’s the really important thing to learn about,” prep Antonio Serna echoed.

Prep Daniel Ambyo-Okolo said, “I felt it really changed my understanding of how I viewed mental health, because I know some people who are in a state of depression or in a state of depression and stuff, that who are afraid to get meds, and I never really understood their perspective and, and why they thought the way they did until right now.”

Many preps found the book’s kissing scene most memorable. Prep Zane Eskandar shared, “The one scene that I can’t forget is when they’re kissing in the car, it, and her dad catches them. It’s just kind of a wonky scene.”

Prep Bea Doeringer also expressed a similar thought about her most memorable

scene. “Probably when they kissed. I just feel that they made it a really big deal in the book.”

Max Henry agreed. “When they made out in that hot steamy car.”

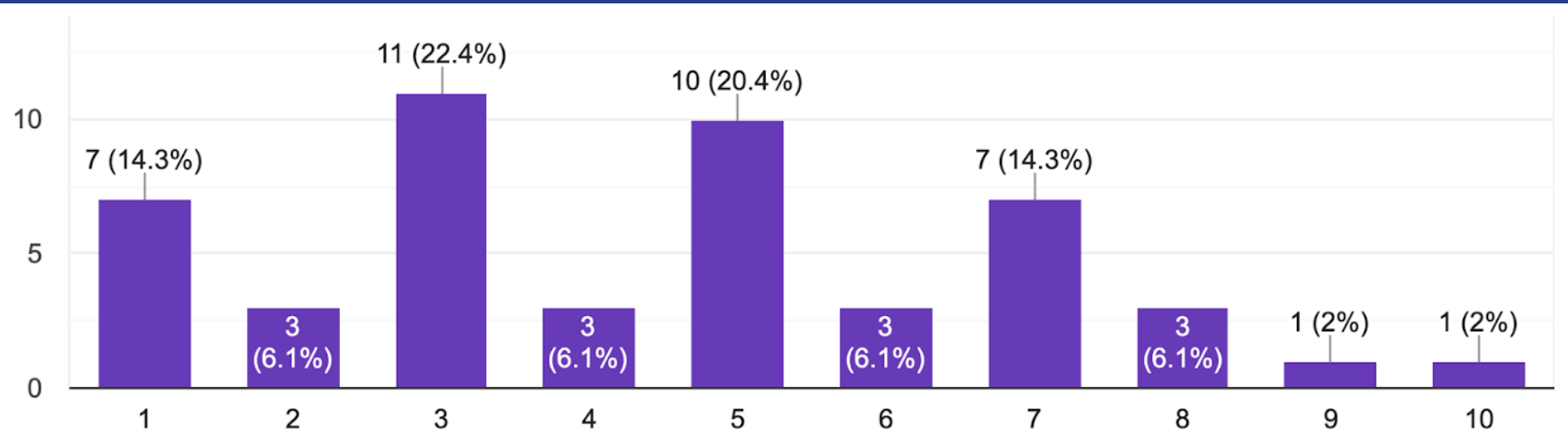
Other parts of the book were highlights for students as well. Prep Fleur Phillips said, “The most memorable part of the book was definitely the last bit, just because it almost felt as though Jocelyn just let rip and really her mental health issues completely took over her. And I think that was a really important experience to highlight because often it, the media, it’s portrayed as something that can just be solved with a quick fix, but this showed how it can’t just be solved overnight.”

When asked about their least favorite part of the book, many preps noted its lack of substance beyond its theme of mental health. “My least favorite part of the book

was the ending because it felt the characters were able to resolve quite a traumatic situation almost too easily and felt they weren’t really addressing the key issues that were brought up in that final, I guess, fight scene. So I didn’t think that was a very good way to end the story,” Phillips stated.

Prep Adu Illangovan said, “Probably the cringiness, the lack of suspense made the book super cringy and some of the main characters were really annoying.”

Overall, “*This is My Brain in Love*” was fairly liked by the prep class. Students enjoyed the way it delved into topics of teenage mental health. However, some disliked the way it incorporated some cringy romance scenes at the same time. Moving forward in the year, preps hope to read more inclusive books that touch on topics of race and mental health.



Graph of the 49 respondents of the prep class’s rating of the book on a scale of 1-10 (1 being the lowest, 10 being the highest).



Read upper Allison Kelly's thoughts on the "sad girl autumn" trend, 10.

Read upper Max Mantel's thoughts on Hasan Minhaj's comedic practices, 12.

Read upper Aven Burney's ranking of Olivia Rodrigo's GUTS, 11.

# Bread and

## Is an American Parliament Inevitable?

By HUNTER RYERSON  
'24

On Jan. 3, 2023, at the onset of the 118th US Congress, Republican Congressman Kevin McCarthy failed to secure a majority of votes for the Speakership of the House, hampered by protest votes from the hard-right Freedom Caucus. What followed were days of political drama and spectacle broadcasted clearly to American voters. C-SPAN, which was granted special authority to operate independently for the duration of the speakership crisis, gave America an unprecedentedly candid view of its representatives. Close-up reactions, rowdy boos and hollers, and angry shouting across the House floor made for a jarring departure from the low-energy routine typically shown on television. These were scenes fit for Netflix's House of Cards, not our actual Capitol Hill. After 15 rounds of arguing, pleading, and horsetrading, McCarthy secured his gavel. In exchange, he traded away any certainty of keeping it by guaranteeing that any congressman could force a vote to oust the speaker at any time.

On Tuesday, Oct. 3, just under nine months after taking office, McCarthy was ousted from the speakership by that very procedure in a 216-210 House vote. Led by the very Freedom Caucus, which had hampered McCarthy's original speakership bid, this motion stalled the work of an already-fumbling Congress. That afternoon, I joined some Cillian political junkies to watch this

Congressional meltdown on a laptop screen. Someone joked: "Well, I guess Rishi Sunak's gonna be speaker."

The comparison between the ousted Speaker McCarthy and the resigned British Prime Minister Truss was apt: both arrived in power on shaky mandates from their respective conservative parties, and both failed to sustain a functional government to combat large-scale issues facing their respective citizenries. But this quick joke made me think more deeply about the growing similarities between parliamentary government and our own.

The system of parliamentary democracy requires the executive, or head of government, to derive their mandate from the legislature (i.e., parliament). Meanwhile, the head of state (typically held by a monarch or a ceremonial president) is a public persona embodying the state as a whole and is entirely distinct from the Head of Government. On paper, this is starkly different from our own constitutional republic, in which the directly elected president is both head of government and head of state, conducting partisan policy and embodying the United States as a unified nation.

However, in the last decade, our past two presidents have veered away from statecraft and instead become personalities and figureheads for their respective ideologies. Former President Donald Trump is the clearest example. During Trump's ultimately

successful 2016 presidential bid, Trump's campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, insisted that: "[Trump] needs an experienced person to do the part of the [presidential] job he doesn't want to do. He sees himself more as the chairman of the board than even the CEO, let alone the COO." Trump's supposed vision as a big-picture overseer of the federal government, but not dealing with day-to-day, nitty-gritty affairs, is greatly similar to the role of the

*"It would be nice if students know the differences between a Mexican and a Bolivian or a Venezuelan and a Salvadorian, making sure that our community knows that we're very diverse and we're part of the American continent."*

parliamentary head of state. And, indeed, for the first two years of the Trump presidency, it was Speaker of the House Paul Ryan who spearheaded the (ultimately failed) Republican health care agenda, large tax cuts (true to his Ayn Rand fanaticism), and a greatly-bolstered military budget, managing the hyperspecific policy agendas as a Head of Government would. Similarly, former Speaker Nancy Pelosi broke precedent during her tenure, stripping the House Majority Leader of its role as manager of the legislative agenda and redirecting that authority to herself.

Meanwhile, President Biden's first term has been marred by rumors of a constant tug-of-war between different Democratic factions over controlling policy. While right-wing conspiracy theories of a secret "shadow president" — either in the form of a third Obama term, a Harris presidency, or even a Pelosi presidency — have gone viral, and Weekend at Bernie's references are a dime a dozen in political discourse, I'd be hard troubled to find any voter on the street who truly believes Biden is running the show.

Yet, even if we concede that the executive component of the presidency is fading, that isn't proof that some bizarre pseudo-parliamentarianism has overtaken Washington. Another typical hallmark of parliamentary democracy is the feature of coalition government, where two or more parties within a multi-party parliament will collaborate to form a majority. This isn't always the case, but parliamentary systems often allow for more third parties to gain seats, either by proportional representation, multi-round voting, or even the guarantee of the coalition itself (voting for a third party isn't a wasted vote if they'd work with bigger parties on the important issues).

At first glance, this couldn't be more different from our US system. We are so starkly divided across party lines, with Republicans and Democrats so hyperfocused on unseating one another that no third party (Reform, Libertarian, Green, or otherwise)

wins elections or has any particular influence on the national stage. However, a closer look at ideological caucuses within our two parties reveals there is far more coalition at play than one might think.

In particular, following this recent McCarthy debacle, the Republican Party has proven itself to be a loose coalition between the far-right Freedom Caucus' 46 members and the more moderate Republican Study Committee's 156 members (accompanied by twenty unaffiliated Republicans). The Freedom Caucus agenda is dissimilar enough from that of mainstream Republicans that it is effectively its own party (akin to the split between the French Parliament's hard-right National Rally Party and its more moderate Republican Party).

This notion of coalition isn't unique

*"It would be nice if students know the differences between a Mexican and a Bolivian or a Venezuelan and a Salvadorian, making sure that our community knows that we're very diverse and we're part of the American continent."*

to one instance of Republican infighting, either. Congressional Democrats are pretty evenly split down the middle between the 99 members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus and the 94 of the moderate New Democrat Coalition, with ten congressmen

drawing up the center under the Blue Dog Coalition. They may do a better job of hiding it than the GOP, but these two bigger Democratic factions (and, to a lesser extent, the Blue Dogs as well) have faced massive infighting in recent years. Most notably, the heated civil war between then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez revealed serious fractures in ideology within the Democratic Party as well.

American politics in the 21st Century have proven to be wildly unpredictable. The issues and circumstances we face are largely unprecedented, and our system of government will almost certainly evolve in unprecedented ways to match. As we, the people, seek to understand our government best and how to guarantee maximum progress, welfare, and stability, it is important to keep a thumb on the pulse of the three branches of government as responsible citizens. The pattern of the speakership rising in prominence and the presidency falling in turn, accompanied by a fragmenting two-party system, all corroborates the idea that a parliamentary America may be just around the corner, and we ought to understand the implications of that new system, so we as citizens are prepared to advocate for our needs within it.



A session of the United States House of Representatives.

Courtesy of Pew Research Center

# The Pitfalls of Harkness

By ALLISON KELLY '25

If we as students can't get over the stress of speaking just to be graded, how can we help our classmates and therefore ourselves learn in a truly non-sibi way?

When I first came to Exeter, I was shy but excited about Harkness. I was ready to let it do its "magic" and make me an extrovert. A year and a half later, I still get nervous showing up to any humanities class to discuss the previous night's reading. I could be fully prepared, ready to cross-examine evidence, make connections to broader themes, and so on, and yet, it's still daunting to speak up, to contribute anything of meaning at all.

Harkness suddenly became less about what they tell you in admissions videos – advertising discussion-based learning that the Exeter community prides itself on than it is about surviving on this oval-shaped battlefield.

I became so focused on finding my next point rather than paying attention to who was speaking that I had no chance to actually learn.

But we're all guilty of this. As students in such a competitive academic environment, we're constantly pawned against each other, fighting for recognition and praise. We've become so wrapped up in what it means to be the best that we've started to lose sight

of what it means to be a non-sibi community.

When we're all just throwing our points out on the table, are we really even discussing? No matter how rooted in textual evidence our ideas are, are they really promoting conversation at all? Without thought-provoking ideas, how can we have a good discussion and therefore learn? But without strong points, regardless if they promote discussion or not, how can we be graded individually for our Harkness skills?

Making a random point or quoting a passage in the text just for the sake of speaking isn't a conversation. Harkness tables shouldn't be a competition against your classmates, but a space for discussion. We should be able to ask questions and throw ideas out onto the table without the stress of being perceived as "smart" when doing so. Being graded on how well you "Harkness" should be less about the points you make and more about the productiveness of the class's conversation.

Exeter claims that the Harkness method of learning, even with its inevitable downfalls, equips each Exonian with vital communication skills. I understand this to a certain extent – Harkness doesn't allow people to hide from the discussion, thus preparing students for the "real world" of business meetings and

**QUESTION OF THE ISSUE:**

## Asking the Important Questions?

Submit your responses (short or long and may be anonymous) to [exonian@gmail.com](mailto:exonian@gmail.com). Anyone is welcome to submit! Note: answers to this question will be published on the next issue! Faculty and adult members of the community are equally as welcome to submit a response.

conference rooms. But if this were really true, wouldn't your boss want you to be actively listening and learning from your peers rather than facing people solely to argue and ask easily answered rhetorical questions?

I've had many conversations with friends about the same topic, and everyone seems to be saying the same thing: Harkness isn't supposed to be about the value of your points but the value of class discussion. We can't learn without conversation, and we can't have a conversation if everyone is just contributing fragmented points in hopes of making sense solely to the teacher.

And I don't mean to completely rip apart Harkness here; Harkness is useful in so many ways and allows us to learn from each other instead of a lecture but hasn't it come to a point of becoming a battlefield instead of a classroom?

An academic warzone?

If all of this really is for the benefit of one student body, then why do we all feel pitted against each other?

Harkness might be causing Exeter students more stress, tainting the discussion that is supposed to be our source of learning. What if we focus more on listening to each other without the pressure of making good points a certain number of times in class just for a grade?

What if teachers were more open-minded in terms of how students can participate in Harkness? If students didn't feel the pressure of being graded just on what they're saying in class, students might feel more comfortable contributing to the conversation, making it fruitful once again.

One way teachers can support more inclusive conversation is by encouraging students to share their thoughts through other

## RESPONSES:

Where is the best water on campus?  
— Roxane Park '25

Best library floor?  
— Ethan Ding '25

Favorite place to study?  
— Joonyoung Heo '25

Right or left twix?  
— Michael Yang '24

mediums besides speaking. In discussing difficult or sensitive topics, students might feel more comfortable sharing their ideas through writing; this way, teachers can ease some of the pressure placed on students to speak during sensitive conversations discussed in class.

Another way teachers can better support the class is through more feedback on a student's Harkness performance. I think we can all agree that one written evaluation of class participation per term is far from enough, and it's not exactly helpful that you don't receive your evaluation until after the term is over. If teachers were able to give students written evaluations more towards the beginning of the term or at midterms, students could learn how to better participate in conversation in order to help themselves and the rest of the class.

Instead of treating the Harkness table like a warzone, we should all consider it as a place of learning, a place of academic humility where it's okay and should be perfectly normal to make mistakes. Asking more questions, being more open-minded to other ideas, and listening – really listening – to what our classmates are saying are all ways we can make the Harkness table a more comfortable place of learning. By recognizing we all have valuable contributions to make to the table, we can work together to make sure we get to hear everyone's thoughts instead of fighting each other for air time. And as our learning is only as good as our discussion, knowing when to hold back and by allowing more students to step into the conversation, we can protect what "non-sibi" means in the classroom and truly learn from each other.



Ava Zhao / The Exonian via Midjourney

# How Should America React to the Hamas vs Israel Conflict?

By SUNGHYUN BAE and EVAN DIERBERG

On Oct. 7, Hamas launched several attacks into Israel striking cities with rockets and capturing a multitude of border towns. What followed was a string of social media posts showing footage detailing the gruesome war crimes committed by Hamas. Israel responded with a declaration of war, several air strikes, and a mobilization of reserve troops. This event resulted in a global uproar, with reactions from various governments and influential figures condemning or supporting Hamas.

The recent attack is a continuation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict stretching by decades, marred by atrocities committed on each side. This article does not aim to solve the issue of who is the correct party in this dispute. A single article cannot summarize, much less give an answer to the complicated question that is the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. It is important to remember that neither side is correct or justified in its actions, and to discuss only the radical of both viewpoints will not result in progress. This article is to discuss what is the appropriate course of action for the US to minimize

the loss of human life and move towards a peaceful resolution.

Although Hamas engages in acts of resistance, such as targeting civilians, launching rockets, and taking hostages, it lacks the military strength to directly confront Israel on the battlefield. The conflict remains localized in Gaza, leaving Israeli territory largely unaffected. The U.S. must prevent the prolonging of the conflict by stopping other countries, such as Iran, from interfering. Iran has a history of supporting Palestinian militants. While the presence of carrier strike groups might deter direct action from Iran, the U.S. must stop

Iran from sending military aid by blockading the Gaza Strip and allowing only humanitarian aid to pass. Similarly, The U.S. should halt its delivery of ammunition to Israel as it is not necessary for the peaceful resolution of this conflict.

In the meantime, Biden and the U.S. need to push for restraint in Israel's counter-offensive. As it is, the death toll in Gaza is upwards of 4,000 (ohchr.org), and Prime Minister Netanyahu has warned that their current bombing campaign – which includes the use of controversial white phosphorus ammunition

(hrw.org) – is "only the beginning." While civilian collateral is inevitable with a counter-offensive against Hamas, the least Israel could do is grant a longer grace period for innocent civilians to evacuate instead of the unreasonably lofty evacuation request posed last Friday, a request which the UN described "impossible." (press.un.org) Further, it must be weighed that, in light of the catastrophic Palestinian expulsion in 1948 by Zionist militants, Palestinians may fear the evacuation to be permanent. To ensure that Israel doesn't turn the counter-offensive of Hamas into an indefinite eviction of Palestinian civilians, the U.S. should maintain its condemnation of humanitarian crime and stress the reinstatement of Palestinian authority in Gaza after the war. So long as Israel indiscriminately bombards Gaza, taking

the lives of innocents along with terrorists, Israeli-Palestinian hatred will cyclically continue to intensify.

The conflicts between Israel and Palestine span decades and can be traced back to 1948's Palestine War. There is a much larger issue at hand that involves years of oppression, apartheid, and religious discord that cannot be resolved so easily with the removal of Hamas. Yet, one's oppression will not be remedied with the oppression of another. For the time being, the U.S. must minimize losses of life by containing the conflict within Israel through military deterrents and sending humanitarian aid to Gaza while cautioning Israel to exercise restraint in its counteroffensive.

# GUTS Album Ranking

By AVEEN BURNEY '25



Olivia Rodrigo is revitalizing rock music for a new generation with her latest album, proving that the genre still has a powerful resonance. Her blend of emotional lyricism and raw instrumentation adds a refreshing edge to her music, attracting younger listeners to the rock scene. Rodrigo's authentic teenage storytelling and infusion of pop-rock elements are fantastic. We need more women playing electric guitars and breaking boundaries. In this piece, I'll keep it short and sweet — a simple rating — and if you don't agree, oh well!

1. "bad idea right"
  - amazing guitar lick and solo, pumped up and perfect sing-along
2. "get him back!"
  - so funkalicious, so fresh, so different (reminds a bit of the band CAKE)
3. "ballad of homeschool girl!"
  - so pop rock and catchy
4. "all american b#tch"
  - It has an amazing build-up, and a little weird melody; love the social commentary
5. "lacy"
  - really love the harmonies, this song really hits for me
6. "love is embarrassing"
  - very upbeat, the message is very true at times
7. "pretty isn't pretty"
  - These cliché lyrics still ring true
8. "logical"
  - gut-wrenching, get it?
9. "teenage dream"
  - the questions we all ask
10. "the grudge"
  - nothing too special, I really like the lyrics about winning arguments in my head
11. "making the bed"
  - I might have slept on this song, get it?
12. "vampire"
  - if only it weren't overlaid...

## Prozac and Pumpkin Spice: Sad-Girl Autumn and the Romanticization of Seasonal Affective Disorder

By ZOE CURITS '25

It's starting to feel like fall again. The air is crisp, the leaves have just started turning, pumpkin chai has made its return to the DSquared menu, I'm well overdue for my yearly Gilmore Girls rewatch (in lieu of studying for midterms) and the unhinged sad-girl autumn posts have made their way back to my Instagram explore page. It starts mildly, something about staying home and watching "When Harry Met Sally" and drinking cider, then develops into a more sinister, Sylvia Plath-coated desire: total and complete isolation.

"Finally relating to this scene," a post reads. The scene in question: a frame of the 2000s oeuvre that is the second installment of the "Twilight" Saga: New Moon. Bella sits in the same chair, months pass her by, seasons change from the same window's view,

and the dollied camera circles her stoic face, "Possibility" by Lykke Li in the background. I watch the clip on YouTube, if only for research purposes.

It's easy to connote Bella's depression with Edward's departure, but the sentiment reads deeper upon looking through the comments. A couple of users comment on the cinematography or music choice, but it's nearly impossible to ignore the slew of comments reading "literally me" and "this hits." Not everyone gets left by their 105-year-old vampire boyfriend in September: there's something else at play here.

It's nice to think that the rhetoric online about face masks and The Smiths and pumpkin spice is simply surface-level and that there's nothing more to it than good old-fashioned fall festivity and the nostalgia of porch side pumpkin carving, but the undertones

say decidedly otherwise. Seasonal Affective Disorder, also known as Seasonal Depression, affects approximately 5% of the American population in its most extreme diagnoses. However, 20-30% of Americans experience some effect of S.A.D. in their lives (Cleveland Clinic). There are different types of S.A.D. for different seasons. Fall-onset, the most common type of S.A.D., begins in late September to early October and lasts throughout winter until the arrival of sunnier, warmer spring months.

Autumn, as a season itself, harbors some level of melancholy. It's plenty with astronomical events; phenomena like Autumnal Equinox and an uptick in geomagnetic storms have a direct effect on regulatory systems that produce serotonin and melatonin. Barometric pressure is changing, leaves are reddening, and the air is biting. There's a strong

feeling of change about the season, and not necessarily towards the positive. As The Guardian's mononymous "Alison" puts it, "When the winds of autumn sigh around us, their voice speaks not to us only, but to our kind; and the lesson they teach us is not that we alone decay, but that such also is the fate of all the generations of man."

As individuals on social media, and especially as women, there's a strong tendency towards commodifying emotion. Melancholia is defined by our fisherman-knit sweaters and cinnamon-scented candles, how many Sexton poems we've read, the number of times we've rented a Sofia Coppola film (brownie points if it's The Virgin Suicides, by the way) or read The Bell Jar. It's listening to Morrissey sing about the rain falling hard on a humdrum town on freshly purchased Koss Porta Pro headphones,

buying cheap pearl earrings and red Chanel lipstick because Lana Del Rey said so, or attempting Ulysses alone in the dining hall because Rory did. Emotion, especially sadness, is something to be bought into, a brand in and of itself. The internet, slowly but surely, has "aestheticized" sadness, and sad-girl autumn is a direct example of this.

The real debate to be had here is whether or not this romanticization is ethical. If the strange, depression-promoting, isolationist posts are ignored, if they can be ignored, the rest of sad-girl autumn's facets seem like effective self-care habits, coping mechanisms, even, for fall-onset symptoms

The commodification of this sadness, however capitalistic and oversimplistic it might be, creates a community online where users can empathize with each other

over shared autumnal blues. Sad-girl autumn embraces the loneliness of fall, relishes in it, and uses The Cranberries, hot coffee, knitting, and Gilmore Girls as vehicles for comfort during a bleak season. Seasonal Affective Disorder is quick to become consumptive, but, in a twisted way, the romanticization of autumnal isolation serves to combat that. So, here at Exeter, no matter how many seniors proselytize nihilism come winter time exams, or how many days go by without the sun, no matter how late the foliage is, or how much history reading is assigned, you'll always have Joni Mitchell and Dead Poet's Society and artisanal yarn from Charlotte's Web, the stadium loop trail and cable knit sweaters and the never-diminishing stash of apple cider at Elm; you'll always have sad-girl autumn.



Sad-girl autumn embraces the loneliness of fall, whether that be using Rory Gilmore references or evangelizing pumpkin spice and isolated readings of Sylvia Plath.

# Hasan Minhaj

By MAX MANTEL '25

The scene of American stand-up comedy is much more diverse in experience and background than it was before, meaning that now more than ever, Americans can laugh along and relate to shared experiences. One such comic is Hasan Minhaj, who is best known as a stand-up comedian. He has two Netflix specials but also has tackled a more varied repertoire, such as his show Patriot Act, where the Indian-American “uses his unique comedic voice and storytelling skill to investigate the larger trends shaping the fragmented world.” As a comic, many of Minhaj’s stories center around his identity (an Indian-American and practicing Muslim), and the bigotry and discrimination he’s faced as a result of that. Or do they? The New Yorker recently published “Emotional Truths,” an article factually undermining the comedian’s most poignant stories. In the article, reporter Clare Malone chronicles her investigation into various bits, ultimately finding a severe lack of evidence. After the article was published, a debate immediately arose with a simple question: is it acceptable for Minhaj to lie, and more importantly, should we still listen to his stories even if they are fabricated?

To answer this question, we need to separate Minhaj’s work into two boxes: Minhaj, the activist, and Minhaj, the comedian. Put quite simply, the comedic merit of Minhaj’s stories is eclipsed by his impact as an activist. As one of the few mainstream Indian-American comics who discusses his racial identity, many people unintentionally look to him as a representative of his culture. Is placing this responsibility (to represent the experience of a group of people diverse in thought and experience) right or just? No, not at all, but it’s what happens time and time again whenever a wunderkind in their field markets themself off of their diversity. There is precedent for this as well; Elizabeth Holmes’ company Theranos relied on the breaking of the glass ceiling and opportunities for women in their marketing, and when their company was exposed as a sham, other young women aspiring to create start-ups of their own saw themselves compared to Holmes. Minhaj being outed creates the possibility of similar consequences. Other POC comedians, who have real, funny, and tragic stories to share based on the bigotry they have suffered, now have a real chance to encounter scrutiny because of Minhaj’s actions. Again, it’s not fair for one person’s mistake

to play such a large role in this confirmation bias that degrades real experiences, but it’s what can happen and has happened in the past. And frankly, for a man who’s supposed to be so in touch with the politics and society of the United States, it’s disappointing to see his failure to recognize that.

The second, and much less important, question: is Minhaj still funny? Do his stories still carry the same comedic weight? Sad and candid stories are not uncommon in comedy, from John Mulaney’s bits about his rehab to Pete Davidson’s candid talks about the impact of his father’s death on his childhood. Some of the best comedy comes out of places of darkness; those terrible experiences people have suffered through illuminate their art and allow them to make a good stand-up comedy bit. But when these stories are fabricated and created for the sake of playing into a public persona, they feel uniquely manipulative. As such, Minhaj’s stories lose their weight because of their fabrication. It’s one thing to exaggerate a silly story about a funny scenario one has found oneself in, it’s another to create false narratives about racism/bigotry one has suffered.

Perhaps Minhaj’s greatest sin is his lack of ability to think ahead and understand how his lies discredit other, real stories. The stories that Minhaj tells are, in fact, real, at least in the sense that other



Hasan Minhaj admist a stand-up comedy performance

Courtesy of NBC News

Muslims, Indian-Americans, and people of color suffer the effects of bigotry and racism in the way that Minhaj has claimed. By propagating these stories and taking

advantage of them for his own career, Minhaj has only made it easier for the real ones to be dismissed and attacked. If Minhaj wishes to be a player in the dialogue of advancing

America past racism and misinformation, he cannot simply rely on his emotional truths.

## American Foreign Policy: Why We Resist and Protect

By JOSEPH KIM '26

American foreign policy has been a subject of intense scrutiny and debate throughout its history. The United States, as a global superpower, plays a dominating role on the world stage and its balance of outwards force and inwards defense; thus, the United States’ foreign policy is of imperative concern for Americans and non-Americans alike. Strong and forceful American foreign policy during the Cold War and post-Cold War eras has proved instrumental in maintaining global stability and boosting American interests. In the face of evolving global challenges, the robust use of American power is necessary to protect our national interests, advance American interests, and foster global stability.

National security is the cornerstone of any country’s foreign policy. The United States, with its global reach and influence, must consider the security needs of its allies as much as that of American citizens.

Keeping an enemy offshore as far away as possible by limiting their spheres of influence and expanding our own naturally brings security to our nation by ensuring that the battlefields are thousands of miles away rather than at our front door. The United States can effectively expand its sphere of influence and gain reliable allies by developing strong political and economic ties with allies. The United States protects not only American citizens but also the security interests of its allies by maintaining a strong grip on its sphere of influence and projecting its military and economic power abroad.

With the eradication of powerful threats comes global stability and peace. It would be a grave error to believe that appeasement or a peaceful balance of powers will ensure everlasting peace and prosperity. We can learn from Britain’s grand mistake in 1939 that appeasing the desires of power-hungry growing powers is a one-way road to either surrender or a painful and dreadful war. If none of these ideas produce

international unity and accord, perhaps a world with an unchallenged superpower expanding its influence outwards is the solution. Much like how the uncontested Roman naval hegemony secured the Mediterranean, the best way to secure greater prosperity in the long run is for an unchallenged superpower, the United States, to dominate the world stage.

Having established this philosophy, how can the United States apply this doctrine to real world situations? In fact, we already have. In the Monroe Doctrine written out in 1823, the United States established the Americas as a boundary in which infiltration by outside powers would not be tolerated. However, times have changed since the establishment of the Monroe Doctrine, and we need to firmly dictate where we draw our line. As the global superpower the United States is, we must set our boundary to be any ally of ours, no matter how far away. Needless to say, the United States

must honor this creed, or it becomes meaningless. In current day situations, we must not cower away when Taiwan or Ukraine requests support, and we should be boldened to sign agreements guaranteeing allies’ borders. Any country under our protective wing must be guarded from outside threats, and this decree must be understood by every rival power.

The controversy that arises regarding global American hegemony is the seemingly unnecessary war and conflict that results from such an aggressive policy. This is because of our natural immediate negative impulse when hearing the word “war”. Non-interventionist critics may argue that the millions of deaths during the Korean War and Vietnam War may have been prevented with a less threatening and belligerent foreign policy. While this argument has merit, one must also consider the larger consequences of the United States losing its grip on the world at large. Had the United States simply stayed neutral in every

Cold War conflict against communism, allowing most of the world to fall under the Soviet sphere of influence, the United States would have been hopeless when

*“Regardless of immediate setbacks and clashes caused by aggression, the one and only path to century-long stability in this new global era is acceptance—even acquiescence—of American supremacy on the land, seas, and skies.”*

Soviet armies eventually rolled into American land. A common problem when people think of foreign wars is that they often compare war to peace. Of course, peace is preferable to war. However, we should always keep in mind the results of giving up. Americans have had the luxury of not seeing their land invaded and occupied and have thus lived with an arrogant mindset, taking American peace for granted. Many

Americans consider our country as a haven away from the civilian suffering wrought by war but often forget why that is. We must realize that our sacrifices on foreign soil that push our enemies further away and our staunch support of our allies are what prevent a large war fought on American soil. Regardless of immediate setbacks and clashes caused by aggression, the one and only path to century-long stability in this new global era is acceptance—even acquiescence—of American supremacy on the land, seas, and skies.

A firm American foreign policy is imperative for safeguarding national security, promoting American interests, advancing Western ideals, and maintaining global stability. In a world characterized by evolving threats and geopolitical complexities, the United States must continue to lead with resolve and strength despite the regrettable costs in life and capital to ensure a safer, more prosperous future for itself and the world at large.

## 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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# Humor

## Amazing Advice

By FORREST ZENG '26

If you are a new student, Harkness is bound to seem daunting. After all, Exeter prides itself on its unique Socratic method. If you want to become an expert on Harkness in no time, read on!

1. Play contrarian. Use fun phrases such as “to play devil’s advocate” or “I think you’re wrong” whenever someone makes a point. Cut off your classmates in the middle of their points — they will love this.

2. Never, ever, EVER look at your classmates — it’s very awkward. Instead, when you make your point, look directly into the eyes of the teacher.

3. Change the topic often. Harkness is dynamic, and hopping sporadically from one subject to the next gives you and all your classmates a much wider understanding of everything!

4. To establish dominance at the table, do a little shimmy as you sit down. Everyone appreciates a dance move from time to time.

5. During English long block, talk for as long as possible about one small detail in your reading. This works especially well if your class is during H block. Use smart words such as “dichotomy” or “juxtaposition.” Your classmates and teachers will love this!

Use these tips next time you do Harkness, and watch your participation grade shoot up! Thank me later.

When I’m giving advice and I start to feel advised by my own advice



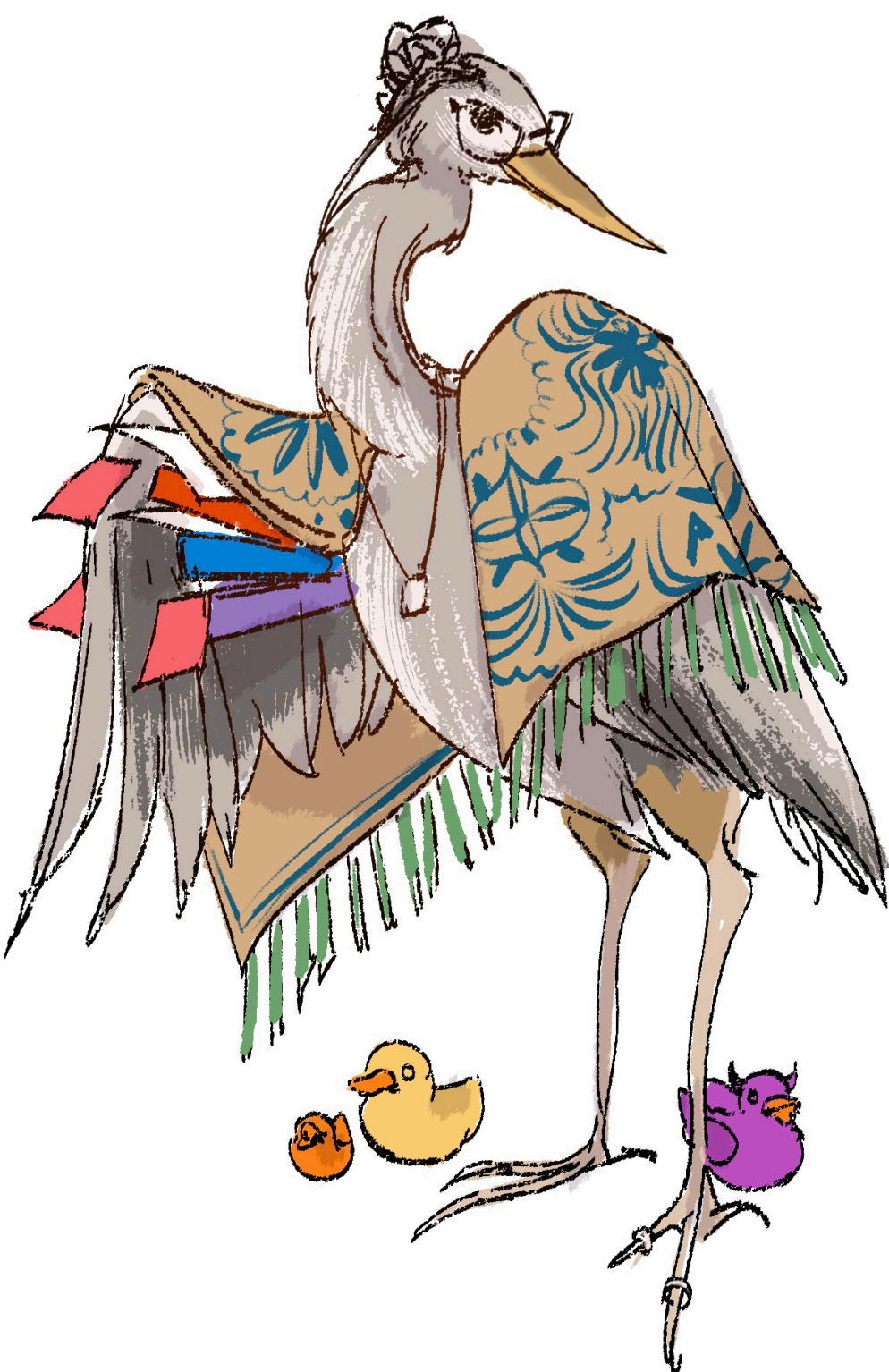
Courtesy of iFunny.co

# THE CARTOON CORNER

If you’d like to draw for *The Exonian* or simply have a piece featured, email Ava Zhao at [yzhao4@exeter.edu](mailto:yzhao4@exeter.edu)! Anyone is welcome to submit.

## CAN YOU GUESS THE FACULTY?

- Week 3 -



By AVA ZHAO '24

# The Crossword Corner By Finn Tronnes '24

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13	
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**ACROSS**

- 1 Most important part of a 333
- 9 Eye-related
- 14 Also eye-related
- 16 Steamy room
- 17 Old-timey photo hue
- 18 Guitar attachment
- 19 “\_\_\_\_: Battle Angel” (2019 action film starring Rosa Salazar)
- 20 Rx book
- 21 Teeny-weeny itty-bitty
- 22 Read, à Lyon
- 23 Preppy clothing brand
- 25 Rookie gamer
- 26 Former
- PBS host LeShan
- 27 Brought back to work
- 29 Where Hank works in “Breaking Bad”
- 30 Anti-wrinkle shot
- 31 Front rower
- 33 Venmo alternative
- 36 Capital of Georgia
- 37 Madrid madam
- 38 \_\_\_\_\_
- Dog (or, be nosy)
- 39 Wrath
- 40 Dorky way to get to class
- 42 VIP at a Silicon Valley co.
- 45 Homer Simpson’s

- favorite bar
- 47 Made soar
- 48 “Indiana Jones and the Temple of \_\_\_\_”
- 49 Author X. Kendi
- 51 Nas X, Peep, Wayne, Yachty, etc.
- 52 Filth
- 53 French department or river
- 54 Affected by wind or water, say
- 56 Med school exam
- 57 Using a tire as a flower bed, for example
- 58 “Not so!” retort
- 59 Where service is lacking

**DOWN**

- 1 Secondhand transaction
- 2 Eye-related
- 3 Savings option for the self-employed
- 4 Crème de la crème
- 5 Big scream
- 6 Q-U connection
- 7 “Make it snappy!”
- 8 Jimi in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame
- 9 Bone: Prefix
- 10 Communion bread holder
- 11 Lit
- 12 Me before a test (nervous!!!)
- 13 Big big rodent
- 15 More desertlike
- 23 Sci-fi device that lets someone blast off
- 24 Has feet like a duck’s
- 27 Nature calls?
- 28 Sorrow
- 30 Pres. after GWB
- 32 2020 No. 1 hit whose title acronym is compared to “macaroni in a pot”
- 33 Florida cop show
- 34 Gym class set to music
- 35 Looks down on
- 36 Lion’s lunch, maybe
- 38 8am response to “How are you?”
- 41 Suez Canal ship
- 42 Requiring quarters, briefly
- 43 Italian composer Albinoni
- 44 Special ready-made dish at Sunday brunch
- 46 \_\_\_\_\_
- Domingo, DR
- 48 “\_\_\_\_\_ of Jupiter” by Train
- 50 Middle: Prefix
- 52 Bind with a belt
- 55 Latin possessive

# Sports

## » COTW

Read about the Captains Of The Week: Girls Varsity Cross-country, 15.

## » GIRLS SOCCER

Read about Girls Varsity Soccer's strong start to their season, 16.

## » BOYS SOCCER

Read about Boys Soccer crushing Cushing Academy, 16.

# Captains of the Week: Annika Finelli and Andrea Nystedt

By JOONYOUNG HEO and ROXPARK

The woodland trails of the great Exeter outback are frequented by squirrels, the occasional deer, and the girls varsity cross-country team. Several times a week they go on team runs, led from the front or supported from the back by senior captains Andrea Nystedt and Annika Finelli. Their hard work has made for a strong team and an impressive record this season.

Finelli has a long history with the sport. "I've done cross-country since I was a fifth grader," Finelli said. "Coming into Exeter, I knew I was going to do cross-country and indoor track. I was a junior varsity runner in my prep and lower years, then finally in my upper year, I picked up my training and became a varsity athlete. Being voted in as a captain was super exciting. I've loved the sport for all four years I've been here."

On the other hand, Nystedt discovered her love for cross-country during her lower year. "My prep year, I did dance, as I was a serious ballet dancer before exeter, but I decided to try something new, and I decided I'd do cross-country," she said. "I wanted to challenge myself and why not? I heard a lot of fun things from my friends on the team. It's kind of funny because I'm asthmatic and I'd never run before besides the turkey trot during Thanksgiving at home — that was the peak of my cross-country experience. I just went into my first cross country season blind. I'd never run more than three miles in my life before, and then on the first day we ran four."

"I think that's what makes it so special for me," Nystedt continued. "It's proving to myself that I can keep going even when it's tough and my lungs are burning. I've improved a lot throughout the seasons as well which has been very rewarding. Then last season I was lucky enough for my teammates to elect me captain last year, and I'm really excited for what the team can do this season."

Nystedt and Finelli's season as captains began with some unusual circumstances, but together, they have successfully led the team through practices for the past two months.

"There's definitely been a big change," Finelli said. "The boys and girls programs have combined, so it's me and Andrea working with the captains on the guys' side. We've been trying to work together. It might have seemed difficult, but cross-country has always been a sport where I've really enjoyed the team dynamic, so practices have worked great."

Nystedt expanded on the unique team dynamic. "I think everybody on the team perseveres really well and learns how to overcome adversity because running is not easy," she said. "But I think what's really special is that everybody shows up and is prepared to work hard. However, everybody's also having a fun time, and I think that's the most important thing. There's a serious tone, but there's also a lighthearted tone. It wouldn't be fun if we were all about the splits or really serious about a race. I think being able to have those light-hearted joking moments, talking and laughing on long runs or recoveries, brings the team together."

During team practices,

the runners are divided into four training groups: alpha, beta, gamma, and delta. "Each group is determined in terms of experience, training, and speed," senior Daria Ivanova said. "Alpha and beta usually do the same workouts, and gamma and delta do slightly reduced exercises. The groups are pretty fluid, and it's always tailored to what you have experience with."

"A typical training will be, depending on the day, a recovery, a hard workout, or something in between," prep Kate Gilchrist said. "Hard workouts can be anywhere from six to 12 miles and we have to go at a pretty fast pace. For recovery, we go for about 40 to 70 minutes at an easier pace."

"Our training has been a lot more intense compared to last year," lower Tiffany Sun explained, "but I feel like I am benefitting from this change."

The team's hard work is reflected in their great record this season. "We've been training really hard, and the team looks strong," upper Kayla Hyett said. "The combination of returning runners and new teammates has made our varsity and junior varsity groups tough in competition."

The runners have even exceeded Finelli's expectations following last year's season. "We're looking good this year," she said. "We were nervous last year when we had two of our varsity athletes leave, so we didn't know who was going to fill in for them. But this year, we've had some underclassmen take over those two spots, and the varsity team is looking really strong."

The team has also seen some great individual performances. "Our first race was a great opener for a lot of people," Ivanova said. "I ran a good time and got a personal record by a lot. I got a personal record in another race as well. I wanted to get a sub-19 time and I missed it by three seconds, but I did place second, so everything was fine."

"So many of our runners have gotten faster this season," remarked Instructor in English and team coach Emily Quirk. "They are running more miles and pushing themselves on our harder days, which has led to improvement."

Through their captainship, Finelli and Nystedt have helped the team secure an admirable record. "The captains actually start off each practice by making sure everyone's there," Gilchrist said. "They make sure everyone's set up and pumped for every meet, and they make sure everyone stays together during team runs."

"The captains are right there with the rest of runners, struggling alongside them and modeling resilience and drive," Quirk continued. "The captains have also encouraged our newer runners to rest as needed and trust the process. While Andrea often joins new runners on their recovery runs and warm ups, Annika focuses on supporting our returning varsity runners, offering words of encouragement both before and after races."

Hyett agreed that Finelli and Nystedt are committed to supporting the team and ensuring success. "Our captains clearly care deeply about every member of our team, checking in on us before races and making sure we all know where to be," she said. "They show up to each



Girls cross-country captains Annika Finelli (left) and Andrea Nystedt (right) pose for a photo outside of Phillips Hall.

practice with enthusiasm and hype up the team with fun spirit days before Saturday meets."

This was one of the goals that Nystedt shared for her time as captain. "I'm just making sure I'm bringing a positive attitude to practice and workouts," she explained, "giving high-fives or saying 'Hey, how's your day going?' as I bike to practice. That's what I really try to do — get the energy up. Even if I'm tired, I still get that energy and try to spread it to others because I feel like it's more fun when everybody's uplifted. I feel like running has always been a highlight of my day, and I really want it to be a highlight for others."

Even outside regular practices and meets, the captains have worked to strengthen team spirit.

"They've been doing an excellent job," upper Meredith Habstritt said. "I'm a new upper this year, and I felt supported and welcome. They reached out to me even before pre-season as early as last May to make sure the team dynamic was already built up before the season started. Then, throughout pre-season and into the school year, they organized different team events and helped us get to know each other really well."

"I love my captains," Gilchrist said. "It's an older-sibling relationship. They're really looking out for you, and they're so amusing to be around. They set up team dinners for us after every single practice. They make sure everyone is checked in and feels good after practice. If there's an injury, they know who to talk to and how to get help."

"I've been proud to watch the girls come to each other's sides at moments of vulnerability this season," coach and Instructor in Music Brandon C. Newbould said, "and I expect they will enjoy some success this season because of that teamwork."

This tight-knit team dynamic exists for a reason. The captains, players, and coaches alike have recognized that, although cross-country may seem like an individual sport, the runners are truly

able to thrive as a team.

"Running in groups is just so central and key to cross-country," Nystedt reflected. "A lot of people think that cross country is a very individual sport, but you go faster when you're with others. That's why it's so important to have a strong team and to try to develop those relationships, because whether it's just doing a workout or especially in a race, it really helps morale when you're running next to a teammate."

Team Coach and Instructor in Mathematics Diana Davis agreed. "When one of them is feeling tired, they can get strength from their teammates. When others are feeling strong, they can pull the others ahead. It's much easier to run further when you're with someone else, right? When you're with a group you can train better and get stronger, get fitter, faster," she said.

"I think it is great that I run with some of the girls as well as some of the boys," shared prep Henry Hazelton, a member of the boys cross country team. "It really makes the team a lot closer together. Andrea has run with me many times and she has helped me get a feel for Exeter as well as being a friend."

This exemplary team spirit extends even beyond the trails and has created many fond memories for the girls. "The captains have really brought everyone together," Ivanova said. "Last year during pre-season, we made some blueberry crumble in Dr. Davis's kitchen and ate it together."

"We ran to a raspberry farm during pre-season and we were able to pick raspberries and bake some treats afterward," Habstritt said. "That was really fun. We've always continued to build a really great team dynamic."

Finelli and Nystedt also collaborated with the captains of the boys team to organize a movie night earlier this term and foster bonding across the teams.

"We watched Kung Fu Panda and had a really fun time," Nystedt said. "We went to the forum and munched on some snacks as we watched Po become the

Dragon Warrior. I guess something funny about that movie is that he realized the secret to defeating the enemy is himself, which is true for cross country as well: nothing is going to help you as much as yourself. There's no miracle drink or miracle exercise that is going to make you drop a couple of minutes. It's really just the work that you put in that is what you get out, and we're scheduling another movie night or another team bonding activity soon."

Experience, the examples of previous captains, and their own philosophy for leadership have all shaped Nystedt and Finelli's roles on the team.

"In my freshman year, Caroline Luff was our captain and I've always aspired to be like her," Finelli said. "Whether you were a JV runner, varsity runner, or brand new to the sport, she was super inclusive and made sure you got the help you needed."

"I feel like something that's really cool about being captain is that you know how you felt at the start and how you feel now, and you're reflecting back on your times, and thinking about what you would like to have seen," Nystedt said. "That's what we try to implement, whether that's dress-up days before meets or other little fun traditions. We try to keep morale up and everybody excited to come to practice."

"I think that's what's important," Finelli said. "At the end of the day, having a team to lead just makes me happier. Knowing I have this responsibility gives me something to work toward to be that older figure for these underclassmen. When I graduate, I want to make sure people remember me — not necessarily me, but the sport as a whole and what I did for the team. That's what I'm always thinking about."

Newbould observed that "Annika and Andrea complement each other in leadership qualities. Andrea's genuine care and kindness towards her teammates plays a key role in bringing our newer athletes through the first couple of challenging weeks as they adjust to the rigors of training and

Austin Desisto / *The Exonian* racing." On the other hand, "Annika's playfulness belies her attention to logistics and organization, which has been very helpful this year as we merge the teams. She knows how to bring the goofy, but no one doubts the seriousness with which she approaches the sport in terms of performance."

Looking ahead, the girls cross country team has a number of goals for the season. "Everyone is just looking forward to improving," Habstritt said. "We've had two months of training under our belts. The varsity team has seen a lot of improvement from last season and so have I. I'm excited to continue on that trajectory."

"We're looking not only towards our usual prep school competition, but also to Nike Cross Country Regionals (NXR) and competing against not just private schools, but all the schools in the New England region," Davis said. "That'll be exciting. Our kids are really strong. Last year, we placed second at interschols to Loomis and they're looking really strong this year, but I always hope we can win, I always think we can win, and there's always a way and there's always a chance and I believe we can do it this year."

Even with their competitive spirit, of course, the captains' priority remains, as always, the team. "I want everybody to be healthy and happy," Nystedt said. "Yes, I would love it if we won interschols for both varsity and JV and even in an NXR, but if you're unwell and or unhappy, you're not going to run well. I just want everybody to stay injury-free and keep building connections within the team."

"I am very happy to have Annika as my co-captain," Nystedt concluded. "I think we work very well together, and I hope we have a great season."

# Girls Varsity Soccer Start their Season Strong



Girls varsity soccer team posing for a photo after a winning game.

By KAI GOWDA and MEGHANTATEZEE

On Wednesday, Oct. 11, girls varsity soccer lost a home game to the Pingree School with a score of 0-7. The current record for the team is 2-8; however, their most recent game was a win, proving that the team's streak is just starting.

"We've been feeling pretty good, a little bit frustrated about the actual turnout of the record because I know we're playing so much harder than it's being depicted like on the score sheets," lower Meghan Signore said. "I think with injuries and our

current record, it's a little harder to pick things up, but we're still feeling very hopeful."

"We haven't been doing too well, but I feel like we've progressed as a team and gotten better every game we play, so I don't think our record really reflects that," prep Emmy Tedeschi said in agreement.

When asked about her opinions on the recent losses, lower Elle Shea said, "For me, it kind of stinks to lose, but it's a developmental thing. You lose, but you also learn from these really good teams that you're playing and that'll only benefit our

team more."

"We felt that we did a terrific job defensively. Now we need to start controlling more of the game offensively: connect more passes, possess more of the ball, and create more opportunities," said co-coach Diego Arduro on the loss against the Milton School. "I feel that this is going to be a very important season for us. We have had many injuries in our senior and upper class, and this has opened up space for our younger players to get more minutes and further develop. It's been very rewarding to see them step up to the challenge and compete

against older players," Arduro continued.

Despite the many losses, the team still has a very positive outlook for the rest of the season.

*"You lose, but you also learn from these really good teams that you're playing and that'll only benefit our team more."*

"I actually think we have more potential than we did last season 'cause we have new faces, new players. It's just a fresh

start. I think we are gonna be able to get some more wins this season," Shea said.

When asked what she is looking forward to in the future, Tedeschi said, "Just continuing to play with my team and to win against Andover on [E/A] day."

"I just can't wait for the rest of the season. We're not even halfway through, which is great. I wanna play more," Shea said. "We gotta win E/A though. We got E/A."

"I think we kind of reached a point [where] we're gonna start turning it around. We have like five games directly ahead of us that are definitely

@peagvsoccer/Instagram

winnable games, and I really am hoping that we can pull them all out. I think that we're gonna be able to," Signore said. "I hope that attendance keeps staying up and I hope that everyone keeps cheering on Big Red soccer."

"We're gonna focus on being more patient and composed on the ball when we have opportunities and not rushing our chances," Signore continued. "Specifically that and taking more shots."

# Boys Varsity Soccer Bulldozes Cushing Academy



Upper Jaylen Bennett on the boys varsity soccer team about to make a pass.

By JAKE CREELAN, ROHIT KANTAMNENI, ETHAN LU, and HUGO SHINN

On Oct. 4, the Academy's boys varsity soccer team faced Cushing Academy at home. Players Beckett Moore, Charles Dobbins, Max Sahinoglu, and Jordan Adeyemi all found the back of the net to round out a 4-0 blowout against the away side. This success marks Big Red's first home victory this season.

Against Cushing Academy, the team played a transitional style of play, pressing and winning the ball back in the midfield to counter. The triumphant victory marked a newfound determination in the squad to keep winning.

"The energy was really high with the score in the first 40 seconds. That really gave us some momentum to keep pushing forward," upper Jaylen Bennett said.

"We did well [in] encouraging each other. We're moving the ball around pretty well and

finishing our chances," prep Max Sahinoglu echoed.

"Before the game, we got hype. After kickoff, we tried to carry that on. And we kept the energy up. Then after the game, — after the win — we were pretty happy to come out with a good result," upper Alex Sahinoglu said.

The home crowd fueled Big Red's energy, propelling them to a big win.

"It was our second time playing on turf and our first performance playing on our home turf didn't go so well. But I would say that during the game, we got used to it," lower Kofi Annan-Brown said. "Even though it was wet, I think we played pretty well. It was one of our best performances and a lot of our players were able to get playing time. After the game everyone was hyped and had a great time."

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