



MLK Day Programming Celebrates Democracy

By ELLIE MATASAR '29

The community celebrated MLK Day with workshops, speakers, and service on Monday, January 19. MLK Day, the only federal holiday designated a National Day of Service, commemorates the life and achievements of civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr. As in past years, classes were not held, and instead students engaged in special programming.

"Dr. King's vision of democracy isn't as a finished structure, but as a living project that depends on our willingness to care for each other across differences," said Ms. Ashley Aluko.

This year's MLK Day theme was "Democracy as a Beloved Country." Ms. Ashley Aluko, co-director of pluralism and community, said, "We turn our attention to Dr. King's vision of democracy, not as a finished structure, but as a living project—one that depends on our willingness to build, question, and care for one another across differences."

Programming, which started at 8:45 a.m., included a keynote speaker, Dr. Timothy McCarthy, service and educational workshops,



Keynote speaker Dr. Timothy McCarthy addressed students in Walker to begin the day of remembrance.

and time for dorm conversations.

Dr. Timothy McCarthy is an award-winning scholar, educator, and human rights activist who teaches at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, where he was the school's first openly gay faculty member, and at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Dr. McCarthy was co-recipient of the 2015 National Humanities Medal from Former President Barack Obama and a founding member of Mr. Obama's National LGBT Leadership Council.

After Dr. McCarthy spoke, students engaged in workshops led by students, staff, and faculty members. Before MLK Day, students were asked to rank their choices of programs, so they

could be placed in workshops that reflected their interests. There were a total of 17 workshop options this year, including options for those interested in food: "Southern Cooking as a Model for Democracy," led by Ms. Beth Smithey, head of the science department, and "Shrimp and Grits Demonstration," led by Ms. Denee Hinman, resident district manager at CulinArt, and dining services chefs.

Other courses spanned topics drawn from history, literature, athletics, and world languages and cultures. These included workshops such as "Should the Constitution be Scrapped?," led by Mx. Emma Wynn, instructor in history, philosophy, and religion; "Ni de aquí, ni de allá: Linguistic

and Cultural and Racial Code Switching," by Spanish instructors Ms. Carmen Dockery and Mr. Alexander Forero; and "Safe, Seen, and Supported," by Mr. Dave Thompson, director of international programs.

Two workshops were held by outside speakers. Dr. McCarthy led "Becoming B.R.A.V.E.: Communicating with Courage, Leading with Integrity," a workshop focused on communicating with courage and leading with integrity. This workshop was only available to upper class students.

Dr. Gretchen Goldman led "Science and Democracy: What should the role of scientists be in our democracy?" Dr. Goldman is an American environmental scientist,

policy advocate, and president of the Union of Concerned Scientists.

"Today's speaker and programming reminded me how one person's voice can inspire change and leave a lasting legacy," said Pahal Bhasin '26.

Bluenotes, Calliope, and other student musicians traveled to Noble Horizons, a senior community, to perform for residents.

This year, MLK day programs were a way for students to honor the impact Martin Luther King Jr. had on the country, while learning about community and democracy in American history and in the present day.



Artist of the Issue: Mark Zhu '26

By JAMES ZHOU '28

Mark Zhu '26 is a four-year senior from Suzhou, China. He is a member of the Right Brain Logic jazz band ensemble and plays the alto saxophone. Outside of music, Zhu is a co-captain of Boys Varsity Rowing. He is currently a proctor in Dana.

How did you discover your passion for the saxophone?

I began my music journey playing the piano. I played it for five years, but I honestly couldn't find joy in it. I then moved to playing classical saxophone, and I started listening to a lot of jazz saxophone music by John Coltrane.

I fell in love with the sound of the saxophone and how free jazz music sounded in general. Hearing masters like Claude Delangle and John Coltrane inspired me to find and develop my own voice on the instrument.

What are your experiences and perspectives on classical and jazz music?

I first studied classical music and played in my primary school orchestra, and I've been a classical musician for most of my life. I only began studying jazz after arriving at Hotchkiss.

I love both styles for different reasons: classical music is beautiful and carefully structured, while jazz

is incredibly free and expressive. What many people don't realize, though, is that jazz requires just as much discipline as classical music. When I practice improvisation, I spend hours running scales and patterns in every key, transcribing, and listening closely to great players. That practice structure is what eventually allows improvisation to feel spontaneous.

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Harkness tables help facilitate the school's emphasis on Socratic dialogues.

Socrates Isn't Always the Best Teacher...

Monica Tian '29

Most of us are familiar with the famous Socratic Method. It is used in many of our discussion-based classes, including English and philosophy, and motivates discourse. However, although this method fosters critical thinking and creates an engaging vibe, I think it is crucial to combine it with other complementary teaching strategies.

The Socratic Method is based on asking a series of probing questions to help students re-evaluate their thinking, with the goal to train their skills in building powerful understanding and arguments. The questions asked by the instructor vary in kind. Some may invite the student

to provide further explanation—"What would be an example?"—while others require the student to respond to counterarguments.

Though the Socratic Method fosters critical thinking, it is crucial to combine it with other strategies.

Students can also come up with their own questions to learn more about their peers' thoughts. No

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Apply for The Record!

Applications for The Record's CXXVIII editorial board are officially open. All students—regardless of prior experience with The Record—are encouraged to apply. Strong writing skills and an interest in current affairs and campus life are recommended skills for editorship, but familiarity with InDesign is not required. If you happen to be strong in graphic design or have any ideas for The Record's online presence, please also consider applying! If you would like to hear more about how one Editor-in-Chief became involved with the newspaper, read the editorial on page 5.

Applications are due on January 31 by 10 p.m.; to access the form, check your e-mail or scan the QR code below.



NEWS 2

New Furniture Fails to Impress

Community members react to relocated couches and chairs in Main Building.

Upper Mid Revue Entertains

The delayed performance finally occurred on Tuesday, January 13.

FEATURES 3

How Do We Choose Speakers?

Students share thoughts on what they find most compelling in a speaker.



LAUREN NIEM '26

OPINION 3

When Is AI Use Acceptable?

Arya Samat '29 reflects on how AI is affecting learning in the classroom.

A New Era for Venezuela

Sofia Buck Tarazona '27 assess the country's future.

ARTS 4

Cultural Spotlight: Hanbok

Evelyn Liu '29 reflects on the meaning of Korea's traditional clothing.

Album Review: What Now

Jahlani Jackson '27 reviews Sylvan Esso's second studio album.

SPORTS 4

AOI: Nikki Ferraro '26

The tri-varsity athlete will play lacrosse at Hobart and William Smith next year.

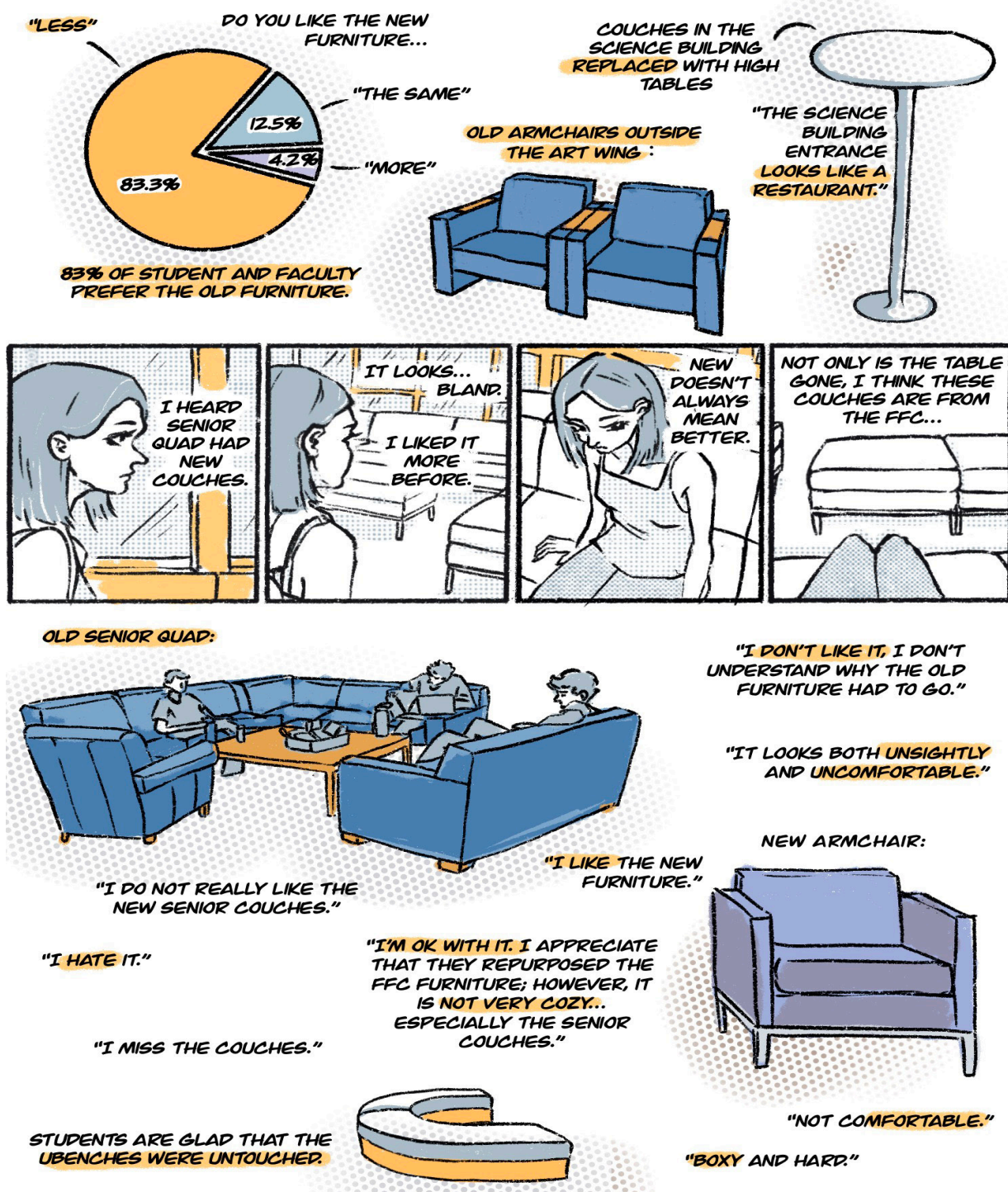
Indoor Tennis Courts Return

With the FFC closed, courts are being renovated and will open in the spring.

News

Community Weighs In On New Furniture

Following the replacement of furniture in Main Building, staff writer Rose Morlock '28 asked community members to share their opinions on the changes. 38 people responded to the school-wide survey.



By ROSE MORLOCK '28
Staff Writer

When students returned from winter break, many of the old couches and chairs scattered through the Main Building had been replaced by new furniture relocated from the FFC.

The old couches and table with Seniors' last names had been removed from Senior quad, to be replaced with longer blue couches. Similar couches replaced the old furniture in the seating areas outside the history and languages hallways and post office. Tall tables and chairs appeared outside the Music Wing and replaced the couches in the science building lobby.

The Record sent a survey to students and faculty; 38 people answered questions about the new furniture.

"The new furniture has deterred me from using a number of places I used to enjoy," said an anonymous student.

They reported an overall negative reaction to the new additions, with

83% of respondents reporting they like the furniture less, and 65% saying they will use it less than the old furniture.

Many students and faculty members objected to the aesthetics of the new furniture, describing it as "sterile and weird," "depressing," and like a "medical office waiting room" or "the lobby of a nursing home."

The practicality of the furniture was also challenged. Some stated the chairs are "too stiff to be inviting and functional" and "not as comfortable" as the older furniture.

Many students report using it reluctantly. Some noted they use it "only because [they] want to sit somewhere" and "out of habit."

School Removes Extended Passing Periods Between Lunches

By CHLOE CAIRNS '29

Students returned from Winter break to a welcome schedule change.

"I really love the new schedule, because I don't need to rush to practice," said Asta Huang '27.

For two years, while the Ford Food Court was used as a temporary dining hall, the school added a ten-minute passing period to accommodate the

longer walk between the two lunch periods and pushed the start of afternoon classes to 2:10 p.m.

Now that the new Bissel Dining Commons is up and running, those extra ten minutes are no longer needed and have been removed. The academic day now concludes ten minutes earlier, giving students additional time before athletics. Asta Huang '27 said, "I really love the new schedule. The change means my double ends at 3:30 p.m. instead of 3:40 p.m., so I don't have to rush before practice." With the new Dining Hall closer to the heart of campus, it gives students not only improved access but more usable time.

Rescheduled Upper Mid Revue Packs Walker

By JAHLANI JACKSON '27

Upper Mid Revue was finally held on January 13, after being postponed from November 18. Hosted this year by George Ferrarone '27 and Liv Oberman '27, the revue lasted just over 45 minutes. Despite its short length, many were pleased with the overall turnout and show. Rose Bourdeaux '26 and Jiyan Bharvad '27 both described the event as "exciting and fun."

The event was initially set for November 18, however, it was unable to take place as scheduled. As Ms. Carita Gardiner, the dean of the class of 2027, said, "There were many loose ends in planning that prevented completion of things and disagreements in regard to what acts could versus couldn't be included."

Even with logistical challenges, those planning the event were able to successfully engage a range of students in six acts. Opening the show, Helen Wood '27, class president, Harper Semlies '27, and Isaac Obering '27 moderated the trivia show, *Are You Smarter Than A Fifth Grader?* The game pitted Upper Mids against a group of fifth-grade students from Salisbury Central to answer general trivia, from math to pop culture references. Ty Higginbotham '27, Stuart Allard '27, and Vinnie Mercadante '27 lost 20-40 in the final round. Stumped by the penultimate question, "Who created the Mona Lisa?", the Upper Mid team turned the question over to the fifth graders. Correctly answering "Leonardo da Vinci," the fifth graders secured their victory!

Following this act, the hosts introduced dancers Amina Wang '27, Gigi Bazos '27, and Bharvad. The trio's choreography, inspired by the show "Dance Moms," elicited applause. Bourdeaux said "The dance moms performance was my favorite act. I thought the act was well done. Those participating clearly put in a lot of time and effort; connecting their act to 'Dance moms' was really clever."

Bharvad said, "Though the planning process was difficult and tiring, it was

well-supported by the students leading the event." Managing students included 2027 class presidents Wood and Andrew Roraback '27, along with moderators Ferrarone and Oberman. Bharvad said, "This group, along with the student council, was really understanding about everything and great at managing logistics. They took into account the shortened timeline when organizing the whole event, in that they understood the limited time we had to design our act." This year's revue lacked a "drama trivia" section, which was typically included in previous revues. Bourdeaux said, "The trivia section usually involves telling jokes designed with class drama in mind. In that the host uses these jokes to insinuate something happened between two people or something else controversial."

Ms. Gardiner described the revue as a "showcase of 2027's talent." Bruce Zhang '27, Jerry Fan '27, Alex Lu '27 performed "Don't Stop Believing" as a classical ensemble alongside a karaoke trio performance by Fritz Weihman '27, Ferrarone, and Roraback. Next, Coy proctors Rintaro Aoyama '27, Henry Rowe '27, Jack Lykourazos '27, Ian Choi '27, and Oliver Burger '27, were hooked up to period cramp simulators while reading Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet." As per tradition, the revue included a video of 3 a.m. dorm interviews, this year from Tinker and Wieler. Warren Edwards '27 and Michael Ortiz '27 performed the final act. Following a projected video of the two referencing *Subway Surfers*, they walked through the auditorium singing "Mr. Telephone Man" by New Edition.

Overall, those involved put together a creative display of Upper Mids' talents, while simultaneously packing the seats of Walker. By overcoming a range of unforeseen logistical challenges, the students leading the event demonstrated great flexibility and cooperation. Class council member Justin Kearse '27 said students "maintained maturity" in the overall planning process to produce a "beautiful" event.



COMMUNICATIONS

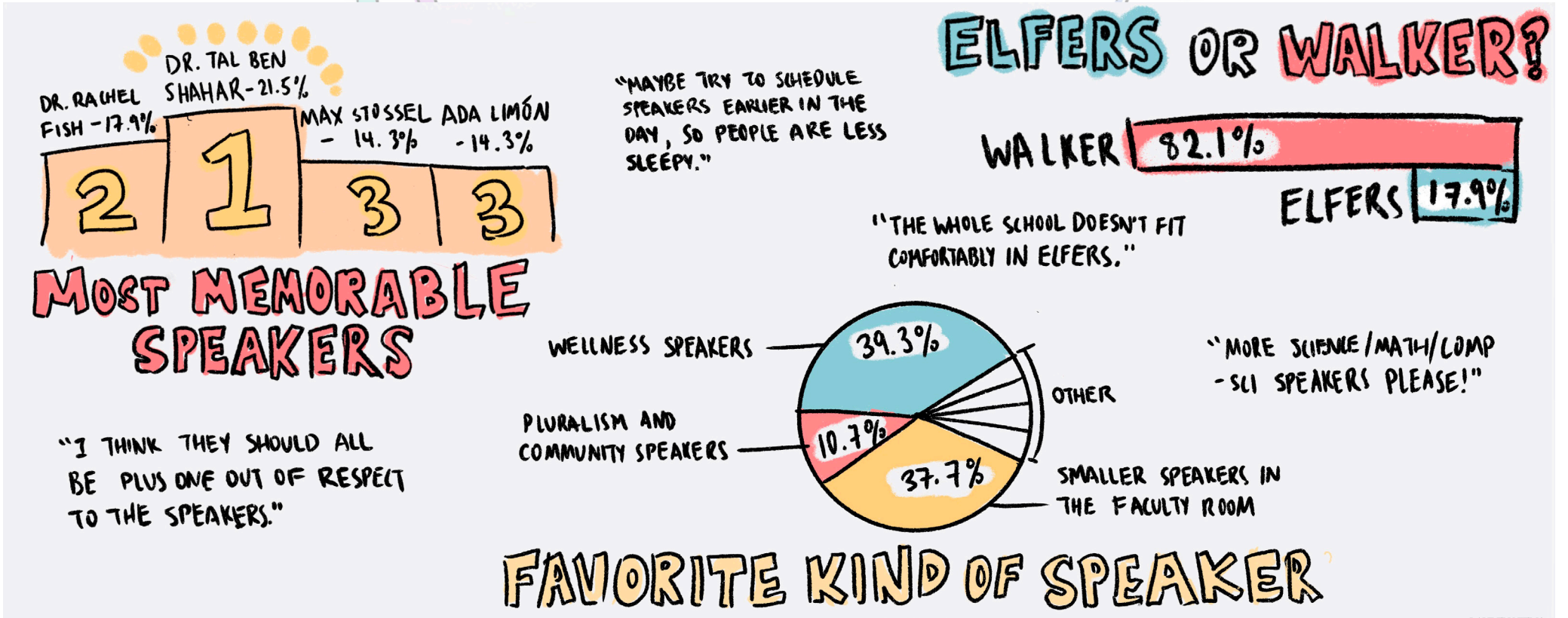


The Upper Mid Revue showcased a variety of games, dances, and singing acts.

Features

Students Review All-School Speakers

This issue, the Features Editors surveyed community members to gather their perspectives on the types of speakers they find most compelling. Staff Writer Jeremy Cao '28 interviewed Scott Meadow '73, a business leader and speaker who has decades of experience in finance and leadership. Charlotte Cudey '26 examined the processes by which the school selects wellness and graduation speakers.



LAUREN NIEM '26

Alum Spotlight: Scott Meadow '73

By JEREMY CAO '28
Staff Writer

As someone who studied literature and history before entering finance, how has that humanities background shaped you?

I think my Hotchkiss humanities background is 100% important, because I have the ability to articulate my perspective based on the training that I received by reading and studying around great classmates and teachers. There are many people who understand accounting, but they do not know how to communicate effectively. My studies in history and literature have helped me understand the communication side of finance.

You've spoken to more than 15,000 students during your teaching career. What have those years in the classroom taught you about what truly holds an audience's attention?

Simple ideas wrapped in a story hold an audience's attention. Generally, simple ideas come alive if they're linked with something emotional.

For example, when I say that a venture capitalist is going to choose how he invests in an entrepreneur's businesses, why is that the case? It's the venture capital gold rule. At which point people expect a particular thing that they happen to have in the back of their mind, therefore, they feel as though they understand. Then what I say is, No, he who has the gold, makes the rules. So it's the surprise that makes the concept hit them squarely in the nose.

When you speak to students about entrepreneurship, what is the first misconception you try to dismantle—and why do you think it persists?

I don't think people really understand how hard it is to be an entrepreneur. They think because they have an idea, and it's their idea, that they in turn can execute it.

But what you need is to understand if you're going into drug discovery, then you better understand biotechnology. You need to work in an environment that's cash constraints. Because if you are an entrepreneur, you're not going to have the same money as an entrepreneur that you might

have if you were working for a big company like Amazon.

So I'm a big proponent of encouraging my students to apprentice for an experienced entrepreneur or an experienced investor before they try to do anything on their own.

How have your past experiences in entrepreneurship informed your present endeavors?

If we're starting a new business that's never existed before, how are you going to understand the amount of money that business is going to make and what are the risks associated with that business? I developed a technique in my courses where I break down pre-proofs of concepts. Pre-proof of concept is concepts that have never existed before. They have certain basic hypotheses about what that business is likely to look like. And if you go back and you look at the economy and businesses that have existed, even though they're not related to the one we're starting, they might inform us about a certain aspect of that business.

By studying the past, we can understand the future. For example, if we want to understand the economics of a business like Staples, and Staples does not exist, we might want to go back and study a business like Home Depot that is an analog. Then what we want to do is bring the business up into its component parts and then study those component parts relative to things in the economy right now.

If we're working on a particular AI problem, and we are thinking about

the amount of time we take to code for that solution, maybe we study the coding for another solution that may not be AI-oriented, and it's been made simple.

Looking back to your time as a student at Hotchkiss, what do you wish you had understood earlier?

The best thing I did not take advantage of was the collaborative spirit we are surrounded by. I gained a tremendous experience out of high school that changed my life in a million different ways. But my ability to link my ideas with other people's ideas, to get a better solution, is a very important life skill that I wish I had sharpened.

What advice would you give Hotchkiss students who may not see themselves as "natural speakers," but want to learn how to communicate persuasively?

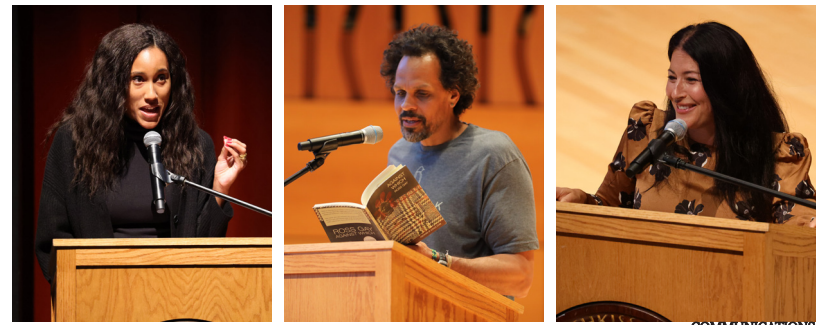
Do anything. You want to be a good hockey player, you have to practice. You want to be a great diver, you have to dive. You want to be great in a math course, you have to understand the underlying concepts and apply them over and over.

You have to fight through shyness and use the resources that you have, whether it's your teachers, friends, parents, or brothers and sisters.

I tell my students that the most important thing they can learn is to be able to communicate very complex information orally in 12 minutes. And they can do that by practicing and putting their mind to the task.



JOSH STUNKEL



COMMUNICATIONS

Who Chooses Our Speakers?

By CHARLOTTE CUDEY '26

Each year, visiting speakers bring new ideas and perspectives to campus. Many of the selected speakers are recommended by peer schools or have spoken at conventions or summits attended by faculty members. Adults in the community consider speaking samples and review speakers' writing. Student leaders also assist in the processes.

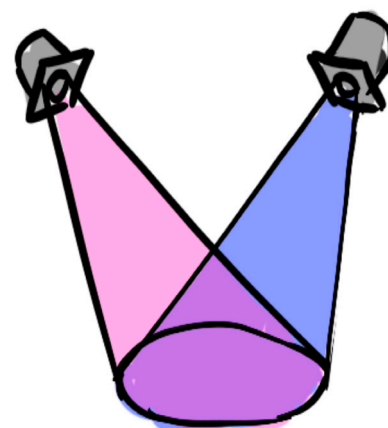
Several speakers are invited each year to speak to students about health and well-being. Members of the Wellness Council—composed of Ms. Carrie Smith, director of student wellness, Mr. Andrew D'Ambrosio, dean of student life, and Ms. Jodi von Jess, director of counseling—meet with speakers multiple times before they come to campus. Students on the Wellness Committee are also included in conversations, allowing the speaker to gain a wider perspective on how the community could best learn from and engage with their presentation. Ms. Smith said, "Every time we hire a speaker, we talk about what we have heard in their materials that aligns with what we are trying to accomplish. We talk to them about what our community looks like, as well as what we think students would benefit from hearing. We also consider what topics students have heard a lot about recently to



LAUREN NIEM '26

avoid redundancy." The Council of Pluralism and Community—led by co-directors Mr. Pierre Yoo and Ms. Ashley Aluko—also brings speakers regularly, vetting them through a similar process.

The Alumni and Development Office and the Head of School's office is currently working to select a graduation speaker for this year's ceremony. Mrs. Elizabeth Brown, chief of staff to the head of school, said, "While the speaker doesn't necessarily have to be an alum, it is very helpful to have one, because they understand the trials, tribulations, successes, and quirky moments that happen here." Members of the Class of 2026 and their dean, Mr. Mario Williams, will also be included in conversations about the proposed speakers. Mrs. Brown said, "While professional accolades are very important, the speaker also needs to be a fluid public speaker as well as able to connect with a diverse audience that includes students, graduates, and families."



LAUREN NIEM '26

Opinion



RENAN BRAZ

A New Hope for Venezuela Without Maduro

Sofia Buck Tarazona '27

On the day following Maduro's removal by the United States, glimpses of hope crept into the streets of Venezuela after decades of terror. Celebrations sprang up across the country. The people could finally breathe.

This event has not only reshaped the futures of millions of Venezuelans but also triggered international controversy.

After arriving in New York, Maduro pleaded not guilty to narco-terrorism conspiracy accusations; he claims he is a "prisoner of war," not a criminal. Maduro has allegedly been involved with narcotrafficking and the Cartel de los Soles.

My best friend said to me, "Maduro is gone." Her simple words carried years of terror and despair. Now, Venezuelans can finally rest for a moment.

Beyond narcotics allegations, Maduro and his predecessor, Hugo Chavez, are largely responsible for the suffering of the Venezuelan economy: the most severe economic decline seen in history. Venezuela has the largest known oil reserve in the world, and under Maduro, its production steeply declined due to mismanagement and corruption. His disastrous economic policies and sanctions led the government-owned corporation to \$100 billion of debt. His kleptocratic dictatorship caused eight million Venezuelans to flee the country.

Consider the story of one of my best friends—someone just like any of us, with hopes, dreams, and aspirations. She was born in Venezuela and lived there until she was seven. Because of Maduro's regime, she and her mother were forced to flee, leaving the entire rest of their family behind.

Her experience is one of many, and her profound relief at Maduro's removal is shared throughout the Nation. The glimpse of hope his capture has given to Venezuelans is the one thing they can grasp during this period of turbulent uncertainty.

She said to me, "Maduro is gone." Her simple words carried years of terror and despair. The story of Venezuela has long been laden with poverty, food shortages, hyperinflation, hunger, and fear; now, with this single decisive event, Venezuelans can rest for a moment.

In the immediate aftermath of Maduro's capture, feelings exploded. Crowds on the street cheered the fall of his regime, and people overseas saw a chance to reunite with their families after years of separation.

However, fears surrounding the United States' motives in removing Maduro quickly surfaced. The instability of Venezuela's future raises doubts about whether the initial hope is truly warranted.

To fully understand the brewing controversy, it's important to note the methods taken by the United States to remove Maduro, and the reasons behind them.

The U.S. government has been questioned on whether it has authority to use military force in Venezuela without international approval. Concerns are growing that this alleged violation of sovereignty

may set a dangerous precedent for forceful interventions in global affairs without repercussion. But in this case—knowing the damage of Maduro's regime and the number of political protestors he has imprisoned and killed—shouldn't it be seen as necessary?

Are President Trump's actions truly for the greater good of Venezuela, or is he moving one of his pawns to achieve his self-interested goals?

Although Venezuelans are optimistic that things are changing for the better, hope is mixed with worry about what the future will bring.

A major worry is the future administration of Venezuela's oil reserves. President Trump stated in a press conference that the U.S. will "run the country" and take control of the oil. Maduro's capture could be a strategic move to gain leverage over the U.S.'s international opponents like China and Russia, who have both had significant economic links to Maduro's regime.

This raises a crucial question: are Trump's actions truly for the greater good of Venezuela, or is he moving one of his pawns to achieve his self-interested goals?

Whether or not President Trump acted out of self-interest, his actions have resulted in the long-awaited dawning of a new era, offering Venezuelans across the world a chance to reclaim and rebuild their nation.

Should We Leave the Socratic Method in Ancient Greece?

From Cover

matter the source, these questions all serve the same purpose: to uncover greater contributions and deeper thinking.

According to Mr. Sam Somera, instructor in history and philosophy, the Socratic Method is "a great way to investigate the logic and reasoning behind your beliefs." However, he notes that one disadvantage of this method is that it fosters occasions where interlocutors can attack beliefs but mask those attacks as questions. This is often known as playing "devil's advocate." While good questions boost students' understanding and enable them to, according to Mr. Somera, "arrive at some foundational truths along the way," playing devil's advocate often turns the experience of learning into a passive aggressive debate.

Personally, I find the Socratic Method interesting and enriching, but it becomes problematic if this is the only teaching technique used.

I'm an introvert (verified by the MBTI personality quiz, if you wonder), so during discussions, I find sharing my ideas challenging. Most classes have over fifteen students, and the teacher cannot question each of us individually, so sometimes I don't get an opportunity to talk class (especially if it's one where there are two or three people who dominate the conversation). Without external support, it's very difficult for students like me to step out of their comfort zone and this cycle compounds.

Excessive questioning can actually hinder the process of learning. Imagine you're starting a brand new unit. As you learn more, questions build up in your head, and you raise your hand to ask them. The answer you get, though, is another question. Without a solid answer, the way forward is murky. Without a strong foundation, we

will struggle when we face more conceptually challenging material.

Some say that the opposite of this method—lecture-based learning—is boring and uncreative. And I agree: lecture-based learning is not what we're here for. A course full of lectures would be dull and limit students' abilities to communicate and reflect. Hence, we should incorporate the Socratic Method, alongside other approaches. For example, when we start a new unit, we could begin with lecture-based learning for the first few lessons. Those lectures are crucial for introducing foundational concepts, and aren't affected by the number of students.

I'm an introvert, so I find sharing my ideas challenging. Without external support, it's difficult for students like me to engage during class.

As basic knowledge grows, the curriculum can shift towards the Socratic Method, stimulating application of what has been learned so far. Teachers can also apply other techniques, such as experiential learning, project-based learning, and inquiry-based learning. These provide a variety of learning experiences that can bolster overall learning quality.

Well, what can we do now? I find asking specific questions pretty helpful during classes. Try to ask for detailed explanations, too. "Can you define [concept] and give an example?" usually leads to the answer you desire. Even if we can't change the current learning program, I am confident we still have the ability to adapt and grow, little by little.



LEON LI '26

Forget Swimming Like A Duck: Don't Be Afraid to Show the Struggle

Penelope Thornton '27

Ducks glide across a pond, calm and graceful, while paddling like crazy underneath. That's the idea behind the idiom "swim like a duck." Work hard, but make it look easy.

I get why some people want to do that. Making life look easy can feel safer, because struggling is often seen as a sign of failure. I've heard that message my whole life, and honestly, I hate it.

Why are we all supposed to pretend things come easily? Why is struggle something we're meant to hide?

I don't find perfection relatable. I find effort relatable. That's why dramatic movies hit so hard. When

we watch a character go through a breakup, we're not watching because their pain is entertaining; we're watching because, in some way, it mirrors our own lives. There's comfort in seeing that someone else has struggled too. It reminds us we're not alone.

Take the movie *Whiplash*, for example. It's about a drummer pushing himself to become great. While most of us don't want to be jazz drummers (as lit as that is), we do know what it feels like to chase something that demands everything from you.

The movie wouldn't work if he made it look easy. We wouldn't connect if he looked perfect. We connect because the effort shows—the long hours, the mistakes, the pressure, and the doubt. We don't

relate to him because he's suffering. We relate because he's trying, and we can see it.

That's why the idiom "swim like a duck" bothers me so much. It teaches us that we should make things look effortless, that no one should see how hard we're working. To me, that sounds a lot like, "No one can know I'm trying." But I am trying. Almost all of us are.

When we pretend we're gliding only effortlessly, we end up feeling isolated in our struggles. Everyone else looks fine, so we assume we're the only ones barely staying afloat. The idiom doesn't make life easier, it just puts a filter over it.

What if we stopped being ducks? What if we showed the paddling? If we were honest about how hard things are, we could share real

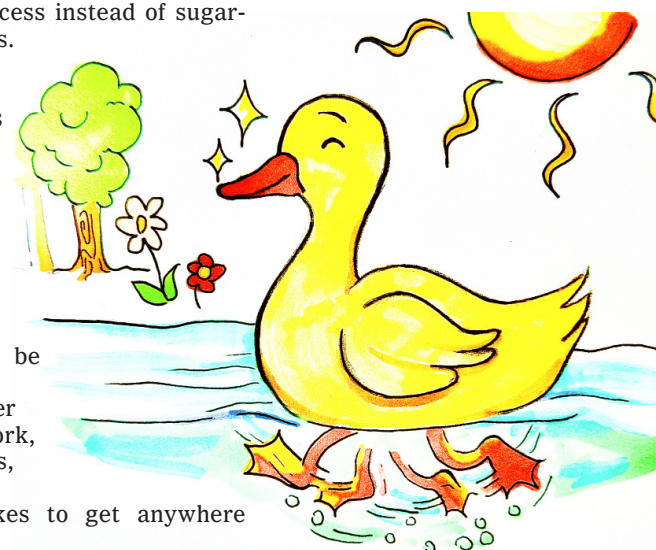
paths to success instead of sugar-coated myths.

We could learn from each other's setbacks, not just highlight reels.

So, no, I don't want to swim like a duck. I'd rather be human.

I'd rather show the work, the mess, and the effort it takes to get anywhere worth going.

Let's stop pretending it's easy.



ALICIA FENG '28

EDITORIAL

Why Apply?

As applications for the CXXVIII board open up, Editor-in-Chief Katharine Ellis takes a walk down memory lane and reflects on how she first got involved with The Record.

The first article I wrote for *The Record* was a series of bios on new PG students during the first week of my Prep year. Nervously stepping into the Faculty Room, I was greeted by energetic editors assigning articles and bouncing around ideas with seasoned writers. Soon enough, a detailed assignment landed in my inbox, followed by several reminders to submit the piece.

After running around campus endlessly searching for older students who had ignored my interview requests, I turned in a rushed draft to the sports editors. What stayed with me most, however, was how quickly connections formed: brief conversations with athletes, online comments from editors, and seeing our collective work displayed across campus that Thursday.

Soon after that first article, I was promoted to staff writer, and Tuesday evenings became reserved for refreshing my inbox as I waited for the next issue's sign-up sheet. I loved every part of working on *The Record*—from conducting engaging interviews with unfamiliar students to watching my writing improve each week through feedback from editors, Mx. Wynn, and Ms. Villano. My appreciation for the publication deepened even further when I was appointed News editor during my Lower Mid year. Although the role was initially challenging, the layout process quickly became a highlight of my weekends, allowing me to combine writing with my interest in visual design and creativity.

Whether you're looking for opportunities to meet new community members and engage more deeply with our school or are attracted by the allure of Adobe InDesign, I encourage you to apply to be a part of *The Record*. Whether writing, editing, drawing graphics, or managing the social media, your contributions will be valuable and not go unnoticed by the Hotchkiss community. No matter your previous experience with the publication, the only necessary qualification is interest and excitement for the work.

Every contribution matters!

Who Should Pay on the First Date?

Sienna Hwang '27

Who pays on the first date? It's a timeless question. Quick disclaimer: this is one girl's opinion, not a manual.

My dad: "The boy pays." (I didn't even finish the question.)

My mom: "50/50." (She has zero credibility. Every one of her exes paid.)

My friends: Two-thirds say "the boy pays," one-third says "split." All of them are extremely confident, despite their very limited data.

So, I turned to my grandpa for wisdom. His answer: "Go with the flow." Revolutionary.

Here's my take: split the first date.

Not for the reasons you're probably thinking, but because it sets up the second date, where we get a shot at confirming whether chivalry is still alive and well.

The key is sending the right signals through your choice of venue. It needs to be nice enough to say "we are not a burger couple" (at least not until the third date), but chill enough to avoid giving off a "I expect Michelin stars at every meal" vibe. Adjusted for my very real 17-year-old budget, a well-reviewed \$50 omakase sushi spot is ideal for a first date (bonus points for a no-tipping policy).

Splitting the bill gives him the confidence to ask you out again and offer to pay next time. The tricky part is making sure he doesn't think 50/50 is now the law of the land. That requires subtle hints before the second date.



LEON LI '26

By the third date, all bets are off. You might get a serial giver (watch out for overachiever energy) or a dedicated splitter. And if you're really lucky, you'll end up with someone who reads the room and picks all the right moments to treat you—preferably with some variety (surprises are much appreciated).

Saying My Winter Goodbyes

Rikako Umezawa '27

The Haneda Airport is where I learn, over and over again, how to say goodbye. Even after the countless times my family has come to send me off since I was thirteen, it never hurts less.

I once believed that distance would train me not to miss home, and that separation would eventually feel ordinary. In some ways, it's true. I now know how to pack, check luggage, and walk through security without looking back too many times. But there are goodbyes the body remembers, even when the mind tries to move on.

Lately, those goodbyes belong to my grandparents, who raised me as their own. Each visit feels shorter than the last, each farewell heavier than the one before. We cry together, aware

that time is not promised.

Coming back to school in 2026 began with tears and a quiet sense of regret for choosing a boarding school an entire hemisphere away from where my heart lives. Winter here feels endless—dark and unforgiving. The sharp pain of the cold air on the cheek becomes a daily reminder of the distance.

Surprisingly, winter also pulls people closer; it holds light inside. Dorm rooms glow. Hallways fill. Friendships grow through shared time indoors.

Coming back to school after winter break is a return shaped by both loss and choice. My family may wish we could stay together forever, but they send me back anyway, hoping that in this unfamiliar cold, I am becoming someone worth missing.



RIKAKO UMEZAWA '27

The Best AI Use Is Targeted And Transparent

Arya Samat '29

In the past few years, it has been almost impossible to talk about school without mentioning AI. You can always hear someone say, "Oh, it helped me finish my essay," or the occasional "Hey, my teachers use it to generate slides." Technology is everywhere—in casual conversations, homework routines (whether people admit it or not), and now in teaching. AI is clearly here to stay, so it's important to look at when it's appropriate to use and when it crosses a line.

AI isn't inherently good or bad. It's a tool, and like any tool, its value comes from how we decide to use it. In a way, it's comparable to a calculator. Mr. Doron Blake, instructor in philosophy and religion, said, "When the goal is simply to accomplish a rote task, then using technological tools

seems appropriate. We have been using calculators for years to do computations and other tasks, when those tasks are already mastered by the student. It saves time and allows the student to focus on the new, more complex elements of the work." In other words, when AI expedites busywork, not thinking, it can be helpful.

We should seek to apply this tool appropriately, because then we can learn with it. If the administration decides to ban AI, it will only lead to students using it secretly and carelessly. It's not going away anytime soon.

I use AI to help me study for my Spanish assessments. I feed it assignments I've done in the past and ask it to give me practice quizzes and tests. That doesn't replace my studying; it helps me study more effectively.

Another positive example comes from my physics teacher. She allows

us to use AI when we need grammar help with our lab reports. If we're not sure how our writing flows, we can ask ChatGPT for feedback—but not to write anything for us. This makes sense in STEM courses, where the goal is understanding the science content. This kind of usage helps students learn because it's targeted and transparent.

On one hand, ChatGPT helps us study more effectively; but on the other, AI use impersonalizes the experience of learning.

On the topic of transparency, another important discussion has been around teachers' use of AI. According to students, there have been increasing cases of teachers using AI, for purposes ranging from creating class materials to grading students' work.

To see the teacher's perspective: stress from teaching multiple

classes is compounded by leading a co-curricular and other additional responsibilities. Maybe they think that by using AI in elements of their teaching and grading or by directing students to use it for feedback, they can better direct their limited time to helping students in other ways.

But from a different point of view, many students may feel dissatisfied. This AI use impersonalizes and dehumanizes the learning experience. Questions are raised, such as, "What's the point of paying such an expensive tuition just to be taught by AI?" If students wanted AI to review their work, they wouldn't need to come to such a prestigious school. The teachers here have years of experience and knowledge in their subjects. Understandably, students may feel disappointed at receiving comments from AI.

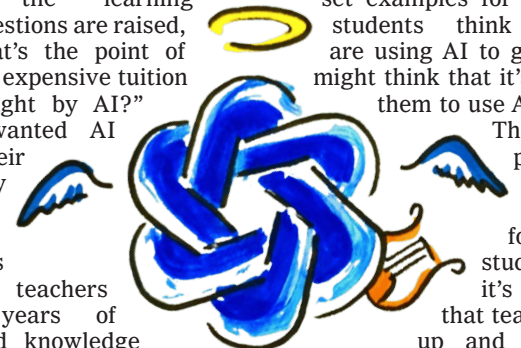
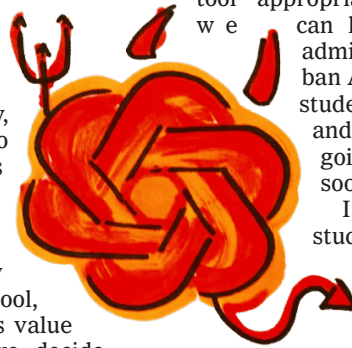
The lack of transparency in teachers' use of AI has led to rumors and misconceptions. Students joke

about teachers using AI to grade their essays, because everyone in the class got the same result. While these accusations may not be true, because many faculty aren't transparent about what they use AI for and when, it's easy for rumors to spread.

When we think of teachers, we think of people we look up to—who we rely on and learn from. They set examples for us, and if students think teachers are using AI to grade, they might think that it's "fair" for them to use AI to write.

This thought process may not hold true for every student, but it's crucial that teachers step up and are clear about their use of AI to their students.

AI should not do the work that is essential and irreplaceable to students' learning. The challenge is determining its balance as a tool.



GRAPHICS BY LEON LI '26

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Arts



LEON LI '26

Pro vs. Con: Art Salons

By BELLA CHEN '29

By ARYA SAMAT '29
Staff Writer

As a Prep taking Studio Art, I was surprised when I had my first Art Salon—both by the experience of sharing my work with others and the insight that viewing my peers' work offered me.

The experience allowed me to develop the critical skill of presenting in front of others and gave me the opportunity to explore my own creative process with more awareness. The excitement as we looked through everyone's projects was a welcome change of mood and breath of fresh air from the week of stressful sit-down exams.

One of the biggest strengths of these salons is how effectively they showcase student work. Students are not simply turning in a piece of art to their teacher; instead, they are explaining their methodology to their peers. Because students from different art disciplines share their work, it helps others to find connections between and learn about different styles, mediums, and periods of art.

As they understand more about other art forms, students gain the ability to ask insightful questions and experience critiquing and presenting work. In doing so, they gain a better understanding of the creative process.

In addition, the nature of these salons forces students to practice presenting and performing—invaluable life skills.

This year, Preps had a total of five sit-down exams, culminating in 10 hours of tests. The Salons were a welcome relief from a stressful environment, and despite the Salons being graded as midterm exams, the atmosphere was lighthearted.

Although I understand the appeal behind hosting salon for Preps and Lower Mids, I believe that it is not the best way to do final exams in the arts. I completed my first salon this Midterms season, and while the event lasted a total of two hours, only 20 minutes were allocated toward the actual graded final for any given student.

Due to the length of the Salon, it was easy for students to zone out and pay less attention as time went on, leading to less constructive criticism while others were presenting their work, and fewer comments on areas where the person performing can improve. Rather than an arts showcase, it felt like one last obligation standing between us and winter break.

In general, salons focus on the wrong things. Arts students are usually not expecting to be graded on their presentation skills, as they mostly focus on the quality of the presented work itself.

Before my salon, many classes only had a few lessons to work on the actual presentation, and being graded on that aspect instead of solely on the work itself was nerve-racking for students who had rarely presented their work in front of many people.

Many students who are first-time music students or beginner artists have never presented their work publicly before. Seeing much more advanced artists present might make them feel inferior and nervous. Mistakes in a presentation can often come from stage fright in the moment, which is hard to combat and unfairly affects students' grades.

Album Review: "What Now" by Sylvan Esso

By JAHLANI JACKSON '27

What Now, released on April 28, 2017, is the second studio album by Sylvan Esso, a techno-pop duo based in Durham, North Carolina.

Sylvan Esso features Amelia Meath as the vocalist and her husband Nick Sanborn as the instrumentalist and producer. *What Now* explores themes of adolescent freedom, self-exploration, and personal reflection. Across the work, lyrics are expressive, with many references to dance, feelings of euphoria, and freedom.

Setting a slow pace, the album's first song, "Sound," lacks lyrics and is largely ambient noise for the first minute. Following this introduction, the repeated line "all you'll be is sound" makes up a majority of the track's vocals. This verse introduces the theme of reflection that is present throughout the album.

Each song in the album, when broken down to its core, depicts some aspect of human sensation, whether it be in emotion, touch, or hearing. Instrumental elements are vital in developing these motifs. The combination of humming electrical static and synesthetic lyrical elements characterizing "Sound" spills into each following song.

The second song, "The Glow," with a quick, punchy beat, depicts teen exploration as innocent and reckless. It is composed of short stanzas, each describing some fragmented memory—whether it be an old school mate or the feeling of being "after school and slightly stoned." These stanzas are then concluded by the

line, "I remember the glow." While this song leans into twee pop, it feels intentional and sophisticated. Playful and experimental lyrics, with "the glow" as a recurring motif, highlight the unique freedom present in the moments after childhood and before adulthood.

"Die Young," the album's third track, is Sylvan Esso's second most popular song, only topped by

apart from "Just Dancing," and "Signal." "Song," the sixth track, is about the understanding of love Meath developed as a child and how it changed with age. Meath sings all she knew about love "was in a page in a board room full of grown ups." As she grows, this foreign idea of love becomes more personal, she writes, "even though it isn't real/ it's living on the tip of my tongue."

The album's pace slows with its conclusion, returning to that of its opening song, "Sound." The ninth song, "Slack jaw," unlike any other track, is primarily lyrical. Its instrumental elements are subordinate to Meath's vocalization. With this, the song's tone is a pensive melancholy. The lines, "Sometimes I'm above water/ But mostly I'm at sea/ Oh, slack jaw me...And I'm walkin' the dog back" conclude this song. These two sections of verse connect to an idea of struggle and loss.

"Rewind" closes the album with a reflective return to the themes of youth and reinvention. This is emphasized not only by the instrumental progression but by Meath's lyrics describing childhood memories like watching TV.

Overall, the album is a complex yet playful representation of growth, exploration, and self-expression. Meath is unique in her ability to use traditional twee pop to develop a multifaceted commentary on her childhood and the collective teenage experience.

Sylvan Esso's unique techno-synth identity gives *What Now* a sound of its own.

PHOTO BY SYLVAN ESSO



"Coffee" from their first album. Lyrically, the song is about Meath's struggles between ending her life and living for another, as she sings, "I was gonna die young." The person Meath sings about is intentionally left vague and is rumored to have dissuaded Meath from ending her life. While the premise of this track is complex, it is backed by synth, replicating a strong electrical guitar and drum instrumental section.

Compared to the first songs, the final five feel more experimental—

SNABE	VIEWER	COOKED	LOCK IN
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Hotchkiss Connections

By EMMA LIU '26 and JEREMY FANG '28
Arts Editors

Scan the QR Code for answers to the Connections.

Email recordarts@hotchkiss.org if you would like to help create games for *The Record* or if you have any thoughts on our articles. Letters to the Editors are always welcome.

Cultural Spotlight: The Beauty of Korean Hanboks

By EVELYN LIU '29
Staff Writer

In the faded photograph on the refrigerator door, my *Doljabi* is frozen in time, the bright colors of my *hanbok* standing out against the wooden floor, a golf ball, a stack of money, a bowl of rice, and other objects arranged around me. My first time wearing a *hanbok* was during my *Doljanchi*, the Korean first birthday ceremony that celebrates a child's survival through infancy and invites blessing for a long, successful life. The entire family gathers in celebration, feasting on traditional foods like *miyeok-guk* (seaweed soup) and *tteok* (rice cakes). The highlight of the *Doljanchi* is the *Doljabi*, where the baby picks from an assortment of items to predict their future profession or fortune; I chose a stethoscope, the symbol of a future medical career. As the years went by, my *hanbok* has stayed tucked away in the back of my closet, but even just through the photographs, I can feel my family's joy, pride, and connection to my culture.

Hanboks are traditional Korean clothing; "han" literally translates to "Korean" and "bok" to "clothes" or "attire." Their origins go back to the Three Kingdoms period, and the style we recognize today developed during the Joseon Dynasty. With their loose and flowing style, which pairs a short jacket with a long skirt or wide pants, *hanboks* allow for comfort and freedom of movement. In the past, people of all ages and social classes wore them everyday, with fabrics, colors, and

patterns that often reflected social rank, age, and special occasions. Bright colors were worn for celebrations, while muted tones were used for daily life or by elders. Embroidery and decorations added layers of meaning to *hanboks*. Peonies and cranes signified wealth, happiness, or long life, while tigers and phoenixes symbolized courage and protection. For royals, *hanboks* were often decorated with dragons and gold or silver emblems, to show their status and authority. Family crests displayed a person's lineage, and smaller designs of animals or plants were added to bring good luck, safety, and other virtues. They represent identity, tradition, and the values people have passed down over time.

The next time I'd wear a *hanbok* would be during my first visit to South Korea eleven years after my *Doljabi*.

My mother took me to Gyeongbokgung Palace, a cultural landmark that was the largest and primary royal palace of the Joseon Dynasty in Seoul. To completely immerse myself in the palace's culture, I chose to wear a *hanbok* during my visit. Having grown up seeing the palace and its beautiful *hanboks* in countless K-dramas with my grandmother and sister, wearing one myself while exploring the Gyeongbokgung courtyards felt especially memorable; it was as if I were experiencing the Joseon era firsthand!

While I felt a little out of place, being one of the only non-Korean speakers there, my experience at the palace made me feel more connected to my Korean side. Wearing my *hanbok*, I felt proud to carry my culture and finally understand how it keeps tradition alive.



PHOTO FROM EVELYN LIU '29, GRAPHIC BY LAUREN NIEM '26

Evelyn celebrating her *Doljanchi* celebration while wearing her first *hanbok*.

AOI: Mark Zhu

From Cover

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

I've been a part of the Right Brain Logic jazz ensemble during all of my four years here. I love collaborating with other musicians and learning how to improvise. Studying with Mr. Tokarz, Mr. Jensen, and Mr. Musillami has helped deepen my understanding of jazz.

On the classical side, the program has offered incredible opportunities, including instrumental recitals and performing at Carnegie Hall. These experiences pushed me to refine my technique and build confidence as a performer.

What challenges have you overcome as a musician?

When I first started doing jazz music, improvising felt daunting and impossible. I felt stressed before every single rehearsal, because when the conductor pointed to me to improvise, I was put on the spot. Nothing came out when I first started. I listened to a lot of jazz music, paid attention to how the greats played and phrased their tones, and practiced a lot of licks.



COMMUNICATIONS

Now, improvising comes more naturally to me.

In performance, I would say that 50% of what I play is the stuff I've practiced, like the runs that I've memorized, and the other 50% is completely imagined on the spot. There are tricks that you learn that can apply to all scenarios, but there's definitely a free aspect to improvisation, where you pull something out that's completely new.

Do you plan to pursue music in college?

I plan on joining the MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble or the MIT Wind Ensemble. I might also minor in classical music.

Sports

Hockey Secures 1st Title at Flood-Marr Since 2007

By STELLA LIAO '27
Staff Writer

From December 19-21, Boys Varsity Hockey competed in the Flood-Marr Tournament, ultimately defeating Deerfield Academy 4-1 in the championship game on Sunday, December 21. The victory marked the school's first Flood-Marr title since 2007.

The team had an on-and-off start of the season, due to breaks and exams. The team entered the tournament with a focus on preparation and execution. Head Coach Mike Doyle said, "We tried not to focus on outcomes. We really focused on the process, paying attention to details, and accomplishing our goals within each game."

Last year, the school went winless at Flood-Marr. Evan Williams '27 said, "Based on the talent we have this year, we expected to have some wins."

The tournament included eight teams competing in two divisions. Hotchkiss competed in a division with Milton, Kimball Union, and Westminster. The other division included Salisbury, Andover Academy, Noble and Greenough, and Deerfield.

The Bearcats opened the tournament Friday morning with a 3-2 loss to Milton. Despite strong play throughout the game, Milton scored a goal with two minutes remaining in the game. Doyle said, "While the result was disappointing, the team's performance was encouraging. I still felt confident in the group. We were playing good hockey and creating opportunities."

Later that evening, Hotchkiss faced Kimball Union, which entered the matchup undefeated and ranked first among New England boarding schools. Hotchkiss took a 1-0 lead and held it late into the third period before Kimball Union pulled its goalie and tied the game with 30 seconds remaining. The

game went into overtime, when Ryan Murray '27 scored a goal to give Hotchkiss the win. Williams said, "The victory was an important turning point; that was when we realized we could really do this."

On Saturday, the Bearcats played Westminster in a final round-robin game. The team delivered its strongest performance of the tournament, earning a 4-0 shutout. Doyle said, "This was one of the team's best games of the season." With two wins in the round robin, Hotchkiss advanced to the championship game.

In the final on Sunday, the team faced Deerfield, the winner of the other division. Hotchkiss scored two goals early in the game. Matthew Wallace '26 opened the scoring on a breakaway, and Williams followed with a goal off a rebound to make it 2-0. Later in the first period, Deerfield scored, to lead the game 2-1. The score remained unchanged until the third period, when Murray scored, giving Hotchkiss a 3-1 lead.

Midway through the third period, Hotchkiss had a five-minute major penalty, forcing the team to spend time defending its lead. With several minutes remaining, Deerfield pulled its goalie, and Williams scored into the empty net to seal the 4-1 victory.

Williams said, "Going from 0-4 last year to winning the tournament this year was huge for us. It gave us confidence going into the rest of the season." Coach Doyle said, "The win showed that we can compete with anybody in New England."

The team's focus now shifts to sustaining that level of play. Doyle said, "Winning the tournament is about having three good days; now we need to be good for eight weeks."

Following the Flood-Marr Tournament, Hotchkiss won games against Millbrook and St. Paul's. The team will face Exeter at Eaglebrook on January 24.



MIKE DOYLE

The team upset the top team in New England, Kimball Union, in overtime 2-1.



TRAV APPLE '28

Ferraro is captain of Girls Varsity Hockey and co-captain of Girls Varsity Soccer and Girls Varsity Lacrosse.

AOI: Nikki Ferraro '26

By CAMILLE CHOO '28
Staff Writer

Nikki Ferraro '26 is a four-year Senior from New Canaan, Connecticut. She is captain of and goalie for Girls Varsity Hockey and co-captain of Girls Varsity Soccer and Girls Varsity Lacrosse. Next year, she will play lacrosse at Hobart and William Smith Colleges.

Girls Varsity Hockey Head Coach Craig Naclerio said, "Nikki is an effective leader on the team both on and off the ice because she's determined, she makes sacrifices for the betterment of the team, and she brings a lot of energy every day to make sure everyone is having fun but also is held accountable."

Teammate Annabelle Wang '28 said, "Nikki brings a lot of positive energy to this team; she always hypes us up before games and practices. As a captain, she constantly supports and encourages us to be there for each other, which builds strong team culture."

How did you start playing hockey?

I have three siblings—two brothers and an older sister. There is this thing called the Winter Club—it's like an outdoor rink. We had a membership and learned to skate there.

I learned to skate when I was six and then I just got straight into it. My two brothers got into hockey. I would always watch them skate, and I said, "Dad, I want to try that."

What do you enjoy most about hockey?

It made me the person I am today, because there is so much of yourself you have to dedicate to it—like the

time I would spend driving more than three hours for a game. I enjoy the adrenaline I feel in the game or being able to make pressure seem like a privilege instead of something scary. I think that's translated into my life off the ice, too.

Why did you decide to come to Hotchkiss?

A bunch of coaches approached my dad during games when I was in 7th or 8th grade. They said they were interested in me and asked him if I had ever thought about boarding schools. I started exploring different options and talking to coaches, like a college process. I ended up here, because I liked the campus and also because the school had good lacrosse.

How would you describe your experience playing hockey here?

I don't think it was what I expected from my boarding school hockey experience. The coach that recruited me left, so I didn't have her. Coach Fralick coached me for three years, and now I have a different coach. I wouldn't say rocky, because it wasn't negative.

I think the team grew closer, because we had to figure out how to make our own identity; I wasn't coming into a program that was already set in stone. We got to write our own story.

What lessons has the school taught you as a student athlete?

I have learned to put things in perspective. Perspective is everything. One small bump is not necessarily a bad thing. You need to step back and realize that

everything happens for a reason. It will make you a better person—that's what I always say to the team. What is the point of it if everything is easy?

Do you have any pre-game rituals?

I have to drink an energy drink every game, but I don't drink all of it at first, just half. I'll drink the rest during the second and third period. At half dress, I put my head down for two minutes and visualize to get myself psyched.

Then I go back to the locker room and shut the lights off and play "Dreams and Nightmares." On the ice before the game, I do three jumps, then go to the net and spray my face with water.

What was one of your favorite moments with the team?

We had a harder game last year against Lawrenceville and no one did well. I was frustrated. Then the next game we were playing a crazy good team. I went out there, and I had the craziest game ever. I made 70 shots. We lost 3-0, but I was really proud of myself.

What advice would you give to athletes going through the college recruitment process?

Trust the process, and don't be hard on yourself, because it is really tough.

Hockey is one of the hardest sports to get recruited for, but don't stress yourself out. No matter who is watching, don't worry about it. Just play the game how you always do; don't change anything. There is a place for everyone, and you will end up in the right place.

Winter Season Recent Results

Boys Varsity Hockey vs. Loomis: 3-3

Girls JV Hockey vs. Canterbury: 10-4

Girls Varsity Basketball vs. GFA: 32-73

Boys JV Squash vs. Eaglebrook: 6-1

Boys Varsity Swim & Dive vs. Avon: 94-61

Boys JV Hockey vs. Berkshire: 1-4

Boys Varsity Basketball vs. KO: 72-69

Girls JV Basketball vs. IMS: 32-8

Girls Varsity Squash vs. Kent: 6-1

Girls Varsity Swim & Dive vs. Miss Porters: 76-97

Girls Varsity Hockey vs. Loomis: 0-5

Boys JV Basketball vs. Salisbury: 35-45

Boys Varsity Squash vs. RCDS: 6-1

Girls JV Squash vs. IMS: 5-2

Varsity Wrestling vs. Choate, Exeter, Lawrenceville: Loss

Ford Tennis Court Restoration is Underway

By LUKE ROMAN '29

Following the opening of the new Bissell Dining Commons in December, the temporary Ford Food Court is being converted back to the Ford Indoor Tennis Court, with construction expected to conclude before the start of the spring tennis season.

Director of Facilities Michael Virzi said, "We started doing work on December 11. Construction inside the building is moving along nicely and will be fairly straightforward."

The main challenges occurred earlier in the project and included working on frozen soil and securing an Inland Wetland Zoning approval, which was obtained in November.

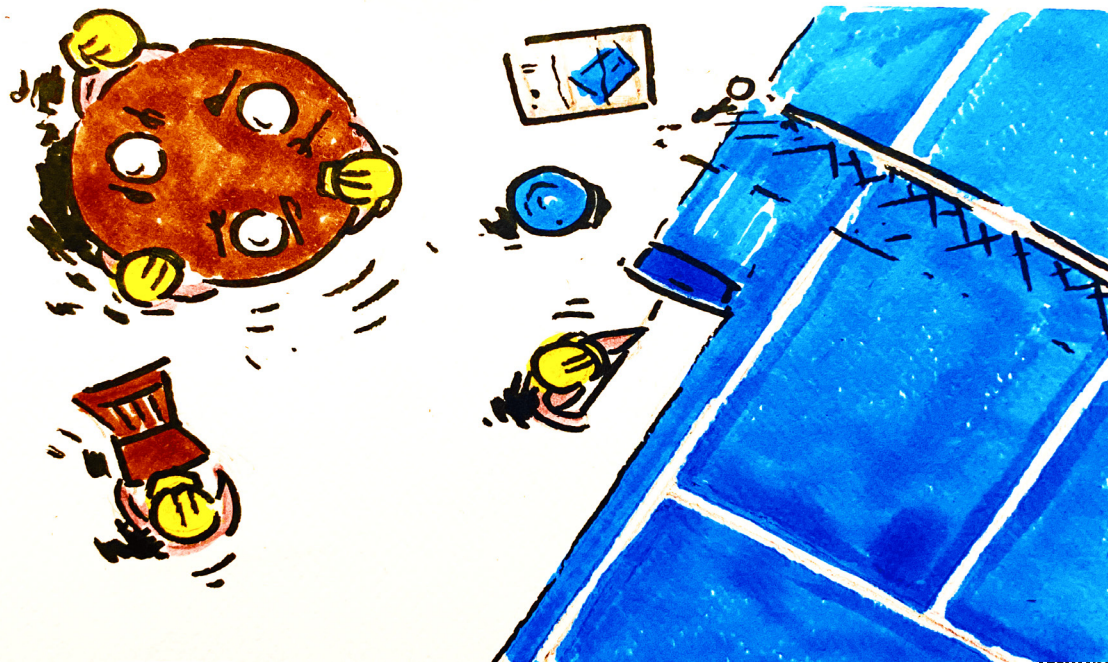
The return of the courts will significantly benefit the school's tennis program, which has been practicing

off-campus at the Silo Ridge Club in Amenia, New York.

The restored courts will make scheduling practices and matches far more manageable. Athletic Director Dempsey Quinn said, "It gives the team the opportunity to still hold practice or matches during the spring if it rains."

The Ford Indoor Tennis Court will reopen this spring.

The restored Ford Indoor Tennis Court is set to reestablish a key on campus resource for the tennis program and for all members of the community who enjoy the game.



The indoor courts will allow the tennis team to hold practice or matches during inclement weather.



Levy '24 was captain of the team his Senior year, leading it to a 13-1 record and a second place finish in New England.

Alum Spotlight: Eli Levy '24

By TAYLOR PANG '27

Staff Writer

Levy is a three-year graduate from the class of 2024. He played Boys Varsity Squash and was manager of Boys Varsity Lacrosse. He was captain of the squash team during his Senior year. He currently plays squash at the United States Naval Academy.

Luke Velasco '27 said, "I couldn't have asked for a better captain to look up to during my Prep year than Eli. He looked out for me and the other younger guys. He was also one of the funniest guys on the team, and everybody just loved being around him."

What was your squash journey like before Hotchkiss?

My dad coached at Williams College, so I grew up watching his team play, and over time, I started getting coached by him. As I got older, I was able to practice with the women's team and later the men's team.

At a young age, I got really good exposure playing with older people with different skill levels.

Why did you choose Hotchkiss?

Hotchkiss was the only school I applied to. As a freshman, I did a tour and immediately fell in love with it. I knew it was a place I wanted to be. I applied as a repeat sophomore.

I loved the squash team, and I loved the coach, Bobby Burns. It seemed like a place where I could grow as a person, athlete, and student.

How would you describe your experience on the Hotchkiss team?

My three years on the team were great. I made lifelong friends. We went into every practice and every season with a positive mindset, with a goal to finish as high as possible in the country. It was my first time being on an actual squash team, which was the best. What was really special about Hotchkiss is that the boys' and girls' teams interacted. Not only did I make friends on the boys' team, but also on the girls' team. We had a lot of great chemistry, and I wouldn't trade it for the world.

What was your experience like as a captain?

Being a captain was my first leadership experience at Hotchkiss. At first, I was really nervous, because I was the only Senior, but I shared captaincy with one of the Upper Mids, Oscar Okonkwo '25. We ended up working well, because we were really good friends. The team made being captain easy, because everybody was so motivated and wanted to finish at a historic high. We had very few problems and worked really hard every day.

What was your college recruitment process like, and why did you choose Navy?

The college process starts in Upper Mid year. Being a coach's son, I got to experience all of these teams coming to Williams. Sometimes, I had the

opportunity to travel to other colleges throughout the country. The Naval Academy stuck out to me the most. Around my 8th grade year, one of my dad's players gave me a tour of Navy's campus. It immediately caught my attention how great an opportunity the Navy Academy would be. The team dynamic was special. It was a brotherhood. I knew it was something I wanted to be a part of.

What is it like playing for Navy?

My experience has been positive all around. The squash team is a brotherhood of people from all around the United States with a shared goal of serving our country at the highest capacity. Our team is a bunch of hard-working individuals who put out every single day and give their all every practice and every match. We support each other through ups and downs. I wouldn't trade it for the world.

What are your goals for college and beyond?

The Naval Academy is a very rigorous school. Its purpose is to face artificial stress to prepare yourself to become an officer and lead enlisted sailors and marines. After graduating from the Naval Academy, you join one of the service programs: the Submarine Force, the Surface Warfare Force, the Marine Corps, or the Naval Aviation Force. The end goal is to better prepare yourself to lead others and become the best officer you can be.

Betting Threatens Fandom

By JAYDEN PERLMAN '27

Staff Writer

In recent years, sports betting has exploded and has gotten to the point where it's concerning for younger generations and their outlook on sports.

If you've watched any nationally broadcasted sports in the past few years, I'm sure you'll understand exactly what I'm talking about. Betting advertisements have gone through the roof. Next time you watch a game, try counting how many betting commercials appear. Every break in the action seems filled with a new ad showing why betting is great and, personally, I am pretty annoyed by it.

I get that a large portion of sports fans are adults, but think of all the younger fans that are watching all of this. Children and teenagers are constantly being given the idea that gambling is simply a normal part of being a sports fan, long before they fully understand the risks. Many are being introduced to these ideas or habits of betting that could harm them later on.

All of this has slowly changed the way people watch games. Fans who used to sit back and enjoy the action now spend entire games sweating over bets. A missed layup, a single pitch outside the strike zone, or one dropped pass suddenly feel like a make-or-break moment for these fans. In my opinion, it becomes much harder to enjoy and appreciate the plays that make professional sports special when every small mistake feels like a personal loss.

It may sound a bit overdramatic, but what might start out as a fun side hobby can turn into something serious such as addiction without people even realizing it. When gambling becomes the focus, it encourages decisions that can get risky very quickly, especially for people who already struggle with self-control.

Consider the betting situation when it comes to the major sporting events such as the Super Bowl, the NBA finals, March Madness, the World Series, the Stanley Cup Finals and of course, the World Cup finals. We all know that these events are popular across the sports world and for good reason.

As a result, these events account for the biggest gambling days of

the year. Believe it or not, fans collectively wager billions of dollars annually, with the average bettor ending up placing hundreds of dollars in bets.

Unfortunately, it's becoming a trend among professional athletes and coaches as well, making the situation even more concerning. Just this past year, several professionals have faced suspensions, fines, or investigations for gambling-related issues. Players have bet on their own games and even themselves, leading to accusations of game rigging. MLB pitcher Emmanuel Clase, NBA point guard Terry Rozier, and NBA coach Chauncey Billups have all been investigated for gambling violations.

Children are constantly being given the idea that gambling is simply a part of being a sports fan, long before they fully understand the risks.

Fans have begun to question team or player results and the integrity of the games themselves. These betting scandals are comparable to the use of steroids and PEDS (performance enhancing drugs) to skew results, prevalent in the Olympics and in the MLB during the steroid era of the 1990s. Even though it's a different problem, the cheating element and fear of losing credibility is similar.

I'll end by saying this: watching pro sports should allow people to come together, forget pressures from work or school, and enjoy competition from the best athletes on the planet.

Sure, making small side bets with friends can be fun, but continuously risking your money online seems unnecessary. Ask yourself if it will actually make the game more enjoyable, because being responsible with your money is extremely important.

Everyone understands that at the end of the day, professional sports are a business that is trying to sell an entertaining product. Professional sports is filled with excitement and unforgettable moments that bring people and communities together through shared fandom.

Let's make sure we don't prioritize gambling over the love of the game.

Winter Season Upcoming Games

Boys Varsity Hockey
@ Exeter - Away

Boys JV Hockey
vs. Trinity-Pawling - 1/24

Girls Varsity Hockey
@ Westminster - 1/24

Girls JV Hockey
@ Westminster - 1/24

Boys Varsity Basketball
@ Westminster - 1/24

Boys JV Basketball
vs. Eaglebrook - 1/23

Girls Varsity Basketball
@ Williston - 1/24

Girls JV Basketball
@ IMS - 1/28

Boys Varsity Squash
vs. Exeter, Andover - 1/24

Boys JV Squash
vs. IMS - 1/23

Girls Varsity Squash
vs. Taft, Andover - 1/24

Girls JV Squash
vs. IMS - 1/23

Boys Varsity Swim & Dive
vs. Brunswick - 1/24

Girls Varsity Swim & Dive
vs. GA - 1/24

Girls Wrestling
@ Andover - 1/25