



## Peter T. Grauer '64 Receives Alumni Award

By STELLA LIAO '27  
Staff Writer

On Friday, January 30, Peter T. Grauer '64 received the 2026 Alumni Award, the highest honor given by the school's Alumni Association.

Established in 1931, the award recognizes graduates who have made significant contributions in their professional fields and whose accomplishments reflect positively on themselves and the school. Recipients are selected by the Nominating Committee of the Alumni Association's Board of Governors.

Mr. Grauer is a businessman who served as chairman, president, and chief executive officer of Bloomberg L.P. starting in 2002. He became chairman emeritus in 2023 and retired from the company in 2025. During his time at Bloomberg, Mr. Grauer played a central role in the firm's growth as a global financial technology and media organization.

Mr. Grauer earned his undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and completed the Program for Management Development at Harvard Business School. Before joining Bloomberg, Mr. Grauer worked in investment banking and private equity. He was a managing director at Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette and later helped found DLJ Merchant Banking Partners and DLJ Investment Partners. He also served as a senior partner at Credit Suisse First Boston Private Equity.

In addition to his corporate career, Mr. Grauer is involved in

philanthropic and nonprofit work. He currently serves as president of the Board of Trustees of the Inner City Scholarship Fund in New York City and holds leadership or trustee roles at a number of organizations focused on education, conservation, healthcare, and civic engagement.

**"You've got to step up in tough times; this is what leadership is about," said Mr. Grauer.**

His work has been recognized with multiple honors, including the Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation Happy Warrior Award and induction into the North Carolina Media & Journalism Hall of Fame.

During his time as a student, Mr. Grauer was president of the Student Council and co-captain of the football team. In August 2023, he was named Alum of the Month.

During the awards ceremony, Mr. Bradley remarked that Mr. Grauer had been voted "most popular" and "most influential" by his graduating class.

The ceremony included a fireside-chat style conversation between Mr. Grauer and Ms. Anne Deneen '95, who has served on the Board of Trustees since 2019 and currently chairs the investment committee.

At the beginning of the

conversation, Mr. Grauer emphasized the importance of relationships as the foundation of leadership. He said, "You never know where these relationships are going to take you."

During the discussion, Mr. Grauer described the mentorship program he created at Bloomberg to identify emerging leaders and communicate their value to the organization. "It was all about identifying talent, giving them the opportunity to grow, and underscoring that they are important," he said.

When asked to identify a defining leadership moment, Mr. Grauer described traveling to Japan

immediately following the 2011 earthquake and tsunami to support Bloomberg employees. He said, "My instincts were, this is what leadership is about. You've got to step up in tough times and really show what you are made of."

He later discussed Bloomberg's emphasis on diversity and inclusion, citing research showing that broader perspectives lead to stronger decision-making and long-term growth. Mr. Grauer described Bloomberg's commitment to building diverse teams, saying, "Any organization worth its salt must have a higher purpose." He described

Bloomberg's effort as central to its identity and as a motivating force for employees.

The fireside conversation ended with a question and answer segment, in which Mr. Grauer answered questions about his time at the school, including his favorite campus spaces, traditions, and personal habits.

The ceremony ended with closing remarks and congratulations from Ms. Deneen, making Mr. Grauer's return to campus a professional milestone and a reflection on his long-standing connection to the school.



The ceremony included a conversation between Mr. Grauer and trustee Ms. Anne Deneen '95.

## Twenty-Seven Students Perform at Carnegie Hall

By XAVIER AN '28

On Saturday, January 31, 27 musicians embarked on an adventure to New York City. This trip was more than just a fun field trip for music students: it was the performers' final step in a much longer journey, one containing months of dedicated and consistent practice.

The Young Artists Concert at Weill Recital Hall marked the eighth year musicians from the school have performed at Carnegie Hall, one of the most renowned performance venues in the world.

In contrast to previous years, where the audition process consisted solely of video submissions, this year introduced a live process in which performers presented five minutes of

their piece in front of a panel of judges of music faculty from distinguished music schools and ensembles, including Dr. Jose Ramos Santana, head of the piano department at the Hartt School of Music; Mr. Ralph Evans, violin professor at Mannes College; and Ms. Susan Evans, former cellist at Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

On the night of the performance, the Weill Recital Hall echoed with music from across centuries, ranging from Baroque works by Johann Sebastian Bach to Romantic compositions by Franz Liszt and Felix Mendelssohn to contemporary music. Violinist Andy Zhai '29 said, "I felt proud to be at such a prestigious venue where so many famous musicians have performed,

and to have the opportunity to perform and cheer my friends on as

**"There is no greater gift for a teacher than to hear their hardworking students finally perform," said Dr. Witkowski.**

they were on stage as well."

The program consisted of 19 solo pieces and two pieces from the school's chamber ensemble. Ethan Keyoung '29, a cellist who performed in the ensemble, said, "Our ensemble would get together around two times every week for an hour after school or during an orchestra block to run through our two pieces. It was a pretty tiring process, but I enjoyed it, and it turned out to be worth it."

Pianist Anthony Hu '25 attended the performance. He said, "It was a diverse concert with a lot of grandeur but also a lot of delicateness; I felt so proud to see such a range of instruments represented with stunning quality."

At the final bow of the concert, Mr. Fabio Witkowski, head of the visual and performing arts department, dedicated the concert to his wife, Dr. Gisele Witkowski, instructor in piano, to celebrate her birthday. "There is no greater gift for a teacher than to hear their hardworking students finally



Students performed in the Young Artists Concert at Weill Recital Hall.

## Prep Class Competes In Snowman-Building Contest

By EVIE LIU '29  
Staff Writer

Twas the day of the Prep Snowman Building contest, and all through the school, Prep students bundled up with one goal in mind: build the best snowman and win free pizza, turning campus into a winter workshop.

The contest became a chance to connect with friends and nature. For the winning team—Ella Tarango '29, Wyatt Groves '29, and Ashley Zhu '29—the

experience was a mix of teamwork and competition. "Knowing pizza was on the line gave us the motivation to go all out as a team," said Groves.

"But why spend the time and effort on something that's going to melt away?" you may ask. Snowmen don't last, but that's exactly why we make them: instead of worrying about perfection, we focus on being creative and having fun. The contest gave Preps the chance to make memories that will last longer than the snow.



The winning snowman (top left) beat out the five other entries.

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Arya Samat '29 argues that ICE's behavior contradicts its intended purpose.

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Editor-in-Chief Jack McCarthy '26 challenges the student body's indifference to national news.

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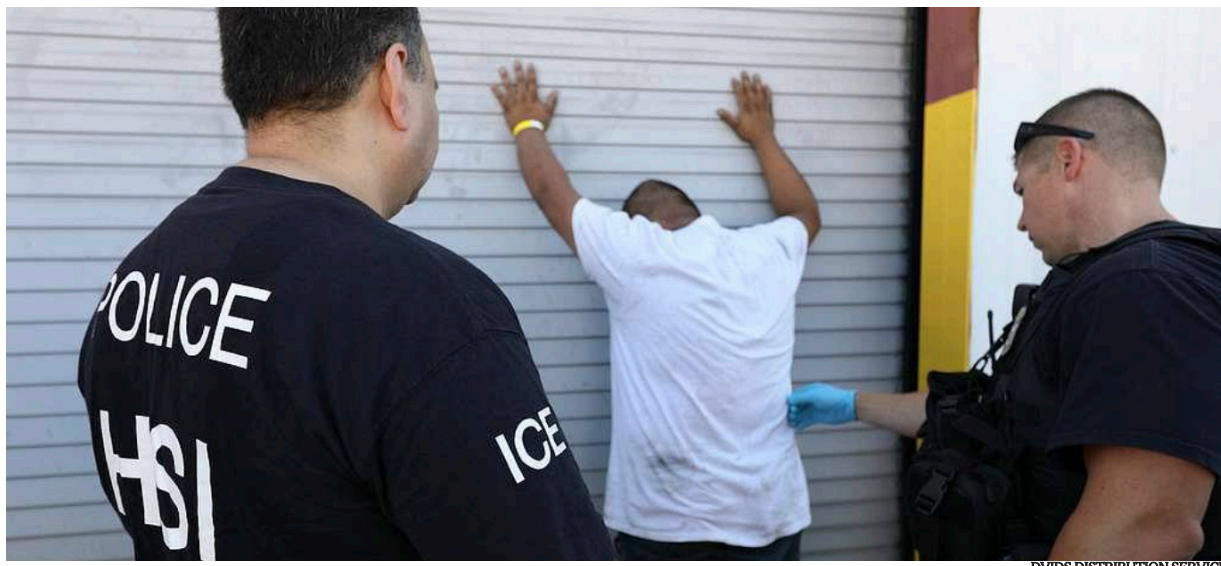
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The Varsity Wrestling co-captain reflects on his time with the team.

#### Olympics to Include NHL Players

Ben Wistar '26 praises the NHL's decision to let its players compete in the Olympics.

# Opinion



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## Our Safety Cannot Be Built on Fear

Arya Samat '29

How did we go from a country where freedom of speech was celebrated to one where legal immigrants and people seeking citizenship are terrified to voice any opinion? Today, immigrants worry that speaking up, protesting, or merely being noticed could cost them their safety and their future.

Although legal immigrants are presumed to be protected by the First Amendment, they are scared that speaking up will prevent them from getting citizenship or a green card. And this struggle isn't limited to immigrants alone; U.S. citizens, too, are increasingly fighting to protect their right to speak freely.

ICE, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, is a federal agency that was created in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, as one of the subsidiary agencies of the Department of Homeland Security. According to their website, ICE's mission is to promote homeland security and public safety while enforcing immigration laws. Currently, ICE is spearheading the Trump administration's mass deportation initiative, a central promise of the president's campaign. Since returning to office, Trump has significantly increased ICE's funding and expanded its scope.

ICE's authority differs substantially from that of local police departments. As federal officers enforcing civil immigration law, ICE agents can operate with broader powers and fewer restrictions than local law enforcement. For instance, they may stop or detain anyone they suspect of being an illegal immigrant. That said, ICE agents remain bound by the Fourth

Amendment and may not enter private property without a signed warrant. Despite the agency's stated focus on undocumented immigrants, ProPublica reported that as of mid-October 2025, more than 170 American citizens have been detained.

Right now, ICE is the highest-funded law enforcement agency in the United States, with a budget of \$85 billion. At the same time, the agency has reduced its training requirements from approximately five months to just 47 days to meet hiring targets, resulting in thousands of new agents who may not be sufficiently trained. Additionally, long-standing policies that once protected sensitive spaces such as churches, hospitals, and schools have been rescinded, meaning immigration enforcement can now enter places where people seek care, safety, and education.

Historian Adam Goodman, speaking on a podcast with CBC News, stated, "There is a prominent shift from the service side of immigration bureaucracy to the enforcement side of it." Rather than prioritizing assistance and accessibility to help people attain legal citizenship, U.S. immigration policy has grown increasingly hostile.

As a result, ICE has become weaponized. It no longer just removes illegal immigrants; it is changing the way people live. Families avoid school events, and workers avoid going to hospitals. Legal immigrants are staying silent about politics in fear that something will happen to them. People who should be protected by the Constitution feel a gap between its promises and their reality.

There is a plain contradiction between what ICE claims and the consequences of its actions. The agency

says its mission is public safety, but safety built on fear is unstable. Stability doesn't come where communities feel threatened and agents knock without warrants. Democracy cannot exist where people are afraid to speak.

The nine ICE shootings since September 2025 have made this painfully clear. When federal agents are able to use lethal force at their discretion with little transparency or accountability, the issue stops being immigration and becomes a deeper crisis of power. Who decides when so-called "security" outweighs civil and human rights?

The protests against ICE in Minnesota have continued despite the bitter cold. Thousands of people are marching to demand accountability for ICE victims. These protests aren't only about ICE as an agency; they are about the kind of country people want to live in. One where safety comes from community and rights, not from force and silence; one where people aren't afraid to speak.

What is happening right now in the U.S. is not easy to talk about. It should make all of us uncomfortable, even if we are not directly affected. When legal immigrants are afraid to speak—when they are being silenced for simply standing up for their rights—that fear spreads. It demonstrates that the rights we are supposed to have are conditional, that people in power can do whatever they want.

ICE was created in a moment of national fear, right after 9/11. But we are long past that day.

The question we should be asking now is whether America is going to keep treating immigrants like it's stuck in emergency mode, or whether it's willing to return to the values it claims to stand for.

## What Will Be the New World Order?

Tate Collins '27

I like to view myself as a non-alarmist. Currently, however, the inside of my brain is flaring neon red and orange: the alarms are sounding so loudly, I can barely hear myself think.

In the past year, when my friends came to me in rageful disbelief over Trump's repeated idiotic actions, I was largely unphased. That led me to write an article a few months ago about how I think we need to bring back patriotism and how Trump doesn't define us. Although I still think the U.S. will recover from Trump, I also concede that he constitutes more and more of who we are by the day.

Trump's recent actions are chipping away at the core of American identity. Through ICE takeovers of city streets and his kidnapping of a foreign leader, Trump has made it patently clear that he couldn't care less for the rules of democracy.

But even beyond that, Trump has an utter disregard for international balance. By threatening a takeover of Greenland—a semi-autonomous territory of a fellow NATO country—we are not just aggravating our allies; we are sacrificing our first place in the world order.

The United States' final line of defense against encroaching superpowers was its alliance with NATO—but given Trump's most recent performance at the World Economic Forum and his seesawing tariffs, it's safe to say those alliances are strained to the breaking point.

At the Forum, the president mocked everyone in the room. Though he ultimately assured fellow NATO countries that he "won't use force" to take Greenland, he insisted on the U.S.'s right to the country (despite how it's been owned by Denmark for over 300 years).

The consensus following the speech was clear: the world order has been broken. The consequent question that everyone is asking is "In a new world order, who will emerge triumphant?"

The initial answer is obvious: China. The country has been on America's tail for decades, waiting to take over the second we mess up.

For most analysts, one moment that was particularly symbolic of China's overtaking the U.S. was the DeepSeek debacle. Despite months of work and billions of dollars invested in AI in the United States, with only a reported \$6 million, China created DeepSeek—an AI model of roughly equivalent quality to ChatGPT—in a matter of months.

While later analysis estimated this number was vastly under-calculated, the point was clear: China knows what we care about, they're going after it, and they're doing it better than us.

But, most importantly, the reason why many believe China will overtake the U.S. is that it's the only nation that's trying. Transition from one global superpower to another has been the only course in navigating the world order—until recently.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney has another idea: a union of middle powers. At the World Economic Forum, he posited that in this ruptured world order, we don't need a new superpower taking over.

When united, countries like Canada, the UK, France, and others have a lot of power. Carney urged other countries like Canada to take hold of their power to create a more cooperative world that doesn't need to rely on the U.S. or China.

He closed his speech defiantly, saying, "That is Canada's path. We choose it openly and confidently, and it is a path wide open to any country willing to take it with us."

While many will see this shift in Carney's view of the world order as a bad sign, I'm hesitant to view it with such cynicism. Of course, I love America, and some egotistical, patriotic part of me absolutely wishes America could maintain its number one spot eternally—but no one superpower can maintain its top spot 100% of the time. What matters, however, is preventing nondemocratic countries like China from taking our spot. So, while a temporary absence of American dominance isn't necessarily a sign of impending doom, the values of whatever country steps up in the interim are crucial.



GRAPHICS BY ALICIA FENG '28

EDITORIAL

## We Need to Pop the Bubble

Last Friday, January 30, was a classic Hotchkiss day for me. I set my alarm for earlier than usual, intending to study for a math test and work on a history assignment due at 10 p.m. The -4 degree weather made it especially difficult to get out of bed, but I rallied. Realizing it was a Plus-One day when I encountered my floormates adjusting their ties in the bathroom, I went back to my room to change, squeezing into my middle school suit and pinning back my dad's extra-large button-down—my typical plus-one clothes were at the dry cleaners.

I speed-walked to breakfast, hunkering down in a booth with coffee and my math review packet. Taking a scroll break, I opened Instagram to an announcement that one of the colleges I applied to was releasing decisions that afternoon, just what I needed: something else to stress about. I kept swiping, mindlessly passing over infographics about the protests in Minneapolis, distracted by the pressures in my school life that took precedent. This trance was broken, however, by a tweet from Attorney General Pam Bondi: "At my direction, early this morning, federal agents arrested Don Lemon in connection with the coordinated attack on Cities Church in St. Paul, Minnesota."

For whatever reason, Bondi's statement struck a nerve that no other story or picture that morning had. Like so many of the scenes coming out of Minneapolis, there is no nuance to Lemon's arrest. The journalist was taken into custody for covering a protest, an undeniable infringement of the fundamental right to a free press. And still, the situation didn't come up once in any of the interactions I had that day.

Our apparent indifference to national news isn't any one person's fault; it's the distortive effect of our community's self-containment. As we get deeper into winter and spend long stretches at school, college decisions, history assignments, and the trouble of picking out Plus-One clothes can feel more consequential than anything happening beyond the borders of Lakeville. But when kidnappings, violations of constitutional rights, and cold-blooded murders can't break through the Hotchkiss bubble to enter our conversations, it's unsettling. There's no clear solution, but one thing is certain: we need to expand the limits of our concern.

## My Grandpa, the "Evil Dragon"

Sienna Hwang '27

For this issue, the Opinions Editors invited students to write about something that makes them laugh. Hwang's article was a response to this prompt.

My grandpa is one of the funniest people I know. During the six years my dad was working in Japan, my grandpa took on the role of my father figure.

During the six years my dad was working in Japan, my grandpa took on the role of my father figure. He's one of the funniest people I know.

We used to play the "princess game." In our fantasy world, there was no prince coming to the rescue. It was always me, the princess, slaying Grandpa, the evil dragon, with rainbow pool noodles. The way he fell backwards, almost hurting

himself when he met his fantasy death, made me crack up no matter how many times we played.

At 76, he's slowed, but his tongue remains as sharp as ever.

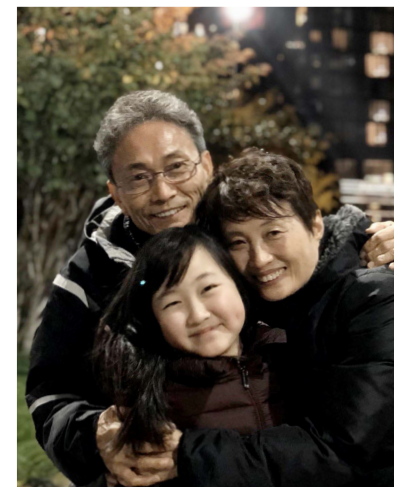
Then there was my grandpa's famous "special apple-picking." Knowing how much I loved apple-picking, especially with my bare hands, he would tie apples onto a cherry blossom tree in his backyard and give me a piggyback-ride so I could pick them without any tools. I would burst into laughter every time I reached for an apple while riding on his shoulders.

At 76, he is still healthy, hitting the gym every day and refusing to retire. But watching him from behind as he walks down the street, I can tell he has slowed.

His tongue, however, remains as sharp as ever. He makes me laugh every time we talk on the phone.

When we spoke a few days ago, he asked when my next visit was going to be, telling me he had his Michelin chef friends lined up to cook my favorite galbi dish (he doesn't know any Michelin chefs).

I do miss my days of slaying the evil dragon grandpa. Yet I still love him just the same—for all the ways he makes me laugh.



SIENNA HWANG '27

Hwang with her grandparents.

# Features

## Spotlight on Summer Portals

With rolling applications open for Summer Portals, Staff Writer Jeremy Cao '28 interviewed Mr. Rick Hazelton, dean of summer programs, to learn more about the offerings. Former Portals students Alicia Feng '28, Wyatt Groves '29, and Mark Gu '29 also reflect.

By **JEREMY CAO '28**  
Staff Writer

### How would you describe the Summer Portals program?

The Summer Portals run for a month. They're divided into two sessions, and students can come for the first session or second session or both. We have mostly middle school students.

It's intended to offer a very experiential, hands-on type of learning. Students only do one course for the entire two-week session. It's intended to be very immersive. They don't take traditional academic courses like Algebra, Biology, Chemistry, or U.S. History. We have courses such as Rocketry, where students build a rocket and shoot it off; Robotics, where students make their own robots; and Structural Engineering, where students make their own planes.

We want the summer to be very different from the school year. For example, if you were in physics class and you really like rockets, but you have to go to history next, then you don't have time to keep on working with rockets. Summer Portals gives you the opportunity to work on rockets for two weeks.

### What does a typical day in the Summer Portals program look like?

Students go to breakfast and then are in class from 9 to 3 p.m. with a break for lunch. They have activities after class from 3:45 to 5:15 p.m. and then dinner. They have dorm activities from 7 to 8:30 p.m. and then check-in. On the weekends, we

have different trips. For example, we might go to a minor league or a Mets game, to a waterpark, or go hiking. At least one weekend activity includes the entire camp.

### How do academic components balance with fun activities?

It's pretty well-balanced, because the academic day is highly hands-on and then there is no homework. So once three o'clock hits, our campers are able to do whatever they want to do in terms of activities. We offer a wide range of activities, including creative writing, landscape painting, art, theatre, basketball, soccer, and things like that.

### What kinds of skills do students develop in Summer Portals?

Inquiry skills, for sure. Students gain an ability to inquire and interrogate questions, whereas, in a normal class, you're confined a bit by what the subject is on that day. In Physics of the Electric Guitar with Mr. Bill Fenton, students learn to build an electric guitar, but they also experiment with how to make different sounds.

### Are there any new directions planned for Summer Portals in the coming year?

Our program this year is pretty much the same as last year. Last year, we had a lot of changes; we added Baseball Analytics and extra sessions of Speech & Debate and Writers in Writing, the most popular programs. Rocketry is probably our class that fills up the most, and I am

considering adding a second session of that as well.

### Are there any moments or stories from past summers that particularly capture the spirit of the program?

There were a couple of kids who wanted to go home on the first couple of days who then stood up and talked to the student body and are coming back the next year and bringing their friends. Those are great moments.

In school, students tend to be individually centered. But when you live in a community, which is something Hotchkiss fosters, you start to think about the other people living around you. When you're in middle school, it's a little bit harder to understand the community and other people and celebrate everyone's success. So when I see students at the end of the program who might have no interest in theatre or art celebrating other kids' work and helping other kids out, when I hear about them picking up a kid who might be homesick or helping a kid who might be struggling, those are the wonderful moments. They learn how interdependent they are.

### How do you measure the success of the program?

We measure success by the number of returning students and by our enrollment. Our enrollment over the last four years has increased dramatically. On a pragmatic level, our revenue has increased each year the last four years. After all our costs, we made \$1 million dollars which is significant.

We also measure success by the end of the program on the last day. Every student presents an Expo, which is a presentation of what they've done and learned. I measure success by seeing kids who came here lacking confidence or unsure about what they want to do, or worried about living away from home, who are able two weeks later to stand up in front of the school, talk about what they did, and show all the things they discovered.

### Why is it important for the school to invest in programs like these?

We use our summer programs to offer exciting immersive experiences so that students will understand that Hotchkiss is a place where

their curiosity and wonder will be satisfied and fostered. If people start to see our school as a landing place for summer, they'll start to see it as a landing place for their high school years.

A very pragmatic reason is that it's good financially for the school. We have beautiful facilities such as our dining hall, turf fields, the MAC, an amazing EFX lab, art studios, and science facilities. So we are able to utilize our physical resources to generate income for the school.

### If you could summarize the value of Summer Portals in one sentence, what would it be?

Two weeks of unfettered access to your curiosity.



COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Hazelton has served as dean of summer programs since 2023.



COMMUNICATIONS

### Mark Gu '29



MARK GU '29

I attended the Piano Portal in 2024. Through opportunities provided by Mr. Fabio Witkowski, I was able to learn from different professors and participate in their lectures. I also got to know many students my age who shared the same passion for piano. The supportive and inspiring environment that the school provides for its music students played a significant role in my decision to choose Hotchkiss.

### Wyatt Groves '29



COMMUNICATIONS

My experience at Summer Portals was like no other. Before the summer, I was interested in Hotchkiss, but after living on campus for two weeks, I really got a sense of what life would be like living here. Every day my curiosity flourished while I got to expand my knowledge and challenge myself. In my Environmental Sciences course, I connected with college professors and Audubon researchers. What I think set the program apart from any other is the hands-on, immersive environment.

### Alicia Feng '28



ALICIA FENG '28

I attended the Environmental Science and Fly Fishing programs in 2023. The sheer number of students and activities was overwhelming at first, but looking back, it was amazing how quickly you could bond with others and establish valuable friendships. The coolest thing about the experience is that I've gotten to rekindle some of the relationships I made during Portals because so many of us ended up at Hotchkiss for high school.

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# Arts & Sports

## Cultural Spotlight: The Music of Colombia

By SARA GARCIA '27

In Colombia, music is not just something that we chose to listen to—it is always there. *Bachata*, a 20th-century style for romantic partner dances, filled the kitchen as my grandmother cooked for the family, moving between the stove and radio, dancing without even realizing she was. The music, the three-step and tap hip movement pattern blended with the smells of my favorite Colombian dishes, the same rhythm of daily life, making sound inseparable from place.

Each style expresses something different: *vallenato* tells stories of love, loss, and rural life; *salsa* brings energy and precision with its fast footwork, sharp turns and melody; *champeta* born from Afro-Caribbean traditions along Colombia's coast, is loud, rhythmic, and impossible to stand still to: playing it in my headphones in the now 10 degree weather in Connecticut just makes me long for the hot sun and beautiful beaches of my home country.

Music defines Colombia's culture. My mother expected me to know how to dance to all of them by the age of ten, as if rhythm itself were a second language all of us had to learn. After I moved away from Colombia, the kitchen in my new home fell silent. There was no *bachata*

playing, no old reggae, no *champeta*. No music drifted in while my grandmother cooked and danced.

The absence marked the beginning of a change, not just the 2,600 miles I had moved away from home, but in how music existed in my daily routine. Borders do not define music. Music is meant to be felt, not translated, experienced the way I once experienced in Colombia, where *bachata* filled the kitchen by default.

Yet for years, Spanish-language music has been treated as separate from the mainstream. The separation is now being dismantled by artists who refuse to let music so beautiful be confined to one culture.

Among them, Bad Bunny stands out as a figure who has transformed Latin music's place in the world. When Bad Bunny headlines the Super Bowl halftime show, he will step onto one of the most traditionally American stages and reshape it entirely. As the first solo Latino headliner and the first artist to perform primarily in Spanish, he challenges the long held assumption that global success requires cultural compromise. Bad Bunny's performance is not an adaptation to the American audience—he is there to show Spanish-language music belongs everywhere.



FLICKR



COMMUNICATIONS

Hicks performing in *Lady Windermere's Fan* during his Prep year.

## AOI: Steven Hicks '26

By TRACY PHAM NGOC '28

Staff Writer

Steven Hicks '26 is a four-year Senior from Austin, Texas. He has appeared in seven mainstage productions and is currently playing the lead in the Winter play, *Frankenstein*.

Outside of theatre, Hicks is a member of JV Lacrosse and Mountain Biking, serves on the board of the Hotchkiss Political Union, and is in his second year as a proctor in Hurst Hall.

**What first drew you to theatre, and what keeps you passionate about performing?**

I took a few theatre classes in middle school, but it wasn't until I got to Hotchkiss that I started to enjoy it more.

During my Prep year, I watched *Into the Woods*, the musical that year; seeing that production showed me what theatre at Hotchkiss could be.

It inspired me to audition for *Lady Windermere's Fan* and after that experience, I just kept going. I haven't looked back since, and performing has become something I genuinely enjoy and care about.

**Is there a role that stands out as your favorite, most memorable, or most challenging?**

My favorite role is usually whatever I'm playing at the moment, so right now it's the Creature in *Frankenstein*.

It's been a really challenging role because it requires a lot of physical acting. Finding the right physicality and shaping the voice for the Creature has been an exciting challenge for me.

The Creature is made from bits and pieces of other people, meaning its movements are a little off and its voice is different. Working with all of that has been both difficult and really rewarding.

**How has the school shaped your journey in theatre?**

I take theatre more seriously now. My first role was in *Lady Windermere's Fan*, where I played a comedic relief character. It was a twist on the children's play *The Emperor's New Clothes*, so we were all in our underpants on stage.

I remember hiking my costume up, making my hair wild, and just having fun with everyone.

After that, I started taking on

more serious roles.

Ms. MK Lawson, my advisor and theatre teacher, has had a huge impact on my theatre experience here.

Mr. Derek Brashears, the head of the theatre department, also plays a big role. He handles tech and is directing *Frankenstein*.

I love learning from both of them because they have so much experience and knowledge.

**What would you say to students who want to try acting but aren't sure if it's for them?**

You'll never know if you don't try! Black Box productions are a great way to get involved and explore acting without committing to a full mainstage show.

The HDA board tries to cast as many people as possible and give new performers the chance to gain experience on stage.

Even if you start with a Black Box, you should still consider auditioning for a mainstage production when you have the chance. That's a really great opportunity to challenge yourself and grow as a performer.



COMMUNICATIONS

## AOI: Cayden Kim '26

By IZZY LIANG '29

Cayden Kim '26 is a four-year Senior originally from Kuwait City, Kuwait, who currently lives in Doha, Qatar. He's been a member of Varsity Wrestling since his Lower Mid year and is currently co-captain of the team. He is also a proctor in Hurst Hall and co-head of the Volleyball club.

Head Coach Cooper Puls said, "Cayden is a high-performing athlete who is willing to try new things and gives a lot of effort to get better. He's been wrestling now for two-and-a-half years. When he started he had almost no ability, and now he has some really fantastic ability. He has been able to do that because he's willing to say, 'Hey, I don't know how to do this, and I don't really know how it works, but I'm going to try it and eventually get it right.'"

**Why did you choose to start wrestling?**

I joined the team Lower Mid year after quitting hockey my Prep year. I chose wrestling because I thought choosing a sport where I have to

face my opponents head-on instead of running away would be better for character development.

**What are some of your favorite things about wrestling?**

It's really great that you don't have the option to run away. Even if you're scared or tired, you have no choice but to keep engaging with the other wrestler. On top of it being really fun and a great bonding activity with all your wrestling partners and team members, it's good for general health and fitness too.

**Why did you choose to come to Hotchkiss?**

My old school in the Middle East didn't have the academics I was looking for. I ended up applying to the best schools I could find on Niche. The Hotchkiss website showed photos of the happiest kids, so that was why I chose to come here.

**How has being a part of the wrestling team here shaped you?**

It's made me much more disciplined. When you do something

hard like wrestling for numerous hours each week, everything else feels a lot easier to deal with.

You can really feel your body becoming more fit, which helps with confidence as you go through your daily life.

The friends that I've made through wrestling have also been integral to my school experience.

**What are some of your favorite memories competing for the school?**

I remember after a meet at Deerfield, we got either Five Guys or Chipotle as a team. Even when you're all really tired and beat up from wrestling a quad meet, it is fun to joke around with the guys and girls and eat burgers and milkshakes on the party bus.

**What are your wrestling goals for college and beyond?**

I'm not really good enough to compete at a high level in college, but wrestling is such a good sport for keeping yourself fit, accountable, and for overall character development. I think I'm going to continue it casually or at the club level and keep wrestling in my life.

**What is one piece of advice you would give to new and aspiring wrestlers?**

Wrestling is one of those sports where if you don't have the desire to get better, it's impossible to do well. But as long as you want to, there are always going to be ways to improve.

The team is really welcoming and our coaches are great, because everyone's going through a hard thing together.

Both the friends that you make through wrestling and the physical and mental progress that you make are sizable.

So I'd say to give it a shot, even if you're unsure about it.



PAWEL MARYANOV

The 2026 Olympics is the first since 2014 to include NHL players.

## Hockey Deserves Best-on-Best

By BEN WISTAR '26

Sports Editor

The Winter Olympics are almost upon us, and as an avid hockey fan, the men's hockey competition is all I can focus on. This is because of four words: best-on-best hockey.

**SPORTS OPINION** The 2026 Olympics will mark the first time since the 2014 Sochi Olympics that NHL players will be allowed to represent their countries—and if you ask me, this change is for the better.

Having professional players in the Olympics will automatically improve the quality of play. Last year, the NHL gave us a taste of what's in store by way of the Four-Nations Faceoff. A round-robin tournament featuring the USA, Canada, Sweden, and Finland, the faceoff gave fans a week of thrilling competition and an instant classic in the final—Connor McDavid had his Sidney Crosby moment, scoring in overtime to lift Canada over the United States.

Moments like those are what makes best-on-best hockey so great. Representing your country is a special thing. Every single

athlete will be performing at their peak, guaranteeing that the fans can expect the highest level of competition.

The competition this year will likely be a repeat of the Four-Nations Faceoff. The USA and Canada are a level above other contenders like Sweden, Finland, and Czechia. Canada has geared up with a roster of stars, including the aforementioned Crosby and McDavid, current NHL goals leader Nathan MacKinnon, and reigning best defender Cale Makar.

Not to be outdone, the USA is bringing its own all-star cast. The best goalie in the world, Connor Hellybuck, will be between the pipes. The forward group includes the talismanic Tkatchuk brothers, and a defense headlined by all-stars Quinn Hughes and Zach Werenski.

Nothing could be better for the NHL than the return of best-on-best hockey. Every game will be a sterling advertisement for the league, exposing the world to hockey at the highest level.

The Olympics has given hockey fans countless iconic moments, and I can't wait to see what this year's competition has in store.



COMMUNICATIONS

Kim joined the team as a Lower Mid and is now a co-captain.