



BEARCATS BEAT TAFT 10-2-2!

By JAYDEN PERLMAN '27

Since 1980, Hotchkiss and Taft have engaged in a spirited rivalry every fall. Throughout the week leading up to Taft Day, on Saturday, November 8, school spirit was on display every day—from All-School Olympian & Pythian games to the pep rally in Fowle Gym, as students awaited the 45th anniversary weekend.

This year the Bearcats triumphed over the Rhinos with a 10-2-2 record across all sports.

Girls' teams went undefeated across the board. Varsity Field Hockey contributed with a 2-1 win. With a 12-3-1 overall record, the team earned a spot in the New England Class A playoffs as the 6th seed.



Students gathered at Spole Field to cheer on Varsity Football to close out the day of competition.

"After fighting really hard all game, it felt so rewarding to tie up the score," said Rose Morlock '28.

JV Field Hockey capped off a successful season with a hard fought 1-1 tie.

In the Field House, Varsity and JV Volleyball both came out with easy wins. Varsity won 3-1 and JV swept with a final score of three

sets to none.

On Hoyt Field, Girls Varsity Soccer managed to score a screamer outside the box with less than a minute left on the clock to tie the game 1-1. Center mid Rose Morlock '28 said, "After fighting really hard all game it felt so rewarding to tie up the score." Girls JV Soccer earned a tight 2-1 victory. The girls' teams continued their

undefeated Taft Day performance in enemy territory, as Girls Varsity and JV Cross Country won 224-325 and 323-324 respectively at Taft in the New England Division I Championships.

Boys Varsity and JV Cross Country teams emerged victorious as well, with scores of 190-345 and 286-291, respectively.

On Centennial Field, Boys

Varsity Soccer fell short, losing 3-0. Taft later went on to become the Founders League Champions. Despite the loss to end their season, this year's Boys Varsity Soccer team finished with the most wins, goals scored, and lowest goals against in the last decade along with an 11-5-3 record.

JV Boys Soccer came out with their 15th victory of the year,

winning 3-2. This result ended their 15-1-2 season with a six-game win streak.

Boys Thirds soccer team defeated Taft 3-1. This victory left the team undefeated across 12 games, with a 10-0-2 final record. Co-captain Alex Gish '26 said, "It was awesome to cap off my Senior and fourth season on Thirds Soccer with a win against our biggest rival. Our hard work all season, consisting of countless Taylor Field and hill sprints, culminated in a victory

"It was awesome to cap off my Senior and fourth season on Thirds Soccer with a win against our biggest rival," said Alex Gish '26.

that felt deserved for our team."

To round out the weekend, Varsity Football put forth a strong showing in a closely contested matchup on Spole Field but fell short, 42-27. Despite the loss, a supportive home crowd showed up to cheer on the players for the team's Senior Day.

Throughout the day, the Blue Mob, coordinated by the Blue and White heads, traveled between the games to cheer on every team. Food trucks spread across campus served beef brisket, grilled cheese, pizza, boba, coffee and more.



THE YALE WHIFFENPOOFS

The oldest a capella group in the nation visited campus for the second year in a row.

Whiffenpoofs Perform in the Chapel

By JAMES ZHOU '28
Staff Writer

On Sunday, November 16, the school welcomed the Yale Whiffenpoofs for an hour-long performance in the chapel.

The Whiffenpoofs, established in 1909, is the world's oldest and best-known collegiate a cappella group. All-male for the first 109 years, the 14-member group now accepts singers of all genders. Multiple Hotchkiss alumni have been Whiffenpoofs, including Ted Coy, class of 1909, son of Hotchkiss' first headmaster; writer and composer David Lippincott '43; and classmates Clayton "Peter" Westermann '49 and Jonathan Bush '49.

The group returned to the school for a second year, conducting a workshop with Bluenotes and Calliope before eating dinner together. In the workshop, the Whiffenpoofs taught "Haven't Met You Yet" by Michael Bublé, which they

performed together during the concert. Ms. Wistar, director of student activities and the organizer of the collaboration, said, "It was convenient to arrange the events as the a capella groups were looking for gigs too, so a lot of them kindly reached out to me to see if I can fit them on the calendar. I think they're pretty familiar with doing that kind of stuff because a cappella groups like to pass it along to younger students, helping them to get a sense of what it is like to be in a collegiate a capella group."

The Whiffenpoofs have performed in a variety of prestigious venues including the White House, Carnegie Hall, and the Lincoln Center. Every year, the group is composed of fourteen students. Members take a gap year between their junior and senior years to record albums and tour internationally, visiting six continents.

HDA Presents Pippin

By TRACY PHAM NGOC '28
Staff Writer

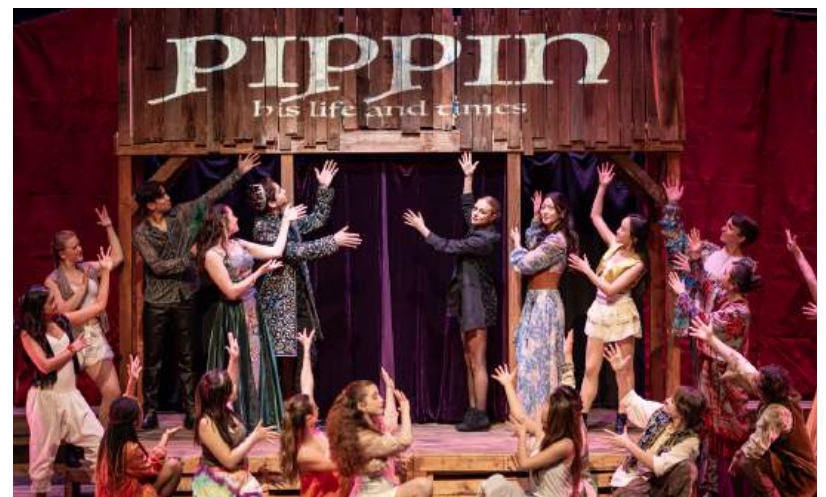
The Hotchkiss Dramatic Association (HDA) presented this year's first main stage production, *Pippin*, music and lyrics by Steven Schwartz, from November 7-9.

Pippin tells the fictional story of Charlemagne's firstborn son, Pippin, played by Jack McCarthy '26, as he searches for meaning and fulfillment. The narrative is presented as a show within a show, performed by a troupe of actors in the style of early medieval theatre.

Thirty-five students collaborated to bring *Pippin* to life in just under two months. "We started by learning the music for the show and then added choreography. The final step of the process was adding the technical elements: live musicians, props, lights, microphones, costumes," said Ms. MK Lawson, instructor in theatre and the director of *Pippin*. "It's a lot of work!"

Rehearsals for musicals are typically split between scene work and choreography, but this production posed a unique challenge, since the lead actor appeared in every scene of the play, requiring the team to work one scene at a time.

For Olivia Kwon '26, who played Catherine, Pippin's love interest,



COMMUNICATIONS

The set was fully disassembled at the conclusion of each show.

another obstacle to overcome was singing before such a large audience. "There were many moments I felt unconfident with the higher notes I had to hit. Thankfully, Ms. Lawson and Mr. Dan Koch, our musical director, worked closely with me to boost my confidence and technique," said Kwon.

When Pippin meets Catherine's son, Theo, played by Hermione Wu '27, their unlikely friendship leads to some of the funniest moments in the show. The audience erupted in laughter at Pippin's many futile attempts to comfort a stubborn Theo after his pet duck's death. Wu said, "It's not my first cross-gender role, but playing Theo challenged me to capture the physicality of a young boy and to

convey his connection with Pippin and Catherine."

Pippin's story was narrated by the charming and mysterious Leading Player, played by Carla Oudin '26. She said, "The Leading Player is supposed to feed off the audience, so it pushed me to step outside my comfort zone and truly have fun while performing."

To capture the spirit of Pippin's journey, the show included several action-packed scenes featuring dances, stunts, and fight choreography. "My favorite song to perform was 'Glory.' Stage fighting is like grown-up kids playing pirates, so performing the scene was a dream," said Lily Siris '26.

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B&W Leads Spirit Week

Students dressed to impress on theme days leading up to Taft Day.

An Update on AI Use

Emily Hwang '29 spoke with Mr. Richard Davis about the school's responses to AI.

Upper Mid Revue Entertains

Liv Oberman '27 and George Ferrarone '27 cohosted the show on Tuesday night.

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Happy Thanksgiving!

Students reflect on their favorite Thanksgiving traditions and foods.



LAUREN NIEM '26

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Learning to Love New Foods

Sienna Hwang '27 shares how she overcame her disgust for dairy and spice.

Latin is the Best Language

Doreen Zhang '29 celebrates the lasting beauty of Latin.

Who Should Shape Us?

Rikako Umezawa '27 & Alex Jiao '27 discuss the pros and cons of how donors shape school life and traditions.

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Art as a Meditative Practice

Clover Curry '27 examines how artists quiet the mind and awaken creativity.



LAUREN NIEM '26

AOI: Serena Nam '26

Arts shines a spotlight on the co-head of Calliope and musical theatre actor.

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Mtn. Biking Is Undefeated

The team finished off its season with a 4th consecutive HMBL Championship.

Achieving Flow in Sports

Luke Velasco '27 explains how visualization helps athletes succeed.

Winning Taft Day: A Recap

Look back on the day of competition and see scores and photos.

News

Class of 2027 Hosts Its Annual Revue

By LUKE VELASCO '27
Staff Writer

Upper Mid Revue, an annual showcase for class members' talents, was presented on Tuesday, November 18 in Walker Auditorium from 9-10 p.m. The event was co-hosted by George Ferrarone '27 and Liv Oberman '27, who were elected by the class. Upper Mid Class Presidents Helen Wood '27 and Andrew Roraback '27 assisted with planning.



Acts ranged from singing and dancing to comedy skits to quiz games.

"We wanted to make the event fun and have everyone enjoy it. We hoped to keep it light-hearted,"
said Liv Oberman '27.

Hosts Ferrarone and Oberman kept the audience engaged between acts and coordinated the flow of performances. Oberman said, "We wanted to make the event fun and have everyone enjoy it. We hoped to keep it light-hearted."

This year's Upper Mid Revue consisted of both filmed content and in-person segments. Video clips

included 3 a.m. interviews in Tinker, Wieler, and Dana, along with a spin-the-wheel game in which Dana residents performed various dares in the library. For one dare, Roraback crawled around in circles while people were studying. Live acts ranged from dance performances to class Jeopardy, where contestants were quizzed on their knowledge about the grade.

Other moments included a game of "Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader," in which class members were asked elementary-level questions to

test their basic knowledge. Proctors from Coy also endured a period cramp simulator.

Planning for this event took about three weeks, and included frequent class council meetings and help from Ferrarone, Oberman, Class of 2027 Dean Ms. Carita Gardiner, and Dean of Student Life Mr. Andrew D'Ambrosio. Wood and Roraback solicited proposals for acts and later selected those that would perform with the help of the Upper Mid class council.

Administration Implements New Detention Policy

By ROSE MORLOCK '28
Staff Writer

This fall, the school made significant changes to its detention policy. These modifications aimed to address ongoing challenges with attendance, chief among them the never-ending cycle of detentions and absences that some students fall into.

Last year, students received their first detention after two unexcused absences and then another detention for each subsequent absence. Detention took place on Wednesday mornings from 8-8:45 a.m. Students who missed detention in the morning would then be assigned detention in the dorm from 9-10 that evening. The policy was clear that one could not simply opt out of morning detention for evening detention.

This new system did not remain in place for long. Mr. Andrew D'Ambrosio, dean of student life, said, "We attempted to make the detention policy more flexible last year, and that flexibility was egregiously exploited, so we had to move to a different model."

Under the new model, students will receive their first detention after their third absence in a marking period, and one detention for every subsequent missed commitment. When they reach their third, sixth and ninth absences, the students' parents or guardians will also be alerted, with the letter of notice increasing in severity after each absence. Failing to attend a detention will be considered another absence,

and therefore earn another detention. Similar to past policies, detention is only tied to attendance.

The *Almanac's* new policy states, "Detention is held on Tuesday evenings from 9:05 p.m. to 9:55 p.m." This is free time for all students to be outside of the dorm. Since activities are often held during this time, receiving detention potentially means missing out on an exciting event.

For instance, Blue and White, held the annual Taft Day Pep Rally during this time. Ethan Li-Kato '27, who served detention instead of attending the rally, said, "I had two hard days in a row where I had major assignments, and I stayed up studying for them. I slept through class on both of those days and it gave me a detention, which I accepted, but needing to miss the pep rally as a result felt overly cruel. I was actually trying to be a good student by staying up, but just slept past my alarm both days."

Thus far, teachers, students and parents have not expressed concern to the deans. "No one has come to my office or reached out to invite a conversation or offer feedback about detention this year," said Mr. D'Ambrosio.

In general, and as the policy states in the *Almanac*, "students should not expect detentions to be rescheduled. Detention is not supposed to be convenient for the attendee." Ultimately, if students wish to avoid detention, they should attend their classes.

Students & Faculty Respond to Increased AI Usage

By EMILY HWANG '29

As artificial intelligence tools become more widely available, they are rapidly changing how students write, learn, and research. Schools across the world are struggling to determine the fine line between work assisted by AI and fully created by AI, a distinction necessary to ensure that students can learn responsibly as technology advances.

The school currently requires students to follow their teachers' guidelines for AI use and, if it is permitted, cite use properly. Mr. Richard Davis, dean of academic life, said, "The three questions are: Is this your work? Can it be fairly assessed? Did you follow the expectations [of your teacher]?" The school's expectations, included in the *Almanac*, require clear communication between students and teachers about when and how AI can be used. "Remember why you are here," said Mr. Davis. "Hopefully it is to learn and grow: socially, musically, academically. The grade isn't the goal, the learning is."

While Mr. Davis acknowledged that AI has made certain kinds of assistance more accessible, he insists the process of learning remains the same. "If you want to get stronger, your brain has to do the work," he said. He compared learning to a bench press: to get stronger, one has to increase the weight and stress the body.

Mr. Davis also added that although AI can be helpful in researching or studying, it should be used to extend the learning, not to replace it. "Experts use it best, because they already know what good work looks like," he said. "You have to do your research first and then let it help you build on that."

The photography program is experimenting with using AI to support

student work. Rather than letting AI generate art, students are encouraged to use AI intentionally to enhance design and color choices.

It is no secret that the school has experienced an uptake of AI usage this year. Dr. Lennox Debra, instructor in English, said, "Students aren't being given enough time to read and write. If students had more time to work on their writing, they wouldn't make these decisions." He added, "Student papers will always be more creative and satisfying than anything that I've read in AI. The best papers I've read were student-generated."

Students also shared their perspectives on AI use. Henry Thomases '28 said, "The majority of students understand the difference [between responsible and dishonest use], but it's a time thing. They don't want to spend as much time on that assignment." Kelly Jin '28 said, "Students feel they need to use AI, since several peers use it and get better grades with less time spent. There also isn't a clear line between responsible and dishonest use of AI."

At the end of last semester, the school sent out a survey to assess faculty opinions on AI usage for grading and in classrooms. Associate Head of School Dr. Amber Douglas reported that around 70% of faculty agreed that generative AI could be used as a tool to support teaching. Around 80% responded that faculty should play a role in guiding students to use AI appropriately.

"While there were varied responses on how freely students should use AI, the data of the survey provides a helpful starting point for developing principles and habits around the technology," said Dr. Douglas. "Teachers want to understand what students have learned. And that's compromised when students use AI. That relationship is the foundation of education."

Artificial intelligence and technology will continue to influence learning for students and teachers. The boundaries of accepted use remain an ongoing discussion at the school.



Students dressed according to different themes on each day of Spirit Week.

Blue & White Leads Annual Spirit Week

By BELLA CHEN '29

The school held Spirit Week, the annual week of spirit-building events leading up to Taft Day, from Monday, November 3 to Saturday, November 8.

"Spirit Week brings good vibes," said Blue & White co-head Addison Kosiewicz '26. "It brings the school together and gets people excited for the weekend ahead."

A tradition of Spirit Week is its dress-up day themes, which this year were "Greek Life," "Twin Tuesday," "Country vs. Country Club," "Throwback Thursday," "Blue Out," and "Spirit Gear." On Sunday, Main Building was decorated with psych cards and blue and white decorations. "Everyone does a different job, and decorating the main building showcases the camaraderie of the school," said Kosiewicz.

Another major event was the Pep Rally, held in the Mars Athletic Center on the evening of Tuesday, November 4. Varsity teams and

dance groups performed, and Blue and White hosted games and skits. "Performing in the Pep Rally was hard work, but rewarding and fun," said Ashley Zhu '29, who performed as a part of the Dance Team, Dance co-curricular, and in Tsunami Step Team.

"Spirit Week gets people excited for the weekend ahead,"
said Addison Kosiewicz '26.

Although the traditions of Spirit Week are similar each year, this year included some changes. One of the daily themes was changed from "Workout Wednesday" to "Greek Life" and the bonfire returned after its absence last year. On Friday, Blue and White hosted the bonfire on the lawn between Hurst and

Buehler, where they tore apart and burned a cardboard rhino.

The school hosted Taft Day athletic competitions on Saturday, November 8. The Bearcats emerged victorious with a 10-2-2 record.

Parents sponsored food trucks, including Travelin' Tom's Coffee Truck, Disco Forno Pizza, and Gunther's Sausage Wagon. The trucks were stationed around the athletic fields along with a CulinArt food tent. A booth of merch and school spirit gear such as face paint and stickers was stationed near the tent. Students joined the Blue Mob, which traveled to every game to cheer on the school's teams.

Members Blue and White and many faculty and staff members collaborated behind the scenes to plan and facilitate a successful spirit week. "Good communication with faculty is key to spirit week running smoothly," said Kosiewicz.

A surprise dance was held in the Student Center from 9:45-10:45 p.m. after the Taft Day win was announced.



LEON LI '26



Features



A Taste of Thanksgiving Traditions

This issue, the Features Editors asked community members to share family traditions and favorite foods from their Thanksgiving festivities. Contributing writer Rachel Fadugbagbe '28 interviewed five students, and 98 people shared their top three favorite Thanksgiving foods in a school-wide survey.



Justin Kears '27

I am from Harlem, NYC. I engage in a movie marathon on Thanksgiving Day with my mom, cousin, and cousin's family. I also volunteer at my local church, because I really enjoy giving back to my community. I first got into volunteering during the holiday season when I was younger and living in the Bronx. One day, my mom and I reached out to the other tenants in our apartment complex to recruit volunteers. We all began walking from the top to the bottom of Manhattan, helping the less fortunate by providing food and money. Our goal with this annual Thanksgiving tradition is to bring cheer and fun to others. Every year, I deeply appreciate this quality time with my mother.

PHOTOS/BEA YORKE '26



Nora Limann '28

Every Thanksgiving, my family and I go on a Turkey Trot, watch the Thanksgiving Macy's Day Parade, and get to cooking, an activity we love to do together. We host an abundance of people, including close relatives from London and near-and-dear family friends. Over the table, we share our appreciation for the past year.

To me, this is like a time capsule expressed in words, encapsulating the essence of my family's life. This year, I am really grateful to have attended the number one private school in the country. After all the delicious food, everyone in the house gathers in the music room. Each year, my siblings and I perform for our guests on the piano, guitar, drums, and violin.



Marilee Becker '29

Every holiday season, my family and I go to Jamaica to spend quality time together. We go for a week and embrace all of the fun events there. One year in Jamaica, on Thanksgiving Day, I got stung by a Portuguese man o' war jellyfish, which made the visit extra memorable.

We treat Thanksgiving Day itself pretty casually by going out to dinner as a family. Around the table, we share at least one thing we are grateful for from the past year and one person we're thankful for. I love Thanksgiving because of the deep appreciation I feel for my family and the act of reminiscing, specifically the positivity that comes from sharing gratitude.



Marcus McGregor '26

I am from a multicultural family that celebrates many holidays throughout the season. We first celebrate the Three Kings, also known as Día de Reyes, which is a Puerto Rican holiday that celebrates the visit of the Three Wise Men who brought gifts [to the baby Jesus]. Then, during Thanksgiving, instead of eating turkey, we make curry chicken. I feel blessed to have rights that were denied to individuals victimized by the recent government shutdown, and those in Jamaica who were victims of the recent hurricanes. I spend time with my seven siblings, playing games and camping out on Black Friday outside game stores to get the newest releases we can all play together. Finally, my father is Jamaican and Jewish, so we celebrate Kwanzaa and Hanukkah towards the end of the winter.



Evelyn Anderson '26

My family and I go to my grandmother's house in Charlotte, North Carolina. Her house is near and dear to me. I remember playing and hiding in my grandmother's backyard garden when I was younger. Now that my cousins and I are older, we work together to cultivate the garden. We even get jobs in the kitchen now, like stirring the gravy, making the stuffing, or learning the recipes while my grandmother cooks the turkey and her classic dessert, sweet potato pie with melted marshmallows. After the meal, we watch football and the Macy's parade. My favorite part of the day is getting all of my family together, since they come from New Jersey, North Carolina, and New York. I love playing Monopoly with all of my cousins. To conclude the night, we start decorating for Christmas.



LAUREN NIEM '26



Students can volunteer at the Corner Food Pantry with St. Luke's Society.

How to Help Local Food Pantries in November

By JACK MCCARTHY '26
Editor-in-Chief

November is always the busiest season for food banks and pantries. This year, local food services are especially swamped following the halt in SNAP food assistance for 42 million Americans due to the recently-resolved government shutdown. As a result, local food pantries are experiencing an exponential increase in reliance on their services.

To support the Corner Food Pantry at St. Mary's Church in Lakeville, Ms. Kim Gnerre, associate director of the Edsel Ford Memorial Library, set up a collection box for food donations outside of the library. From November

7-14, community members donated non-perishable food items like dry pasta, canned goods, and cereal. Ultimately, multiple large boxes were donated to the Corner Food Pantry.

The Corner Food Pantry is open from 3:00-4:30 p.m. on Fridays and 9:00-10:00am on Saturdays and is one of several local services that provide food to those in need. In addition to donations, St. Luke's Society supports the pantry by sending student volunteers to pack and distribute bags of food. It is common for the Corner Food Pantry to draw lines of more than 60 cars, so student volunteers are essential to the function of the pantry. St. Luke's also

collaborates with the Millerton Food Pantry at the Northeast Community Center, where student volunteers help out by stocking shelves and handing out food.

For more information about how to support the Corner Food Pantry, scan the QR code below.



Opinion

How Much Influence Should Donors Have?

RIKAKO UMEZAWA '27 Life at Hotchkiss operates with a quiet perfection. When my dad visited for the first time, he looked around and joked, “This place is nicer than most colleges,” and he’s not wrong.

We have a brand-new dining hall opening on December 1 with stunning architecture and new food stations. The library feels like something out of a university campus, our athletic facilities are top-tier, and the school offers programs that send students overseas to learn, compete, and volunteer throughout the year.

Yet for most of us, these extraordinary resources fade into the background as an unremarkable part of our day-to-day.

Last year, for an English project, I was tasked with designing a memorial for Frederick Douglass that reflected his life and values. As I walked around campus looking for inspiration, I began to notice all the different memorials we have. Small, bronze plaques reading “In honor of,” “Dedicated by,” and “A gift from” are everywhere. I found them on benches outside the science building, on the trees near VS dormitory, and next to the weight room.

These spaces and opportunities exist because people chose to give back to our community. Take Hurst Hall, for example. Its refurbishments, made possible by a major donation, have modernized a historic building while meaningfully enhancing student life. With updates like the newly renovated common room, the space houses students and faculty in a way that feels more connected. That’s what giving does: it creates spaces for people to thrive together for years to come.

It can be easy to take this privilege

as a given. When you can fly to another country for a history trip or use professional-level athletic equipment without thinking twice, you forget that these opportunities are exceptional.

When I think about alumni who give back, I imagine they do so not just because they cherished their time here, but because they want future students to experience the same—or even greater—



possibilities. At Hotchkiss, donor culture is about making gratitude visible. It’s the same idea that shaped my Douglass project: a memorial isn’t only a tribute to the past, it’s a responsibility to carry forward the values that matter most.

When the new dining hall opens in just a couple weeks, I know most of us will be excited about the food and the beautiful space. But I hope we also take a moment to appreciate what this building represents. It represents the generosity that sustains our community, the gratitude that connects generations, and the belief that progress is something we build together.

ALEX JIAO '27

The community is buzzing with excitement for the new dining hall to open, complete with a brick oven for fresh pizza, brand new seating areas, and a variety of other flashy amenities. Large-scale projects like the dining hall or the recent renovation of Hurst Hall, are undeniably valuable investments. The development of these projects relies heavily on donor generosity, a system that is essential but poses challenges when it comes to balancing competing priorities.

Hurst Hall, previously Memorial Hall, underwent much-needed refurbishments made possible by the Hurst family’s support. I admire the beauty and modernity of the building, now one of the best places to live on campus. I was startled, though, when the decision to rename the dorm

was announced suddenly in all-school only a day before it took effect. The name “Memorial” carried weight, honoring alumni who have served the country. It was a tribute to those who deserve a lasting place in our school’s memory.

By rededicating the dorm to recognize the new donor family, the administration undermines the history and emotional significance behind its old name.

Although the school recently created Memorial Quadrangle, this gesture feels like an afterthought to cover up the loss. One family’s financial generosity—important as it is—has displaced a commemoration

that stood for more than a century, dating back to the dorm’s construction in 1923.

I understand the necessity of thanking our donors. I do not, however, agree with sacrificing history and tradition to express that gratitude.

Each of the school’s decisions about how to use donations requires trade-offs. The luxuries of our new dining hall excite me endlessly and are sure to reinvigorate the community through the wintertime. Yet I also wonder about the allocation of funding across the school’s many priorities.

New building projects are naturally appealing to donors, providing visible progress and lasting proof of their generosity. High-profile renamings and celebrations only heighten this appeal, signaling to students and alumni alike that these large projects are the most valued and rewarded forms of support. Yet other acts with profound impact—like expanding financial aid—remain largely invisible, even though they matter as much. Even without knowing the exact allocation of funds, it’s hard to ignore how major capital projects can draw attention and momentum away from these less visible priorities.

The school is constantly making difficult decisions about what to prioritize, striving to balance improvements to buildings with preserving history, all while supporting the students in meaningful ways. The pressure to keep donations flowing weighs heavily on these decisions.

I wonder what our campus will look like when I return in five or 25 years. I am sure that the facilities will still be state-of-the-art, but I wonder whether the character I value most about this school will persist. Will our financial aid and diversity programs expand and develop alongside the physical campus? These developments, while perhaps not as exciting as the new dining hall, are what strengthen our school’s legacy for years to come.

GRAPHIC/LAUREN NIEM '26



Take Latin (and Greek) to wear a laurel on graduation.

ANNABELLE CHU '28

Latin is the Lingua Optima to Study

Doreen Zhang '29

When you think about Latin, the first thoughts that pop into your head are probably stereotypical ones: “It’ll help you on the SAT!” or “It’s the language of law and medicine.” While these contain some truth, Latin, in my opinion, is also a language filled with excitement, beauty, and history. People tend to assume that learning Latin is like swallowing vitamin supplements: beneficial, yet unlikely to quicken the pulse. So why exactly should a student at this school, surrounded by so many opportunities to learn modern and “practical” languages like Spanish, Chinese, French, and German, choose this “dead language”?

Learning Latin is more than a language acquisition; it’s a skill acquisition. In the process of studying and reading Latin, you will see how every single word in a sentence connects in a logical structure. Pattern recognition, attention to detail, and patience and consistency in problem-solving—these are the exact tools necessary for coding physics assignments, tackling math problems, and researching primary sources.

The beauty of Latin comes from its

lasting nature. People often complain, “You can’t speak it anywhere!” But while modern language keeps changing with new terms and slang, Latin has stayed pretty much the same for the last 2,000 years. It’s like a time capsule you can open to reveal the wisdom of ancient Rome. A stationary target, Latin allows learners to understand all its fundamental mechanics. Also, to clarify—Latin never “died,” it evolved, into many modern languages.

Latin’s charm also lies in its “uselessness.” Though it doesn’t serve utilitarian needs, it offers a lens through which we can observe the evolution and transformation of civilization: from Caesar’s military chronicles and papal bulls, to the formulas and works of the Scientific Revolution (and even the fantastical world of *Harry Potter*!).

Latin has always been a bridge between the future and the past, between reason and poetry. As the proverb “carpe diem” (seize the day) suggests, an interest in Latin is really an act of cherishing our shared heritage—it invites us to slow down, engage with history, and find resonance beyond time and place.

Coexistence With AI is Inevitable

Arthur Peng '28

Towards the end of October, I began hearing concerns about Lower Mids using AI to complete their English essays. When the issue first came up, I asked myself, *What are we going to do about this ChatGPT apocalypse?*

After gathering all the rumors flying around my grade, I heard that 60 Lower Mids were suspected of using AI. While that number might not be correct, it’s concerning that a significant number of Lower Mids allegedly used AI to write their English essays.

Because of the sheer amount of AI use, the likelihood that these essays will make it into anyone’s grade book looks grim. It’s so upsetting. Why should all the hours and effort I dedicated to my essay be negated because other people couldn’t be bothered and decided to generate theirs in a matter of minutes?

To understand the teachers’ side of the situation, I reached out to some of the English faculty. They generally reflected one consensus: “Why spend \$70,000 a year just to use AI in your classes?” The teachers are exhausted by the distrust AI has forced between them and their students.

Teachers are likely going to implement more in-class writing, if not making all assessments in-class—and perhaps even handwritten. This may sound unfair because in-class writings are inherently lower in quality than essays completed outside of class, where students have ample time to think, write, and revise. But we clearly can’t keep on with the current system.

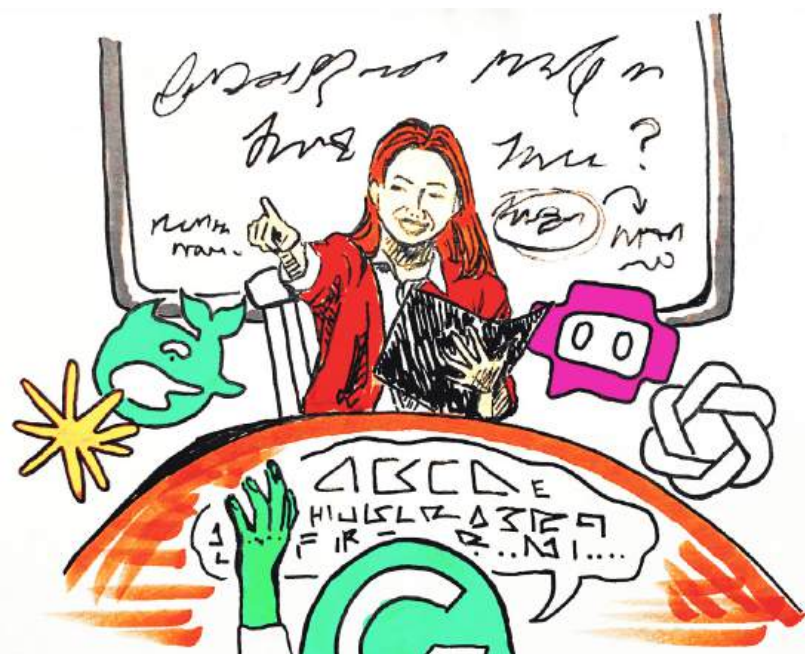
I’m not going to deliver the perfect solution to how we can solve this problem, but the eventual endpoint is clear: coexistence with AI. Banning the use of AI is impossible to enforce. Instead of relying on unrealistic rules

that only push the issue underground, faculty should consider integrating AI into the Humanities curriculum—with clear boundaries and expectations—to teach students how to use it responsibly and effectively. It’s a tool.

Let me be clear: using AI to write your whole essay is absolutely wrong. But we are living in a society where AI use is becoming increasingly prevalent, and many students feel justified in using it to some degree. That’s why we need a unified standard that outlines how to engage with it ethically and transparently.

Ultimately, I’m calling for the community’s attention to the growing misuse of AI within our classes—not just because of the unfairness it creates, but because our school needs a long-term plan to address this reliance.

In the end, coexistence isn’t optional. It’s inevitable.



ALICIA FENG '28

EDITORIAL

Thoughts on Thanksgiving

Jack: Whether I've given you my "Christmas is built on a lie" lecture or you've seen me go up for thirds when they serve turkey and mashed potatoes in the dining hall, let it be known that I believe in Thanksgiving superiority. My fondness for the fourth Thursday in November can be traced back to several features of the holiday: watching musicals perform in the Macy's parade, spending days preparing the meal, and sitting down for dinner at 4 p.m. Yet, if I had to pinpoint one reason why Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday, it's the premise. However corny it is, I love going around the table and announcing what I'm grateful for. I admit that I don't do a good job of regularly practicing gratitude—no matter how hard I try, I can't get into journaling or meditation. But Thanksgiving forces me to reflect on what I'm thankful for so that, even once a year, I can remind myself of what's important to me.

Shaye: Just the other day a friend and I were discussing the phenomenon of the Thanksgiving Break Disappearance. The days surrounding Thanksgiving, we observed, have the strange effect of completely evaporating from our minds' eyes. A week of relaxation is condensed into a flurry of clinked glasses and candlelit dinners, overflowing plates and premature Christmas carols. We remember only Thanksgiving itself. Our brains, we concluded, cling onto only what they deem important; in the schema of break, that's Thanksgiving dinner. But our memories are far less predictable on a broader scale. It's impossible to know what your mind will interpret as worth imprinting: a casual dinner with friends can become a keystone of childhood nostalgia; images from a walk through the woods can unexpectedly resurface years later. You never know whether a humdrum moment will be unconsciously bookmarked as a treasured memory—and it is this uncertainty which makes every day worth appreciating.

Katharine: I have never considered myself one to journal. Easy excuses like, "I don't have time" or "I'll do it tomorrow," always stopped me from picking up a pencil before bed. That all changed when I recently stumbled upon the *One Line a Day-5 Year Memory Book*. The idea is simple: write a line or two about your day, every day, for five years, and slowly create a living "memoir." Since then, I've scribbled down small moments that made me smile or laugh. Some of my early favorites include: "My delicious Chaiwalla cake at The Woodlands" "Hermione hilarious scenes with her pet duck in *Pippin*," and "Playing (and winning) two rounds of the game Spit with Charlotte." Moving through my day with this ritual in mind makes me more observant and appreciative of joys I might have otherwise missed. As my final months at Hotchkiss unfold, I know this growing record will bring more clarity and warmth.

To me, that's the spirit of Thanksgiving: remembering and appreciating what makes life fuller. This holiday season, I urge you to notice the small moments, and even better, start writing them down. I bet in a few years, you'll be grateful you did so!

Tate Collins '27

From endless new and delicious boba combinations to every flavor of Red Bull imagineable, the new Snack Bar expansions have been a godsend.

The quality of our dining services has skyrocketed across the board this year. With new to-go options in the FFC—dining hall soon to open!—and packaged treats in the Snack Bar, getting food is now easier than ever. These new additions are both convenient and tasty, but they come at a cost.

Between the uptick in plastic products in the Snack Bar and the student body's apparent indifference to the fact that straws and half-drunk boba are not recyclable, our school's environmental impact is headed in the wrong direction.

Senior General Manager at Culinary Dining Services Ms. Denee Hinman, the brilliant mind behind these revamps, is collaborating with me to reverse this environmental impact. As a part of this effort, recent changes in the Snack Bar have included switching from plastic to paper condiment cups, making utensils available only upon request, and eliminating plastic water bottles altogether. However, without reforming student behavior, these changes can only go so far.

It's time us students act consciously to minimize our environmental impact. Sure, I'll admit it: it's hard to turn down Thai milk tea in the morning after staying up half the night—but it's a decision we have to make. Every week, the student body runs through an obscene amount of plastic products at the Snack Bar—products which, even after being recycled, will only fully decompose after about 1,000 years. It may not seem like one person's choice "to boba or not to boba" makes much of

To Boba or Not to Boba?

a difference, but every action matters—especially when the ultimate problem we face is so severe.

From the ocean to our brains, plastic is taking over the world. As recorded by *The Ocean Cleanup*, the Great Pacific Garbage Patch has recently surpassed a landmass of three times the size of France. Even more frightening—a 2024 study by the New Mexico University professor Michael Campen found that the average fifty-year-old has about a full plastic spoon's worth of microplastics in their brain. If that doesn't scare you into switching from plastic to metal water bottles, I don't know what will.

Granted, avoiding using a plastic bottle once will not magically make the Great Pacific Garbage Patch vanish; however, it's a good place to start. Just because this issue is daunting doesn't mean we can ignore it.

We have more power to create change than we realize—all we have to do is take the first step. Let's say today you take your Hydro Flask out of storage from the VSCO era and commit to only using a reusable water bottle. By the end of a little over a decade, the height of all the bottles you will have saved will likely equal around the height of the Empire State Building. Now that's a difference that's pretty hard to ignore.

I'm not saying this means you should never order another drink in a plastic container again. All I'm suggesting is that you *think* about the consequences before you go on a month-long boba-buying streak. Maybe you choose to

wait to fill your reusable water bottle up at the FFC instead of buying a Powerade at the Snack Bar, or maybe you completely commit to stop buying plastic-bottled water. Regardless, every action makes a difference.

It's easy to feel like we don't have the power to change things. It's even easier to pretend like our bad habits don't matter "because everyone else is doing it too," but they do. Your choice "to boba or not to boba" *does* matter. So own up to it.



LEON LI '26

Embrancing Milk, Spice, and My Korean Heritage



LEON LI '26

Sienna Hwang '27

I despise dairy with my whole being. Cheese makes me gag, milk makes me grimace, and anything remotely creamy makes me want to toss the dish across the room. I ate it happily when I was little, but as soon as I made the transition into double digits, all I could think about was the sour, curdled taste it left at the back of my throat.

I feel bad for my parents, who have to stash away their beloved wooden cheese board whenever I'm home, and my friends, who have to put up with my bad attitude any time they order something as innocent as mac and cheese.

Equally shocking is my embarrassing lack of spice tolerance—something I thought was supposed to be ingrained in my Korean DNA. It's both ironic and frustrating that I can't handle heat when Korean food is my favorite cuisine. My family's meals brim with red chili pepper, kimchi, and dangerously spicy Buldak flavors, but I can barely manage to get through a kid portion before I'm chugging down a tall glass of water (yes, water) like

my life depends on it.

Then, during the pandemic, I discovered Korean mukbang videos on YouTube—livestreams where creators eat large amounts of food on camera while chatting with viewers. I started vicariously enjoying my favorite red hot dishes without tormenting my tongue. One day, I saw a popular influencer committing what I thought was an absolute sacrilege: she added to one of her Buldak ramyeon to dilute the spice!

After recovering from the initial horror, I felt a strange curiosity creep in. Against my better instincts, I found myself wandering into the kitchen at 3 a.m. (no judgment, please, we were in the middle of a pandemic) to add milk to my ramen. I watched as the dark red Buldak boiled into an orange-colored, creamy soup.

The first bite was... strange. Somehow, two things I couldn't stand on their own became surprisingly bearable together. As the lockdown dragged on, this little culinary accident turned into a full-blown fixation. My mom let me take over the kitchen when she wasn't using it, and it became my personal lab for mad

science.

I was relentless. Adding cheese to *tteokbokki* (spicy rice cakes) is not a new recipe, but I tested at least two dozen kinds before finding the perfect match (I'd never even looked at the cheese section of the grocery store before this). To my surprise, aged Gouda won. I even branched out to non-Korean cuisine to discover which yogurt flavour went best with my favorite Japanese curry.

Since then, I've developed 27 unique recipes combining my favorite spicy dishes with dairy. Not all of them are winners—just ask my parents, who've bravely stepped up as test subjects for every single one (and are desperately praying there won't be a 28th). What started as a simple experiment to make two intolerables tolerable has turned into a real passion.

Maybe there's an important metaphor for life in all this that I haven't quite figured out yet. For now, though, it's enough that it has brought me closer to my family and friends. I no longer leave the table early when dinner's too spicy or hide in my room when they bring out the cheese board. I whip up my aged Gouda *tteokbokki* and join them.

THE HOTCHKISS RECORD Est. 1893

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Arts



LEON LI '26

Jingdezhen, the Porcelain Capital of China

By **STELLA LIAO '27**
Staff Writer

Nestled among the misty hills of Jiangxi Province, the city Jingdezhen has been known as the Porcelain Capital of China for over a thousand years. Its delicate **CULTURAL** ceramics, born from **SPOTLIGHT** earth and fire, embody the very essence of refinement, resilience, and radiance of Chinese artistry.

I witnessed the making process of Qinghua porcelain when I visited the ancient imperial kiln site of Jingdezhen. An old craftsman dipped his brush into cobalt pigment and traced a dragon's tail onto a porcelain plate. His hands moved with practiced steadiness, showing the confidence of an experienced artisan who had spent decades perfecting each line and curve. Every stroke of his brush was soft but accurate, as if it were a breathing extension of his body. Watching him, I realized that the spirit of Jingdezhen lies in the quiet devotion of those artisans who shape it.

Early forms of Porcelain making

in Jingdezhen began during the Eastern Han Dynasty (220 CE), and art flourished under the Song (960-1279) and Ming (1368-1644) dynasties as advances in technique were made and the town became the imperial kiln center. The name Jingdezhen honors Emperor Zhenzong (968-1022) of the Song Dynasty, who decreed that royal porcelain be inscribed with "Made in the Jingde Era." As a result, this mountain town transformed from a humble pottery village into the heart of China's ceramic glory.

Jingdezhen produces four main kinds of porcelain: Qinghua porcelain, Famille Rose porcelain, Linglong porcelain, and color glazed porcelain.

Qinghua porcelain was first created during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). The most recognizable form of Chinese porcelain with its iconic two-tone palette of blue and white, it is made by painting designs with cobalt pigment onto the clay body, glazing, and firing at high temperature. The clear, bright glaze and vivid blue decorations create a refined and layered aesthetic.

Famille Rose porcelain, developed

in the late Kangxi period of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912), uses a soft overglaze enameling technique. Artisans outline patterns on fired white porcelain, then apply colored enamels and fire at 600-900 degrees celsius. The result is a delicate finish with gentle hues and elegant floral motifs.

Linglong porcelain, which originated in the Ming Dynasty, is developed from openwork carving techniques. Artisans carve out rice-grain-shaped holes following floral or geometric patterns on a thin porcelain body and coat it with transparent glaze.

Colored porcelain uses natural minerals and metal oxides as colorants mixed into the glaze. Colored porcelain has a wide variety of colors and types including monochrome glazes with a single color throughout such as red glaze, yellow glaze, and celadon glaze.

Today, Jingdezhen remains a living museum of porcelain culture. Artists from around the world gather there to learn traditional techniques and experiment with modern designs. Through its centuries of artistry, Jingdezhen allows the world to see beauty in patience, perfection, and persistence.



BELLA CHEN '29

Reflections on Art as a Meditative Practice

By **CLOVER CURRY '27**

Art has been used as a form of individual expression for tens of thousands of years. Whether it be visual arts such as photography or painting, hands-on activities like crocheting or music, and even hobbies like soap-making, art is often used as a way to relax. Many art students and faculty also find that creating art enhances mindfulness.

Art provides many people with a mental break in the midst of their busy lives. Studio art student Penelope Thornton '27 said, "I do art as a break between my other work. It's very therapeutic. Because it's so creative and meditative, you have so much freedom to express yourself."

Ms. Terri Moore, director of studio art, describes how art allows her to

"Just as meditation involves sitting with uncomfortable thoughts, art often requires the artist to face internal tension or uncertainty,"
said Ms. Terri Moore.

"be completely present." She said, "In art, one must be both deeply engaged in detail and aware of the greater composition. This shifting awareness is what gives art its meditative quality; it asks the artist to move between close attention and broad perception."

However, this state of focus is not always peaceful. "Creating art is not always 'unicorns and rainbows,'" said

Ms. Moore. "The process of creating can be frustrating and emotionally difficult, especially when the work confronts personal themes. Yet this struggle is a part of the process. Just as traditional meditation involves sitting with uncomfortable thoughts, art often requires the artist to face internal tension or uncertainty."

Arthur Peng '28, a ceramics student, sees art as an engaging process, which brings a sense of achievement from hard work. "I'm very focused and I try to put 100% of my effort into creating the piece. Beyond that, it's the amount of time that I put into a piece that makes me happy."

While art doesn't always resemble traditional forms of meditation, it achieves a similar outcome: a sense of deeper awareness. As Ms. Moore said, "it is about quieting all other ideas and noise and letting the creative reaction and response take center stage." With that focus, art becomes more than an

academic subject or a hobby.

"I do art as a break between my other work. It's very therapeutic,"
said Penelope Thornton '27.

As students move quickly between academic, social, and extracurricular demands, art offers a space for focus and mental clarity. Whether through painting, drawing, or sculpting, art offers students moments of calm and a deliberate practice in the midst of a busy schedule. It provides an opportunity to quiet the mind and enter a state of full concentration and presence.



LAUREN NIEM '26

Pippin Opens HDA Season

From Cover

The play also included domestic and romantic scenes, including the duet "Love Song," which marked a pivotal moment in Pippin and Catherine's relationship. Kwon said, "Not only is it a beautiful, romantic duet, but Jack and I had great onstage chemistry, so it was easy to act truthfully in the moment and get lost in the song's charm."

"It felt very exciting to connect with another school's theatre program and represent Hotchkiss on stage," said Ryan Lee '28.

Tyler Rosenblum '26, who starred as Amos in last year's *Chicago*, took on a vastly different role in *Pippin* as the heartless and commanding

King Charles. "I knew I had to be bold and confident in my acting to do the role justice, and it has helped me expand my range as an actor," Rosenblum said.

The play coincided with Taft Day, and a number of theatre students from Taft, who had closed their own production of *Pippin* just one week earlier, stayed to attend the production. "It felt very exciting to connect with another school's theatre program and represent Hotchkiss on stage," said Ryan Lee '28, who played Lewis, Fastrada's son.

The HDA Board and Ms. Lawson decided on this year's theme, "Innocence lost." Looking ahead to the Winter season production of *Frankenstein* and Spring production of *Romeo & Juliet*, Ms. Lawson said, "We wanted to explore stories about young people's disillusionment as they begin to figure out the world for themselves and navigate life without the guidance they need. I think everyone will really enjoy seeing how the three shows connect back to our theme."



COMMUNICATIONS

AOI: Serena Nam '26

By **EVIE LIU '29**

Serena Nam '26 is a four-year Senior from Ho-Ho-Kus, New Jersey. She has been a member of Calliope since her Prep year, becoming a co-head in Upper Mid year. She has sung in the chorus for all four years at the school and performs regularly with MB140. She has appeared in the musical every year, most recently in *Pippin* as Pippin's grandmother, Berthe.

Outside of performing, she has been a part of student government since her Prep year, serving as Lower Mid class president and this year as All-School President. Nam also serves as co-head of Bluestockings and is a member of the Council of Pluralism and Community.

How did you discover your passion for music?

My mom always told me I started singing before I could even speak. It has been a huge part of my life for as long as I can remember.

When I was six, my mom signed me up for my first musical, *Annie*, because I wouldn't stop singing around the house and at school. I also began voice lessons with my piano teacher and realized how much I loved music.

My grandmother was a talented pianist, and singing still feels like

a way to connect with her. I know I can always rely on music no matter how I am feeling.

How has the school's music program helped you develop as a singer?

The music program is phenomenal, and Mr. Jack Brown, my voice instructor, has helped me grow tremendously as a singer. Through lessons, I've expanded my classical repertoire across multiple genres and languages and developed new techniques. Singing in chorus and a cappella has improved my ability to read music and given me performance experience that's helped me become much more confident as a singer, although I still struggle a lot with stage fright.

What advice do you have for those who want to sing, but don't feel confident in their voice?

Put yourself out there! Hotchkiss is a great place to try something new, so don't leave here regretting not at least trying to explore new passions and activities. If you're interested in auditioning, reach out to members of a cappella groups and the musical. And if you're seeking to improve your technique, I highly recommend taking voice as your art. Mr. Brown has helped so many people gain confidence and improve as singers.

Sports

Taking the Luck Out of Achieving Flow with Visualization

By LUKE VELASCO '27

Every athlete knows that feeling when everything around you slows down, your reflexes quicken, and you know the ball will land in the right place before it even leaves your hand. This phenomenon, known as flow, is the jackpot all athletes strive for in every game; yet most only enter it a very few times in their careers. Elite athletes achieve it more consistently, because they set the correct conditions for flow to occur by using visualization.

Visualization isn't just crossing your fingers and hoping for a legacy performance. It is the practice of repeatedly recreating the conditions for success in your mind. When you visualize slotting that rolling cross-court knick at 10-10 in the fifth, your brain fires the same neurons that fire when you actually perform the moment. When you think about your shoulder muscles that tense, the weight transfer through your shot, and the snap of your wrist, your brain experiences an echo of what happens when you are actually on the court.

The best visualizers picture every single detail of information—the smells, the sounds, or even how their feet feel in their shoes. Olympic skier Emma Cook said, "You have to smell it. You have to hear it. You have to feel it, everything." The more detail a visualization contains, the more connections you build in your brain, helping you achieve flow.

The biggest barrier standing between you and finding flow is doubt. When your mind stops second-guessing, muscle memory takes

the wheel, driving you to success. Take tennis pro Novak Djokovic, for example, who imagines tough points and visualizes how he would overcome each scenario. This provides him with a sense of familiarity, so when he finds himself returning that 149-mile-an-hour serve or a ten-foot-high lob, he has already rehearsed them in his mind. He eliminates self-doubt, because he has been there before—not physically, but mentally.

The players who reach flow constantly are not lucky; rather, they put in the constant work playing out every scenario in their heads, point by point, rally by rally, both the triumphs

The players who reach flow constantly aren't lucky. They put in the work, playing out every scenario in their heads.

and the pressure points.

I urge you, before your next game, sit down and close your eyes. Imagine the smell of the fresh cut grass or the tire smell of the squash ball. Feel the tiny pieces of dirt of turf that get stuck in your cleats or hear the scrape of your skates on the ice. Play out every in-game scenario you can think of and visualize what you will do.

An elite athlete is expected to have a strong body and must have an even stronger mind to compete at the highest level. While physical conditioning may be the vehicle, mental conditioning is the engine, and visualization is the key to start up the car.



LEON LI '26



COMMUNICATIONS

The school's riders earned 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in both the boys' and girls' categories.

Mountain Biking Ends Season With Historic Fourth Consecutive Championship

By KEVEN LUIRU '27
Staff Writer

Varsity Mountain Biking wrapped up this fall with an undefeated season capped by its fourth championship title.

This season, the team was made up of 17 riders, ranging from Preps to Seniors and including boys, girls, and non-binary athletes. Head Coach Mike Fitzgerald said "We had crazy, fun, and wild rides at off-campus trail networks on Saturdays. Riders learned to overcome their fears, challenge themselves physically and mentally, and push past what they thought were their limits to gain new confidence. Most importantly, they supported and encouraged each other."

"Riders learned to overcome their fears, challenge themselves physically and mentally, and push past what they thought were their limits," said Coach Mike Fitzgerald.

No experience is required to join the team, and the school provides bikes for riders who don't have their own. Coach Fitzgerald said, "Some of our riders joined the team already having deep skills and strength, while some newcomers had hardly ridden a mountain bike before. All of them finished the season with more confidence, ability, and strength, earning the respect and support of their teammates."

The team races every Wednesday against opponents from the Housatonic Mountain Biking league, which includes Kent, Trinity-

Pawling, Berkshire, Salisbury, Wilbraham and Monson, Rumsey, and Indian Mountain School. Races are hosted on a rotating basis by member schools.

In mountain biking, riders compete on speed and skill. Riders earn points based on their finish order and race class. The top five riders for each school earn points for the team. CAT 4 races are for beginners and usually last around 20 minutes. CAT 1 races are the longest and most difficult and can last for as long as 75 minutes. As riders improve, they can move up in race class during the season.

Throughout the season, riders trained on Mt. Riga, in the school's skills park, on trails in Beeslick Woods, and off-campus on Saturday mornings. Co-captain J.T. Popp '26 said, "As a captain, I can share with the new riders the support that I received when I was a Prep. The mountain biking community is built on encouragement and support, which makes practices, races, and off-campus rides memorable."

The team competed in the Housatonic Mountain Bike League championships on Wednesday, racing against seven schools and nearly 100 riders. The Bearcats took first place to conclude an undefeated season and captured their fourth consecutive league championship title.

At the championship race, the league recognized the top three boys, the top three girls, and the top team for the season. Asher Frankel '26, Thatcher Meili '27, Tiger Mutter '26, and J.T. Popp '26 finished the season in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th place overall for the league, respectively. Greta Roswech '29, Sasha Carmel '27, Maya Grogean '26, and Coco Sheronas '26 finished the season 1-2-3-4 in the girls category.

On September 28, Meili, Mutter, Grogean, Carmel, and Sheronas and Coaches Fitzgerald and Ted Weihman traveled to Ascutney

Mountain to compete in the Vermont 50 (VT50), one of the longest and most challenging mountain bike races in New England. The VT50 course runs 50 miles and includes 8,500 feet of elevation.

All five students and both coaches completed the race, with finish times ranging from 5 hours 45 minutes to just under 10 hours. Maya, Sasha, and Coco all finished in the top three of their race categories.

"The community is built on encouragement and support, which makes practices, races, and off-campus rides memorable," said J.T. Popp '26.

Coach Fitzgerald said, "While the team will graduate five Seniors this year, strong returners including Michael Ortiz '27, Thatcher, Sasha, and Greta are poised to carry on the Hotchkiss tradition with speed, skill, and grit."



COMMUNICATIONS

Taft Day Final Results

Varsity Football
Loss - 27-42

Boys Varsity Soccer
Loss - 0-3

Boys JV Soccer
Win - 3-2

Boys Thirds Soccer
Win - 3-1

Girls Varsity Soccer
Tie - 1-1

Girls JV Soccer
Win - 2-1

Varsity Volleyball
Win - 3-1

JV Volleyball
Win - 3-0

Varsity Mountain Biking
N/A

Varsity Field Hockey
Win - 2-1

JV Field Hockey
Tie - 1-1

Girls Varsity Cross Country
Win - 224-325

Boys Varsity Cross Country
Win - 190-345

Girls JV Cross Country
Win - 323-324

Boys JV Cross Country
Win - 286-291

Bearcats Win Taft Day on Home Turf!

