



Boys Varsity Baseball Slides Into The Season With Win Against Avon

By ADYSON BROOKES '29

Boys Varsity Baseball began the 2026 season with some losses, but a recent big win is changing the outlook of their season. After losses to Westminster (5-6), Canterbury (2-6), and Choate (0-3), the team achieved a historic 4-3 win against Avon Old Farms on April 8 at home.

Avon is currently ranked in the Top 10 in New England. The win on April 8 was Boys Varsity Baseball's first against Avon in the past ten years. The boys took home the win with an RBI walk-off single from Anthony Rodriguez '26. With Jayden Perlman '27 on second base, two outs, and an 0-2 count, Rodriguez sent the ball to left-center field, and Perlman saw the opportunity. After Perlman made it home, the team rushed onto the diamond to embrace Rodriguez.



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The team's roster of twenty players features twelve Seniors, alongside three new additions.

"We work hard, have fun, and appreciate every second we get to spend on Hoyt Field," said Head Coach Will Boscow '11.

Next, BVB will face Loomis, also ranked in the Top 10 in New England. Aiden Anderson '26 said, "Even though they are strong opponents, we know we have the talent to compete and win, which

makes this stretch exciting."

The team will travel to Taft on April 20 and host Westminster at home on April 22.

Head Coach Will Boscow '11 said, "We play a lot of great teams, and it's hard to single out one or two games over the rest. It's fun as a coach to see our whole team excited and ready, regardless of who or where we are playing."

The team has 12 Seniors, seven of whom are already committed to college. Three of the commits will play collegiate baseball—Anderson '26 for Springfield College, Cam Freeman '26 for Fairfield University,

and Tyler Cassamajor '26 for Montclair State University. Carlos Lalane '26 remains undecided on his school, but will play baseball in college as well.

With so many upperclass students, the team has decided to remain without captains for the moment. Lalane '26 said, "I think any one of us on any given day could be a captain of the team." Trey Morris '28 said, "We are always there to help each other, and not having captains treats everyone as equals."

The team welcomed three new players this season: Eli Gati '26,

Perlman, and Dohoon Kim '28. This brought the team to twenty players.

Several players are injured and are currently not playing. Remy Lee '28 suffered a UCL strain early in the season and is unlikely to play until late April. Also on the bench is Henrik Perez '28, who tore his labrum; Perez's return time is yet to be determined.

This year is Coach Boscow's first year as head coach and Coach Rich Biddulph's first year with the baseball program.

During Coach Boscow's time at Hotchkiss, he played on Boys Varsity Baseball and was captain

his Senior year. He got to know the game of baseball on a deeper level through internships at New England Sports Network and through a past job working at Fenway Park.

He began as an assistant coach for Boys Varsity Baseball in 2017. He said, "We work hard, have fun together, and appreciate every second we get to spend on Hoyt Field."

Coach Biddulph joined the team

"We know we have the talent to compete and win, which makes this stretch exciting," said Aiden Anderson '26.

this year as assistant coach. He played both collegiate and high school baseball as a catcher, and has coached at both the high school and club/American Legion levels.

When asked his favorite part of working with Boys Varsity Baseball, Coach Biddulph said, "They play the game the right way, and I envision this group maximizing its potential and becoming the best version of itself before the season is over. They hold each other accountable, motivate each other, pick each other up when needed, and have committed to being the best team they can be and to pursuing that goal as a unified group."

Michael Steele Shares Advice From His Decades of Political Leadership

By TAYLOR PANG '27
Staff Writer

On Tuesday, April 7, Michael Steele, former Lt. Governor of Maryland and chair of the Republican National Committee, delivered the annual Beal Lecture.

The lecture was established in 1983 by John Shedd Reed '35 in honor of Ted Beal '35. It aims to introduce students to national and global issues and allow them to engage with leaders shaping essential contemporary conversations.

Mr. Keith Moon, instructor in history, who helped organize the lecture, said, "I am always on the lookout for prominent commentators who live in the world of contemporary politics—regardless of their party affiliation—and I felt that Mr. Steele would provide a voice and angle that we don't hear from so often."

Mr. Steele earned a B.A. in international relations from Johns Hopkins and a J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center. In 1999, he founded the Steele Group, a business and legal consulting firm. From 2003 to 2007, he served as the Lt. Governor of Maryland, making him the first African American elected to that office. During this time, Mr. Steele

helped reform the Minority Business Enterprise, a program designed to increase business opportunities and participation for minority groups. His election marked a significant milestone in Maryland's political history.

Mr. Steele led the Republican National Committee from 2009 to 2011, as the first African American chair. In the 2010 congressional cycle, Mr. Steele raised over \$198 million for the midterm election. He also launched the Fire Pelosi Bus Tour, a campaign across 48 states, which helped Republicans win 63 House seats.

Mr. Steele is currently a political analyst for MSNBC, where he co-hosts *The Weeknight*, an evening program.

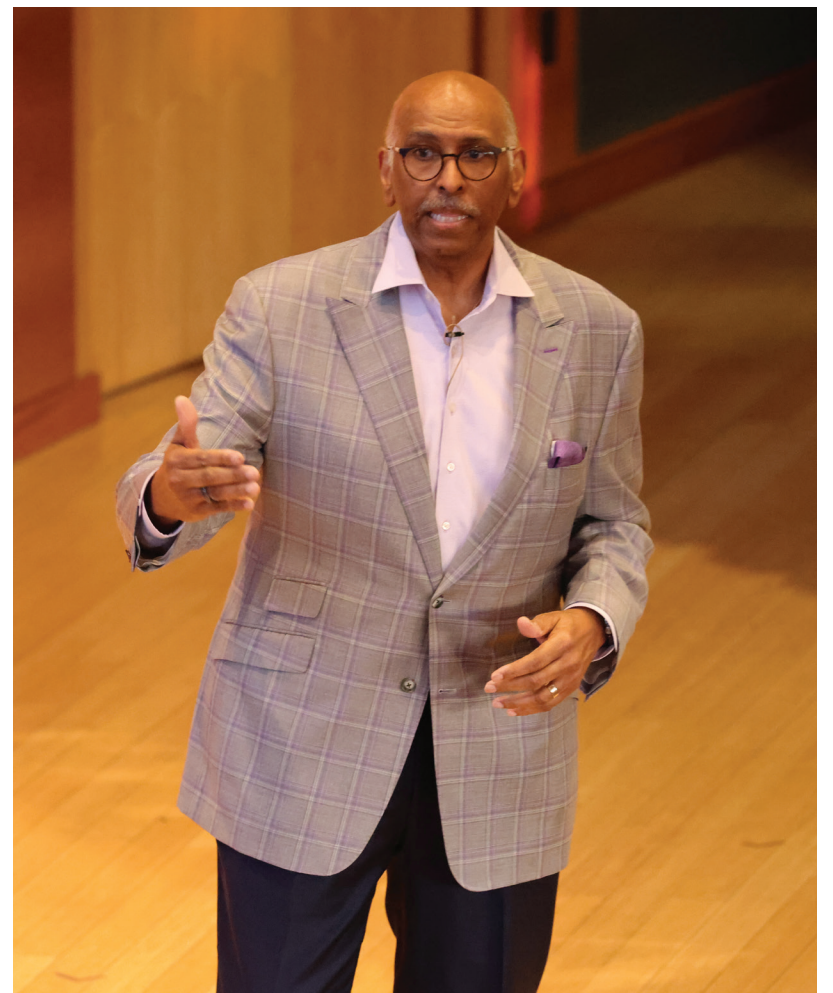
In his speech, Mr. Steele reminded the audience that everyone plays an important role in American society and should participate in politics. He said, "It is not so much the action that is important; it's the silence. The fear of saying no. The fear of saying stop. I pray you never have that fear: that you are so afraid to stop the abuse of justice, the abuse to human dignity."

The timing of the lecture also added to its significance. Mr. Moon said, "The November mid-term elections promise to be a very big

deal, especially since it will be the first time we will see a national reaction to the re-election of Donald Trump. Approximately 30% of the audience will be in a position to vote in November and nearly everyone will be eligible to do so in November 2028, when the next presidential election comes along. I always want students to think about their role in democracy. I hope students will take the same approach Mr. Steele did to deciding what he wanted to do politically when he prepared to vote for the first time: he did a lot of research, weighed all his options, and then made a commitment that he has stuck with. There is a lot to admire in his recognition that every vote matters and his willingness to take such care in making sure he understood himself and the choices he had to make."

Isabella Deng '27 said, "Mr. Steele was very engaging. As someone who holds a different political view from Steele, it was really interesting to hear his opinions on the Republican Party, especially considering recent events."

Mr. Steele ended his speech on a hopeful note. He said, "Take this education that you've gotten, that your parents have sacrificed for, and don't take that for granted."



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Michael Steele is the former Lt. Governor of Maryland and RNC chair.

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Meet the Exchange Students

John Hewat '29 and Charito Rincon '28 joined the community for MP4.

Speaker Shares Family History

Dr. Andrew Lazlo Jr. told his father's story of surviving Nazi persecution.

Revisit Days Welcome Admits

Admitted students joined classes and attended performances.

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Celebrating Retiring Faculty

Dr. Matthias Weiss and Mr. Charlie Frankenbach have served the school for 56 years.



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The Myth of the Ivy League

Arya Samat '29 reminds us that they aren't the only schools in the world.

Who Should Be a Citizen?

Luke Roman '29 argues that we should reconsider birthright citizenship.

The IOC is Unjust

Izzy Liang '29 exposes the hypocrisy of the IOC's ruling on Ukrainian athlete.

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Chamber Music in Elfers

World-class musicians Darko Brlek & Robert deMaine joined the Witkowskis.

Spotlight on Black Boxes

Black Box performances offer students a chance to do it all.

AOI: Katharine Ellis '26

Ellis has studied studio art for four years, recently focusing on printmaking.

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March Madness Is Boring

Few upsets and deep Cinderella runs leave Andrew Roraback '27 yawning.

AOI: Mark Zhu '26

The co-captain of Boys Varsity Rowing will attend MIT in the fall.

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Yury Tsbikov '26 secured a main draw title and won his match 2-1.

News

Andrew Lazlo Jr. Shared His Father's Story on Holocaust Remembrance Day

By ELLIE MATASAR '29
Staff Writer

On March 24, 2026, in honor of Holocaust Remembrance Day, Mr. Andrew Lazlo Jr., son of Holocaust survivor Mr. Andrew Lazlo Sr., shared his father's story with the community.

Holocaust Remembrance Day, observed on January 27 every year, is an international memorial day honoring the close to 17 million people murdered by the Nazi regime.

Last year, Mr. Lazlo Jr. spoke to a smaller group in the Faculty Room. Mr. Nate Seidenberg, faculty advisor of Hillel, said, "His speech was impactful, and I thought it was something all the students should experience."

Mr. Lazlo Jr. started his presentation with a brief overview of his father's childhood. Mr. Lazlo Sr. was from Papa, Hungary, and son to a Jewish mother and Catholic WWI veteran father. Once WWII started, Mr. Lazlo Sr.'s family were forced to leave their home, pack their belongings into tiny bags, and move to a ghetto.

Mr. Lazlo Sr.'s mother was ultimately sent to the death camp Auschwitz, never to be seen again, and he, his brother, and his father were sent to Bergen-Belsen, a labor camp where they were forced to build railroads for the Nazis.

Despite being surrounded by death and torture, Mr. Lazlo Jr. described his father as never losing his kind spirit, noting that he would share his heavily rationed food with those who were weaker than he was. Mr. Lazlo Sr. was separated from his father and brother, but towards the end of the war was reunited with his father. They didn't recognize each other immediately, due to the intense transformation they had both undergone.

Once Germany surrendered, conditions only got worse. Food was no longer brought to prisoners, and they were forced to forage in the woods. Mr. Lazlo Sr. was once put in a position where he was able to kill a German officer, but he told his son that he was unable to do it because the guilt would be with him for his life.

Shortly after, the Red Cross arrived and attempted to nurse the former prisoners back to health. Many were past saving, but Mr. Lazlo Sr. gained weight and went back to his hometown, Papa.

In Papa, the Russians had taken over and conditions were not much better. Mr. Lazlo Sr. decided to flee again and hitchhiked to Yugoslavia, where he applied for and was granted the ability to emigrate to America after a six-month wait.

Upon arrival in the U.S., Mr. Lazlo Sr. had no money and didn't speak English. Mr. Lazlo Jr. said, "My father promised

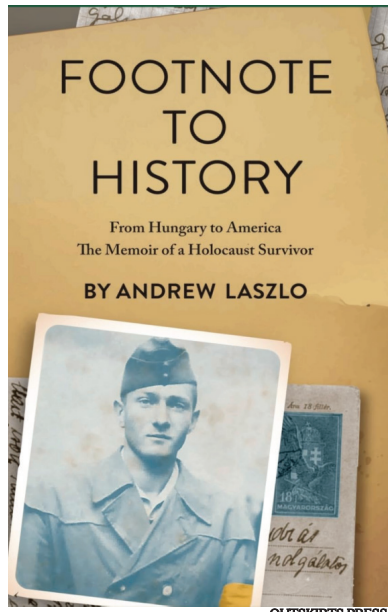
himself to put the trauma of his past behind him, and never mention it again." Mr. Lazlo Sr. taught himself English in three months by going to the movie theater and ultimately joined the army, where he received training as a camera man.

He went on to be a renowned cinematographer, earning two Emmy nominations for *The Man Without a Country* and *Shogun*. Mr. Lazlo Sr. hid his history for most of his life, but eventually revealed his past to his son and passed the story down through him.

Mr. Lazlo Jr. helped his father write his memoir: *Footnote to History: From Hungary to America*, published in 2025. Although Mr. Lazlo Sr. passed away in 2011, Mr. Lazlo Jr. continues sharing with communities across the world the story of his father and his compatriots.

Bella Chen '29, a member of the Council of Pluralism and Community, said, "I think he delivered a good speech encapsulating not only the experience of his father but his own experience and his family's experience passing that history down."

Mr. Nate Seidenberg, advisor to Hillel, said, "It is crucial that, as a community, we come together to honor Holocaust Remembrance Day, especially in light of current rising antisemitism. This day is more than just remembering Jews, there were millions of other non-Jews killed for a variety of reasons. Instead, it is for standing together and saying 'never again'—not just as justice for Jews, but for everyone. It is a strong reminder of what extreme nationalism and othering can lead to, and it is critical that we never forget."



Mr. Lazlo Sr. survived the Holocaust.



TRAVAPPLE '28

Round Square schools exchange students John Hewat '29 (L) and Charito Rincon '28 (R).

Exchange Students From South Africa and Colombia Join Community for the Fourth Marking Period

By JOSEPH SUN '29

The school is welcoming John Hewat '29 and Charito Rincon '28 for the spring marking period after hosting exchange students Tommy Molina '28 and Valerie Sum '28 for the third marking period. Hewat and Rincon come through the Round Square Association, from Bishop's Diocesan College in Cape Town, South Africa, and Los Nogales in Bogotá, Colombia, respectively.

Since 2004, Hotchkiss has been a Round Square school, making it part of an international community consisting of 280+ schools in 50 countries. Through exchange programs, international conferences, and other types of experimental learning, the Round Square programs commit to the six values of IDEALS: international understanding, democracy, environmental stewardship, adventure, leadership, and service.

Mr. Dave Thompson, director of international programs, said, "What is really powerful about the exchange is that because the students are so excited and know they only have 8-10 weeks here, they bring in a kind of an energy that's really good for all of us. It reminds us why we chose to come here. The second real benefit of the exchange program is that the exchange students are very positive about Hotchkiss when they go home, so it's fantastic marketing for the school."

The process for selecting exchange students differs by the Round Square school, with many requiring videos, interviews, or essays. Despite the varying admission processes, the Round Square Schools all utilize the selection process to answer questions about readiness, representation, and making the most out of an exchange to find the best candidate.

At Los Nogales, the process entailed an interview and two essays describing the applicant's top choice school and a Round Square value that they endorse.

Bishop's Diocesan College had a similarly competitive process. There, the top fifteen of the class applied and eight of them continued to the interviews. John said, "We sat at a circular table with teachers interviewing us and bombarding us with questions. We had to give our best possible answer and showcase what Bishop's has to offer, and who would get the most out of specifically the exchange."

Different exchange students attend exchange programs and come to this community for various reasons. Charito said, "It has always been my dream to go on an exchange, because I really wanted to live a different life and get out of the bubble I've always been in. I decided to apply for the exchange because I wanted an adventure—something different. I loved Hotchkiss' value on academics, and

I feel it will be a great place for me to grow."

Hewat said, "I wanted to experience a new way to get an education overseas. I chose Hotchkiss over other schools because of its prestige, the golf course, and because I wanted to experience boarding school."

Hewat is currently living in Coy with Joseph Sun '29, and participates in the Orchestra and Boys JV Golf. He also likes to hike, plays field and indoor hockey, and is interested in STEM. Rincon lives in Buehler with Madi Bawden '29. She is writing for *The Record*, participating in the theatre program, running track, and is interested in science and history.

Both exchange students have been enjoying themselves so far. Rincon says she loves the productive schedule, the diverse community, and dorm life. Hewat enjoys dorm life, the discussion-based class format, and the mix within the student body between the ambition to maximize the school's resources and social activities.

Both are already making their spring bucket lists. Rincon said, "I look forward to jumping in the lake, chilling with my friends, and getting better at track." Hewat said, "I hope to get the most I can out of the JV Golf Team, use my free periods constructively, and make the most of an opportunity that my school has trusted me to take."

Revisit Days Give Admitted Students a Glimpse into Life as a Bearcat

By ASHLEY ZHU '29

As the wooden doors opened, newly admitted students streamed into Chapel through the middle aisles. Conversations came to an end, and it would have been awkward if not for the excitement running through the room.

To many, revisit days feel special.

Maybe because everyone dresses up, maybe because students are all on their best behavior, maybe because our campus has more than one hundred new people—people who could be our future teammates, classmates, and friends.

Revisit days offer admitted students

a firsthand insight into life as a Bearcat, an opportunity for them to gain a better sense of their future teachers, coaches, and classmates, and to ultimately decide if this is a place where they can see themselves for the next four years.

This year, Revisit Fest started off with a presentation in Walker Auditorium featuring performances by the dance team and cast members from the fall musical, *Pippin*, followed by speeches from Head of School Craig Bradley and All-School Presidents Serena Nam '26 and Dwyer Illick '26.

Prospective students were ushered out to the Chapel, where student hosts eagerly anticipated their arrival. One by one, hosts and visitors were paired up, sporting big grins and timid smiles respectively, as they walked down the aisles of the chapel in pairs.

Starting at 10:40 a.m., admitted students got the chance to experience a regular day of classes based on their hosts' schedules.

Host-student matching, which is organized by the Office of Admission and Financial Aid, plays a huge role

in everyone's revisit day experience. The office pairs admitted students with hosts with whom they have common ground. This can be the same hometown, shared hobbies, or similar academic or cocurricular interests.

"Revisit days are about the admitted students. So make them feel as special as possible,"
said Mr. Souleman Toure '19.

Mr. Souleman Toure '19, assistant director of admissions and coordinator of multicultural commitment and outreach, said, "If a student is currently taking Spanish, we might not pair them with someone who is taking French here, just because that's not going to necessarily be realistic to what their

experience will be."

Being able to create an immediate connection often makes a difference in a student's decision, because it brings out the best in both the host and the prospective student. Mr. Toure said, "Because their host could be their future teammate, future classmate, future ensemble member, the host-matching is beneficial for prospective students. It's a long process for us to get all the host-matching right. And it's not always perfect. We try to do our best, and try to make sure that as many students as possible get the opportunity."

This year, instead of the usual three revisit days, the school offered two—one on Monday, March 30 and a second on Friday, April 3. Normally, approximately 60 families attend each revisit day. This year, around 100 families were on campus on each day.

Mr. Toure said, "Revisit days are not about you. They're about the admitted students. So make them feel as special as possible. Make them feel the love, make them feel the support."



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HDA performed excerpts from Pippin for revisiting families.

Features

Retiring Faculty: Edition I

After a combined 113 years of service to the school, four faculty members will retire at the end of the school year. Dr. Matthias Weiss and Mr. Charlie Frankenbach, along with highlights from their careers, are featured this issue. Look for features on the remaining two retirees next issue.

Matthias Weiss: Using His Math PhD For the Complexities of Course Scheduling

By ELIZABETH HICKS '27

Dr. Matthias Weiss, instructor of mathematics, has taught math for 19 years at the school. He was born in Germany. Dr. Weiss attended Leipzig University in Leipzig, Germany. He majored in mathematics with a minor in physics. Dr. Weiss decided to apply for a study abroad year and attend Swansea University in Wales, UK. He then applied to graduate programs in the U.S. and attended Northern Illinois University, earning a doctorate in Mathematical Sciences. Working as a teaching assistant opened him up to the possibility of teaching. While at Northern Illinois University, he met his wife, Leia Weiss.

This year, Dr. Weiss is teaching Honors Calculus, Honors Multivariable Calculus, Honors Advanced Topics in Math, and Honors Advanced Topics in Math II.

After his retirement, Dr. Weiss and his wife will stay in the area. They live in Sharon, CT, where he will continue to ride his horse. Additionally, he hopes to pursue his interest in electronic projects, which started at the school when he was assigned EFX Lab duty.

What was your time in West Germany after high school?

I joined the Air Defense Artillery Unit when I was 18. For an individualist, military service is not exactly a fun environment to be in. There were some fun adventures, like the exercises that we did with the target simulations. So we got our own air shows that were Russian fighter pilots flying target simulations for us. Two-and-a-half years through my service, the German military offered the soldiers a chance to separate from military service. I took

that opportunity because I had quite enough of it.

What led you to teach at Hotchkiss?

Being in a post-doc career is really stressful, because often you have to move around from university to university to get tenure. I figured if I teach at a school that attracts talented students, instead of teaching the talented students at MIT or Princeton, I'm going to teach the students who are going to MIT and Princeton. So, it was a compromise between doing the math that I like and maintaining quality of life that didn't sacrifice my personal life for my career.

What part of your experience here was most impactful or meaningful?

Being entrusted with teaching advanced topics gave me some autonomy, which has been meaningful. I got to take students into really specialized directions that they wanted to take. One of the most fun projects that I undertook was one semester of teaching probability for actuarial mathematics.

What has been your role assisting with academic scheduling?

It's hard to explain without paper and pencil, because there's some math behind it. Some materials magnetize spontaneously—for example, iron, when you heat it up and you cool it down slowly. That's because the ions and iron form one alliance to minimize



RECORD

their energy. People have figured out how to translate that into an algorithm that can minimize other situations, if you define energy appropriately. So what I do to make the schedules is plug in random assignments of slots to sections. And then the energy that I'm trying to minimize is the amount of student conflicts. I run that algorithm, and it tries to minimize the energy of the system, just like in spontaneous magnetization, only minimizing the conflicts.

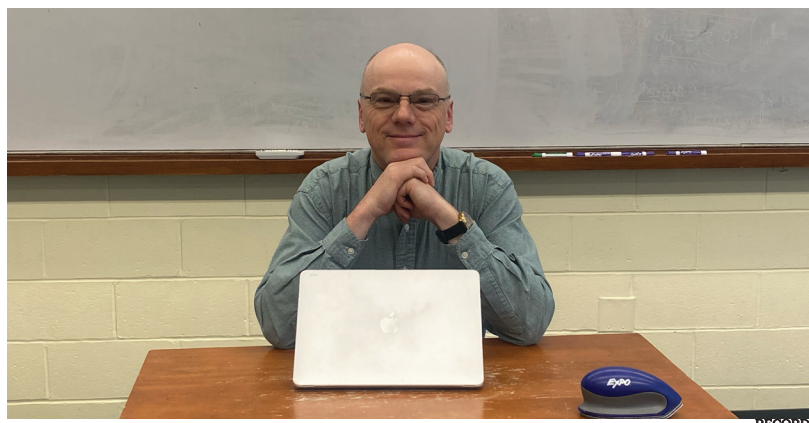
What advice would you offer to students?

If you sign up for a course, especially one that is at the higher level, make sure it's really something that you enjoy doing. There are competing pressures on what students are supposed to take, but if you are in a course that you don't really enjoy taking, everybody's going to be miserable. Students are going to be miserable because of the

requirements of the course, and the teachers are going to be miserable because teachers don't like being in an adversarial relationship with students. That's ultimately what happens if a student is misplaced in a course.

It's not a matter of being strong or being weak. A strong student basically teaches themselves. A weak student, who is still ambitious and interested in the course, is something that every teacher is going to enjoy working with because of the extra time put in is worthwhile. So everybody gets something out of it.

For students who are not interested in the course, it would be like, grabbing me and putting me into a university course on tax law. I can do it, but my attitude towards the course would not be a positive one. I would try to avoid the work. I would not do well and everybody would be miserable. So it's the same with any other course.



RECORD

Literature, Hoops, & Fly-Fishing with Mr. Frankenbach

By BELLA CHEN '29

Mr. Charlie Frankenbach, the Russel Murray Bigelow Teaching Chair and instructor in English, has taught and coached at the school for 37 years.

He has taught English at all grade levels and is currently teaching the Senior elective, "Who Did What? Detective Fiction and Film."

He is a former head of the English department and was interim Dean of Faculty in 2023-2024. He was awarded the Lufkin Prize in 2021. Mr. Frankenbach has coached Varsity and JV Basketball and runs the Fly Fishing cocurricular in the spring.

What led you to start teaching here?

I taught at Loomis for two years after college. After that, I went to graduate school and got married to my wife, Lauren.

Our really dear friends, John and Christie Cooper, had gotten their jobs at Hotchkiss the year before. I was in graduate school in Indiana when they called and told me there's a position here that I should apply for.

I got a job as a half-time study skills teacher, as well as teaching two courses of English.

I also began to coach JV basketball. Lauren and I moved into Buehler, and that was how my career here started.

What are some notable teaching moments that have left a strong impression on you?

There are millions of those moments. However, there's one particular moment I always keep coming back to, which has always stayed with me. I had an honors class years back, during the year my dad passed away. I could sense that they knew that I was

not my normal self. I remember in the midst of it thinking that they were really being remarkably understanding for young people.

I hope I didn't bring my troubles into the classroom, but at some level you're always bringing yourself to it, especially since we were studying works that sometimes went directly to the theme of family.

I come back to that as a moment that highlights the remarkable synergy between students and teachers in this community. For me, it reaffirmed the fact that the students that come here are exceptional people. They were remarkably empathetic and understanding.

A large part of why I love to teach is because we learn from the students all the time. For example, I like to footnote kids or perceptions I have in English class. That part of it is pretty awesome.

What are your plans for your retirement?

I don't have many specific plans. My wife and I are going to move to Rhode Island, and one of our daughters is getting married. I would like to fish as often as possible. After that, I have no idea.

I'll keep reading books. It's going to be interesting to read, like I do in the summer, when I'm not always thinking, "How would I use this book in a classroom setting?"

What advice would you offer to students?

So much of this seems cliché, but it's very, very true—how quickly your time at Hotchkiss goes, so be mindful of that fact.

I was just sitting at breakfast this morning with two students I taught last year. They're about to be Upper

Mids, and they were telling me how fast their time here went by. That's what happens, because you get so immersed in the place.

Something I say all the time is to not wait for a Hotchkiss experience to happen to you; students need to make their own Hotchkiss experiences happen. You have to make your experience happen for you and get after it.

Pursue your interests, but also be wide open to the myriad interests that can happen if you throw yourself into different things.



Charles Frankenbach

MISCHIANZA

Opinion

Ivy League Shouldn't Be the Default

Arya Samat '29

Every spring, members of the graduating class face important decisions—ones that can feel like the culmination of years of work. After years of classes, extracurriculars, and late nights, Seniors choose where they will spend the next four years of their lives.

What begins as a celebration of achievement can quickly turn into a system of comparison.

At its core, these are very personal decisions, shaped by individual values and goals. But once those decisions are made, they rarely stay personal.

In communities like ours, college acceptances quickly become public. In a boarding school setting, word spreads fast. This is compounded by social media, where students post their results and commitments for everyone to see. Which are then shared and reposted.

What begins as a celebration of achievement can quickly turn into a system of comparison. The issue is not that students and schools celebrate these moments, but how they are shared. The elephant

in the room is that Ivy League schools are the ones that receive the most attention, which can unintentionally shape how success is defined.

Part of this comes from the prestige these schools carry. A small group of colleges, especially the Ivies, are treated not just as schools but as symbols. Their names signal a certain level of achievement in a way that other schools—no matter how strong—often do not. Over time, students begin to internalize this message. Success becomes less about finding the right fit and more about reaching the so-called “top.”

At highly competitive schools like ours, this effect is even stronger. We are surrounded by other high achievers, which makes comparison almost inevitable. In this environment, publicly sharing college outcomes can reinforce the idea that some paths are more valuable than others.

This culture isn't created by the school alone—students play a role too. We ask where people got in, often out of simple curiosity, and we react differently depending on the answer. Over time, those reactions build a shared understanding of what is impressive and what is not.

There are still benefits to transparency. Seeing where older students go can be helpful and even inspiring. It makes the future feel

more real. But when transparency turns into comparison, those benefits start to fade.

For some Seniors, sharing their successes brings validation. For others, it brings disappointment—not because of their choice, but because of how that choice is perceived by others.

The popularity of Ivy League schools is not random. These institutions offer incredible resources and global recognition. But treating a small group of schools as the main measure of success limits how students define their goals.

When success becomes tied to a small group of names, students start chasing reputation instead of fit.

The issue, then, is not whether college decisions should be shared, but how they are understood. If the focus shifted from where students go to why they chose those places, we would see that success looks different for everyone.

One small step is to celebrate all decisions with the same enthusiasm, regardless of name recognition. Until then, each spring will follow the same pattern: share, repost, and compare.



COMMUNICATIONS

How Authentic Are Revisit Days?

Emily Hwang '29

Revisit days are meant to give prospective students a glimpse into life at Hotchkiss. Their purpose is to offer an authentic window into the school's learning environment, community, and daily experience. However, while they can reflect the spirit of Hotchkiss, they cannot fully capture what life here truly feels like. No single day, no matter how carefully planned, can represent the full range of experiences that shape a high school journey.

On revisit days, schools naturally present their most engaging and appealing version of daily life. Classes may be more interactive than usual, teachers may adjust lessons to encourage discussion, and students may be especially welcoming. This effort is not without value—it helps visiting students feel comfortable and highlights the strengths of the community. Still, it creates a filtered version of reality. An ordinary day here is not always this polished, nor as designed to impress.

Timing also limits what revisit days can show. Life at Hotchkiss moves in cycles: units begin and end, projects develop over weeks, and classroom energy shifts throughout the year. A visiting student might sit in on a quiet class, perhaps during a period of independent work. Without context, this moment may seem uneventful or even dull. In reality, it could be one small part of a larger, meaningful project that students have been building toward for weeks. A single snapshot, without the full timeline, can easily be

misunderstood.

There is also a subtle awareness on revisit days that the school is being observed. Because of this, students may act more outgoing or energetic than they typically would. What often goes unseen are the quieter, everyday moments that are just as important: studying for tests, reading in the library during a free block, or working through assignments without any need to perform. These moments, though less noticeable, are a real part of student life.

Revisit days offer a snapshot, not a panorama, of life here.

Beyond academics and activities, the culture of Hotchkiss is shaped by experiences that unfold over time. Friendships are not formed in a day; they grow through repeated interactions, shared challenges, and daily routines. While a visiting student may encounter friendliness and collaboration, they cannot see the history behind those relationships—the part that gives them meaning. This deeper sense of community is difficult, if not impossible, to capture in a single visit.

Revisit days are still valuable, but they should be understood for what they are: a snapshot, not a panorama. They offer a glimpse, not the full picture. The true experience of Hotchkiss develops gradually, shaped by time, routine, and relationships—something no single day can fully reveal.



BELLA CHEN '29

New Times Call for Changing Old Laws: Ending Birthright Citizenship

Luke Roman '29

Following the Union's victory in the Civil War, Congress ratified the 14th Amendment in 1868 to secure the rights of formerly enslaved people. In 1898, the Supreme Court case *United States v. Wong Kim Ark* interpreted this amendment to guarantee citizenship to anyone born on U.S. soil, regardless of their parents' citizenship status.

In 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order 14160, challenging that interpretation. He argued that citizenship should come either through parental lineage or a formal application process, and that birthright citizenship now functions less as a protection and more as a loophole that encourages illegal entry.

Since then, 22 states and numerous individuals have filed lawsuits against the administration. This week, the Supreme Court began hearing oral arguments in *Trump v. Barbara* regarding the order, with a decision expected by June.

Although the executive order has not yet taken legal effect, it raises a broader question: does birthright citizenship still serve the interests of the United States today?

Under current law, a child born in the U.S. is automatically granted citizenship, regardless of

the parents' legal status. In some cases, this can make it easier for family members to pursue legal status or access public benefits. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, as cited by the Center for Immigration Studies, about 59% of households headed by undocumented immigrants participate in at least one welfare program.

This raises concerns for some about whether a policy originally intended to ensure fairness is now being used in unintended ways.

Does birthright citizenship still serve the interests of the United States today?

At the same time, immigration levels have fluctuated significantly in recent years. U.S. Customs and Border Protection reported 10.8 million encounters during the Biden administration, compared to 3 million during the previous administration.

Some argue that children are sometimes used as part of strategies to enter or remain in the country. Critics say this places added pressure on public systems such as schools, social services, and

taxpayer-funded programs. The American Enterprise Institute has estimated that the net fiscal impact of an average undocumented immigrant can be significant over time.

Birthright citizenship was originally designed to guarantee equal rights and prevent exclusion. Today, however, some view it as outdated or misaligned with current immigration challenges. This has led to renewed debate over whether the policy should remain unchanged.

With the issue now before the Supreme Court, there is an opportunity to reconsider how citizenship is defined in the modern era.

One alternative that has been discussed is *jus sanguinis*, or citizenship based on parental lineage.

Supporters argue that such an approach could create a more controlled and consistent system, while others believe birthright citizenship remains a fundamental principle.

Ultimately, the debate reflects a larger question about how to balance fairness, legality, and national priorities in immigration policy. Whether through reform or reaffirmation, any decision will shape how the United States defines citizenship moving forward.



ISTOCK PHOTO

EDITORIAL

Don't Be Friends With Everyone

At the start of the year, something I took a lot of pride in was being friends with everyone. There was something about being able to wave at anyone and get a wave back or say “hi!” without thinking twice that made me feel on top of the world. On the surface, it seemed like everything was great. I felt comfortable going wherever with whomever. Preps would come up to me, saying something along the lines of, “Ohmigosh, you’re so great; everyone loves you!” I would respond to these comments by laughing and shaking my head, but there was a strange emptiness in my chest that didn’t go away no matter how many compliments I received.

It took me a long time to realize that this emptiness came from the absence of a concentration of close friends. Because on one hand, yes, I had people I could sit lunch with, gossip with, walk to class with. “I don’t believe in having a best friend,” I would lift my head and answer when people asked. “It’s better to have many many good friends. Not putting all your eggs in one basket, you know.” On the other hand, I didn’t feel like I had anyone that really knew and cared about me. I would often find myself sitting on a packed table or crowded room feeling inexplicably lonely.

Then—long story short—some “stuff” happened, and I lost some of my friends. At first, I felt like my world was crumbling. I didn’t know who to smile at in the hallways anymore; I didn’t want to go to lunch because I didn’t know who to sit with. My anxiety and self-consciousness reached an all time high. When I confided in one of my friend’s moms, she reassured me by saying, “If you’re friends with everyone, you’re doing something wrong.” I didn’t know it back then, but she was right. The silver lining of all this drama was that I came out of it becoming closer to some of the people I had originally only been “decent friends” with.

This doesn’t mean I don’t worry when I walk into the Dining Hall or still have moments when I feel out of place. But as my social circle began to shrink, the hole in my chest did too. I found a few good friends who I can feel like myself with. Who I want to actively stay in touch with and call weekly after I graduate. Who I can trust with my whole heart. When I’m with them, I feel unfathomably happy. That’s something I really treasure.

Recently, I saw an Instagram reel that resonated with me. The reel was a visual diagram of British anthropologist Robin Dunbar’s theory widely known as “The Rule of 150.” Essentially, the rule posits that whether it be in early hunter-gatherer societies or everyday modern life, the optimal range of meaningful relationships a person can have is between 100 to 200. Within this range, a person can only have 50 friends, 15 good friends, 5 close friends, and 1 to 2 special friends. Going beyond this range, Dunbar argues, leads to a lack of stability and cohesion.

At Hotchkiss, this phenomenon feels very real to me. We’re with people every single moment of every single day, which means our social battery is almost constantly being drained. Back at home, I can just go back home after school to be alone and recharge, but there’s no such luxury here. This means it’s even easier to be socially drained, which makes it all the more important to be selective about who you want to spend time with. Sometimes, that means you can’t be friends with everyone. Not that you can’t generally be a nice person, but that the average human literally does not have the emotional capacity to be true friends with everyone, and the attempt to do so—at least in my experience—will only prove to be draining.

Moreover, I’ve found that since coming to Hotchkiss, my sense of self has been eroding more and more. A huge factor is the fact that I tried to be friends with everyone. Human beings inherently have conflicting values, views, and lifestyles. Being friends with everyone means that you will inevitably have to undergo a personality-metamorphosis whenever you jump from one friend to another. Even disregarding how exhausting these transformations are, constantly changing oneself could lead to a fracturing, and even loss, of identity.

At the end of the day, we can only have so many “I care, you care” relationships. So—while there’s nothing wrong with doing so—don’t feel pressured to be in a large friend group or “be tight” with everyone. When you graduate from Hotchkiss, what are the chances that you’re going to keep in touch with the 200 people you say “hi!” to on your way to Snabe anyway? You don’t have to sit at a table with 15 other people during lunch to feel at home.

Annabelle Chu, Editor-in-Chief

IOC: Heraskevych Deserved to Compete

Izzy Liang '29

On February 12, 2026, Ukrainian skeleton racer Vladyslav Heraskevych stood at the top of the track and prepared for his Olympic race. However, mere minutes before the men’s skeleton competition was to begin, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced that he was “not allowed to participate” in the games. His only crime? Refusing to take off his helmet.

Heraskevych’s helmet bore images of Ukrainians who lost their lives since Russia’s invasion in 2022, including figure skater Dmytro Sharpar, boxer Maksym Halinichev, and Heraskevych’s family and friends. “All of them were athletes or people closely related to sports,” Heraskevych said, adding that he wanted to “memorialize them” at the Olympics, so that, even though they were killed, “they still made it there.”

However, this beautiful tribute was rejected by the IOC. Heraskevych was promptly barred from competing because of “[refusal] to adhere to the IOC athlete expression guidelines.” His disqualification forces us to ask not only whether athletes should express political views at the Olympics, but who has the authority to decide what counts as “political” in the first place.

Rule 50 of the Olympic charter lies at the center of this debate. It states, “No kind of demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted in any Olympic sites, venues or other areas.” Right off the bat, the wording of this rule is incredibly vague and invites subjective interpretations as to what counts as a political or religious demonstration. However, according to *Time Magazine*, this rule has been in place since the 1955 Olympic Charter and has been tightened over the decades, notably after the raised fists of 1968, which forced the IOC to codify and defend its position.

In 2021, the IOC consulted over 3,500 athletes from 185 countries to update its political expression guidelines. Seventy percent of athletes surveyed believed it was not appropriate to demonstrate on the field of play, and 67% believed the podium should remain protest-free. The IOC points to this as “democratic legitimacy” for its censorship of political displays, arguing that “[the] unique nature of the Olympic Games enables athletes from all over the world to come together in peace and harmony.”



FLICKR

On paper, the logic of Rule 50 is appealing in its simplicity—but it’s not as simple as the IOC makes it out to be. The claim of political neutrality is itself a political stance, and by deciding what counts as protest and what doesn’t, the committee is overlooking the fact that it is the most powerful political actor in the room.

Consider what the IOC did to Russia just four years prior to censoring Heraskevych. Following the invasion of Ukraine, Russia was banned from Olympic competition. At Milan Cortina 2026, the consequences were sweeping. According to *The Moscow Times*, Russia had no flag, no national anthem, and no national team at the games. Athletes contracted to the Russian military or national security agencies were barred entirely, along with those who actively supported the war. Few would argue it was the wrong decision—but it was undeniably a political one.

The IOC looked at a war, assigned blame, and built rules around that judgment. There is, as the IOC would argue, a certain logic to this: the Olympic Games are built on promoting the principle of peaceful competition between nations. When that peace is violated, the countries that do so lose the right to participate in the Games. Russia instigated an unprovoked war on Ukraine, thus not properly upholding Olympic values, which let to them being banned from competing. So far, pretty consistent. But here is where the IOC’s reasoning collapses under its own weight. If the Olympics stand for peace, and Russia was excluded for violating that peace, Ukraine is not the aggressor in this story. The faces on Heraskevych’s helmet did not advocate for conflict; he only wanted to mourn the victims of an unjust war. To honor those who died defending the Olympic ideal of peace is not a violation of that ideal, but rather the most faithful expression of it.

The IOC’s mistake is treating all political gestures as equal—when they are not. There is a profound difference between a statement that sanctions a war and then silences its victims. By flattening that distinction, by treating remembrance the same as provocation, the IOC is abandoning its values.

Remember that the goal of the Games is inherently political: to bring nations together in peace. Thus, the IOC should stop pretending that politics has no place at the Olympics, and start being honest about which politics it stands for—and which ones it is willing to silence.

The current, underlying discord at the Games is evident right there in Cortina. While Heraskevych was being banned from wearing the faces of dead Ukrainian athletes, *The Euromaidan Press* reported that Italian snowboarder Roland Fischnaller competed on the same field of play wearing a helmet featuring a Russian flag, noting that this is a symbol explicitly prohibited under Olympic rules. When questioned, the IOC’s press office was unable to explain to the media why Fischnaller was able to circumvent

the ban without incurring any penalty. The only explanation given was that the flags represented the countries he had previously competed for—an explanation that satisfied no one.

But this inconsistency runs deeper than one snowboarder. According to *PBS News*, American figure skater Maxim Naumov displayed a photo of his late parents, killed in a plane crash, on the field of play without penalty. Israeli skeleton athlete Jared Firestone wore a kippah with the names of the eleven athletes killed in the 1972 Munich Olympics Massacre, also without sanction. Both were acts of remembrance, in competition, of deceased loved ones, similar to Heraskevych’s. However, neither triggered a disqualification.

Further inconsistencies are revealed by past treatment of Heraskevych himself. As reported by *CBS News*, at the 2022 Beijing Olympics, Heraskevych displayed a “No war in Ukraine” sign after his fourth and final run, a direct political message, and the IOC ruled that he was simply calling for peace, and thus, found no violation of the Olympic charter. It was the exact same athlete, the exact same war, but four years later, a silent tribute of painted faces cost Heraskevych his Olympics.

All that being said, it is still worth pausing to take the IOC’s position seriously, because at its best, it is not an unreasonable one. The committee’s defense was never that Heraskevych’s message was inherently wrong. IOC President Kirsty Coventry said as much herself in a press conference regarding Heraskevych’s disqualification: “No one, no one—especially me—is disagreeing with the messaging.” The conflict, rather, was with the platform on which he shared message.

There are over 130 armed conflicts happening in the world right now, and if every athlete from every war zone, every oppressed minority, every humanitarian crisis, brings their cause onto the track or the podium, the Games cease to maintain their ideal image of peace, some argue. And crucially, for athletes competing under authoritarian governments, a political moment on the Olympic stage could mean retaliation, imprisonment, or worse when they return. Silence, in that reading, is protection for the athlete.

The purpose of this article is not to unilaterally criticize the IOC, but rather ask the reader to question political silence at the Olympics. When we enforce silence, it may seem as though we keep “politics” off the field, but in reality, we only manage to keep one side of the political reality out while the other remains unchallenged.

More often than not, what gets protected are the accounts of those in power. When the IOC silences a Ukrainian athlete honoring his dead, it does not protect him—it protects the narrative of the country that murdered them. The sooner the IOC ceases to pretend that neutrality is all it can ever stand for, the sooner the Olympics might become what it has always claimed to be: a reflection of the world’s best self.

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DISTRIBUTION

Student Population: 627; Faculty: 124. 600 copies are printed. Scholastic press affiliations: CSPA, NSPA.

Arts



Black Boxes bring together students with all levels of experience.

Students Lead in Black Box Theatre Productions

By CHARLIE O'CONNELL '27

Black Box productions, popularized in the early 20th century as an avant-garde movement, are a rather recent addition to the theatre world. Radically simple, Black Boxes' lack of technical distractions create what many consider to be the most "pure" form of theatre. By design, the shared space between actors and audience creates an intimate environment.

"I think it helps demystify theatre. If you see your friend, or someone you didn't know could perform, do a great job in a Black Box, you might feel more inspired to get involved yourself," said William Becker '26.

Black Boxes at the school have evolved over the past decade. Mr. Derek Brashears, technical director, said, "When I arrived at the school, they were more like Senior directing showcases and less focused on short pieces and younger directors." Black Boxes now are a training ground for new and experienced actors alike.

The Hotchkiss Drama Association produces three mainstage productions each year, while Black Boxes are performed more frequently, with the record high being 18 short shows in one year.

"The mainstage program is great, but there are limits in terms of opportunity," Brashears commented. The reduced time

commitment of a Black Box allows the program to be accessible to more students.

William Becker '26 has directed, stage managed, and acted in multiple Black Box productions throughout his four years here. Becker commented on the intimate nature of performing surrounded by his peers. "I think it helps demystify theatre," Becker said. "If you see your friend, or someone you didn't know could perform, do a great job in a Black Box, you might feel more inspired to get involved yourself."

For some, Black Boxes are an item to cross off their "Hotchkiss Bucket List." For others, acting in a Black Box serves as a bridge to the larger theatre world. Mr. Brashears said, "Mr. Soulemon Torre '19 did no theatre before he got to Hotchkiss. He did a Black Box and then was in most mainstage productions afterward."

Currently, Black Boxes are almost entirely student-run. The faculty serve as mentors, but students lead. Becker said, "The director is a student, the stage manager is a student, and the actors are all students."

Brashears recalled watching a rehearsal of students working together entirely on their own. "I remember thinking, I don't need to be here," he said. "This is exactly what I want to see in the theatre department."

Students also choose the scripts. Because comedic scripts tend to be popular with audiences, many students choose them. However, Becker said, "There's a lot of expectation that Black Boxes have to be funny, but they can also be a space for more serious shows."

Black Boxes are a school staple, and considered a Tuesday night "must see" by many.

The Power of Buñuelos and a Good Song

By CHARITO RINCON '28

Yellow is the color of buñuelos, my favorite food in the whole wide world: that perfectly round, tan pastry that only my abuelita knows how to make perfectly.

The sky is blue in the middle of winter, not one single cloud to be found. It's the same weather everyday: out here, seasons are a foreign concept.

Red is the color of my distant relatives' lipstick: you barely remember her name, but she still greets you with a big kiss on the cheek every time she sees you at family reunions. During those, the house is always noisy, full of more people than it was intended for: just the way we like it.

In the living room, little cousins shake their maracas and sing Christmas songs in May, while the couples dance "Cali Pachangero" in the kitchen and the aunts gather to gossip around a big table.

Yellow, blue and red: three colors that come together to represent 52 million people, 20 different styles of dance, about 1,000 different dishes, and a soundtrack that matches each vibe perfectly. And the family gatherings, although arguably the best event, don't begin to cover how it is like living in Colombia, my home.

When I was asked to write an article about art in my country, I had no idea where it was going to lead. Talking about art in Colombia is such a huge task because, back where I come from, everything is art. But, as I've come to

realize during my time away, music is what ties it all together.

In Colombia, silence is rare and avoided. When you're feeling happy, you put on reggaeton to hype you up. Nothing beats listening to J Balvin, Karol G, or Feid while getting ready to go out with your friends.

Or when you're in love, and put on Fonsecas, Sebastian Yatra and Carlos Vives love ballads to remind you of that special person.

I love



when merengue starts playing in the party, just around 11:00 p.m., and all the boys start looking for the perfect girls to dance with. The butterflies you get while spinning around to "La Bilirrubina" are

unmatched.

I miss scream-singing to Shakira Peter Manjarres in the car, while driving to a doctor's appointment with my mom. How can something so simple become such a cherished memory?

And although all those memories are tinged with yearning and nostalgia, I couldn't be happier to be here in the United States, where music also holds a very special place.

My favourite thing happens everyday during track practice, after Mr. Seidenberg gives his daily motivational speech. His typical ending, "What's the song of the day?" is always followed by

Nora's speaker playing songs like "Valerie" or "Party in the USA" on full blast.

Every day, I witness how these songs fill previously exhausted students with energy to go and give it their best try. It makes me realize that, no matter where you are, music will find a way to reach you and change the way you feel. At the end of the day, it truly is a universal language.

ALICIA FENG '28

World-Class Musicians Join Students for A Night of Chamber Music

By EVIE LIU '29

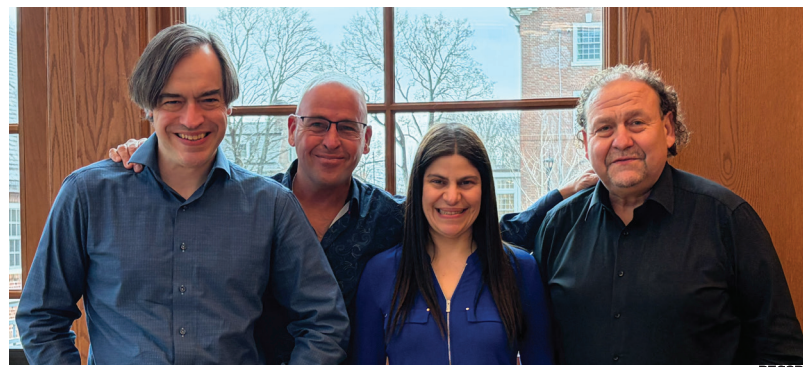
On April 14, 2026, Elfers Hall came alive with chamber music, as an ensemble of internationally acclaimed musicians joined the Witkowskis on stage. Chamber music, a form of classical music composed for a small group of instruments, is named for the intimate venues in which it was originally performed (in contrast to music composed for large concert halls). Cellist Robert deMaine and

clarinetist Darko Brlek were featured performers. DeMaine, a principal cellist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, has performed in some of the world's most famous venues, including Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and Amsterdam's Concertgebouw. Brlek, executive director of the Ljubljana Festival—one of Europe's top cultural festivals—has served as chair of the Council for Culture of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia.

The ensemble was completed by pianists Fabio Witkowski, director of music, and Gisele Nacif Witkowski, instructor in piano. The Witkowskis have performed internationally at sites including Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center.

Dr. Witkowski said, "The pieces in the program were from diverse periods of music: they included Romantic pieces from the 19th century by Schumann with piano and clarinet, which allow for great freedom of expression, and a Beethoven Trio for clarinet, cello, and piano, which displayed the perfection of the Classical era. There were also 20th century pieces for cello and piano by Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos and a beautiful Grand Tango finale by composer Astor Piazzolla, with both composers incorporating the unique rhythms, cultures, and melodic contours of their homelands."

Student musicians will perform in a voice recital on Tuesday, April 28 at 6:30 p.m., which is open to all members of the school and local community.



Visiting musicians deMaine (L) and Brlek (R) dined with the Witkowskis.

Artist of the Issue: Katharine Ellis '26

By SOFIA CLARK '27

Katharine Ellis is a four-year Senior from Weston, Massachusetts. She was an Editor-in-Chief for The Record from 2025-2026, is co-head of Baking Club and Junior Bearcats, and proctor in Tinker. She plans to pursue her artistic passion for culinary arts during a gap year and then continue her education at Princeton.

What are some of your artistic inspirations?

The most notable inspiration would be my grandma. She was a visual artist working in oil pastels. Seeing her artistic mind, particularly her focus on the intersection of nature and art, influenced me as I was growing up. I remember my grandma constantly getting me paper and pens for my artwork.

Additionally, the arts field trips have exposed me to a wider range of artists beyond the ones I typically looked to, like Monet. There are

so many artists where I can look at their work and find something personal that resonates with me.

How did you discover your passion for art, particularly printmaking?

Coming to Hotchkiss, I was placed in studio art, where I've continued my work for the past four years. I always considered myself a ceramicist throughout middle school, but I am glad I was placed in this course, because it has really improved my skills. My Upper Mid year, Ms. Sam Salazar, my studio art teacher, introduced me to the world of printmaking, her area of expertise. Last spring, I started to practice that medium with a series I called "A Print A Day."

Can you tell me about your most recent piece?

I created a dress made out of trash, which I was originally drawn to because I am into fashion and

design and interested in the issue of overconsumption.

This dress consists of materials you wouldn't necessarily expect to be on a piece of clothing, such as packaging from the post office and waste products from around the school. I wanted to think more critically about how I, and others, create waste through consumption and shopping. My entire piece centers around the idea that "you are what you wear."

Do you have any advice for aspiring artists?

Step out of your comfort zone. It was never my plan to take studio art. Looking back, it has taught me so much. I've met great people and worked with amazing teachers through the class. I'm really happy I stuck with it for four years, because I got to try so many new things. Keep pushing yourself, and don't stick to just what you know.



KATHARINE ELLIS '26

Sports



Boys Varsity Tennis competed against seven other teams in the annual KITT.

An Eulogy to Cinderella Teams in March Madness

By ANDREW RORABACK '27

In 2023, talking to all my friends in middle school who either weren't from Connecticut or lacked state pride, I felt like the Grinch. March Madness was the wild west in 2023 with the highest seed of the Final Four being four-seed UConn. To put that into perspective, this year's Final Four had only top three-seeded teams, with two number one seeds amongst them. For those who didn't follow UConn's 2023 regular season, it looked like this: November, great; December, great; January, lost 5 of 8 games; February, great; March, won the Natty.

All these factors led to the Huskies being a four-seed, and when they reached the Final Four, I was filled with hope I'd see them win their first national championship in my (conscious) lifetime. Granted, it was actually only nine years removed from their last one, but I was five back then, and Jim Calhoun, the legendary Huskies coach from 1986-2012, was just a name that rang empty to me. University of Miami, the five-seed, was the next worst, but don't worry, UConn took care of them.

The other side of the bracket, however, presented options of SDSU (San Diego State University) and Florida Atlantic—not perennial powerhouses. UConn won. Frankly, it was never in doubt. What it was, however, was the most diverse Final Four I've ever seen, and with the increasing prevalence of

money in college sports, a subject I have already opined upon, I may never see it again.

Let's take a look at this year's March Madness Final Four, which, not to brag, I predicted perfectly (97th percentile bracket, but who's counting?). You had, on the right side, two one-seeds. Michigan, the eventual winner (with a lineup of all transfers, by the way), faced off against one-seed Arizona, who I, in spite of my state pride, backed to win. I was correct that UConn would lose in the finals, albeit tragically, but incorrect as to who they would lose to.

On the left side, was two-seed UConn, who wound up losing in the finals. Filling out the final four, if you were feeling frisky, was three-seed Illinois. Upset lovers were hardly satisfied. To be the bearer of bad news, they rarely are in any meaningful way. I loved Sister Jean as much as anyone, and I truly appreciated the runs of 2022 St. Peters, 2025 McNeese, 2018 Loyola Chicago, or whatever other upset darlings ESPN tried to convince you had what it took to win it all.

There is an unfortunate predictive model with a high degree of accuracy. It's known as OSOC. OS stands for one seed, and they have made up for 14 of the 17 national championships OSOC has correctly predicted in the past 18 years. C stands for Connecticut. UConn has the other three. The only non-one-seed who's not named UConn to win in my lifespan was, drum roll, two-seed Villanova. That shot

wasn't just the greatest buzzer-beater of all time, but a message of hope to all the underdogs. Even teams that aren't in the top four can win, provided they're in Storrs or, get this, in the top five. If you're not a top seed, winning a college basketball title is just incredibly unlikely.

In the CFP (College Football Playoffs), by contrast, since 2014, one-seeds have won only four times out of 13. Basketball just seems to be predictable. In fact, when I tuned in to ESPN the day after the brackets, their analysts—typically exceedingly able in the field of being wrong—correctly observed that this year seemed to be one where the top seeds would win.

What am I getting at in this admittedly rambling piece of writing? I think this trend of number one seeds facing off in the National Championship is going to continue. The transfer portal only compounds this issue. Those that win get money. Those that get money spend it. Those that spend, win. NIL has made the college sports landscape one where the rich get richer, but I digress. If you want to know why I think the transfer portal is bad, read my article on Nico Iamaleava.

While I, like you, will be rooting for whatever 11-seed from rural Ohio shocks the world, if they do, I wouldn't count on it. Hopefully, however, this will make us appreciate the McNeese and High Points of the world even more. All else being equal, go Huskies.

BVT Places 3rd at Annual KITT Tournament

By STELLA LIAO '27
Website Manager

Boys Varsity Tennis traveled to the annual Kingswood-Oxford Invitational Tennis Tournament (KITT) on March 28 and 29 to compete against Westminster, Deerfield, Groton, Kingswood Oxford, Lawrenceville, Choate, and Hall High School.

The team tied for third place overall with Deerfield in the eight-team tournament, while Choate took first and Lawrenceville placed second.

The competition served as an opportunity for the team to experiment early in the season. Head Coach Josh Smith said, "The main goal for the team from the coaches was to try out some different things, such as doubles pairings."

Tsibikov '26 won the first singles flight and was the only player to secure a main draw title. In his match against the number-one Deerfield player, Tsibikov lost the first set 4-6, won the second set 6-4, and took the match in a 10-6 tiebreaker, avenging his loss to the same player last year. Coach Smith said, "It was a really close match, and I am very proud that he was able to avenge his loss to a very strong opponent."

While most of the players did not advance through the main draw, several won matches in the consolation rounds, contributing to the team's overall score. Matches in the main draw each worth two points, while matches in the back draw each worth one point.

The tournament is a longstanding tradition for the boy's team. Coach Smith said, "As one of the three major tournaments in the season, KITT offers players a chance to build chemistry, assess team bonding, and prepare for the actual season."

Following the tournament, the team secured a 4-2 victory against Taft on April 8.

The team played Salisbury on April 10 and will face Westminster, Kent, and Trinity Pawling the following week.

"KITT offers players a chance to build chemistry, assess team bonding, and prepare for the season," said Head Coach Josh Smith.

Four-year Senior Yury Tsibikov '26 won the 1st singles flight.

The tournament featured four singles flights and two doubles flights, with each player guaranteed at least two matches across the two-day competition.

Six players attended: Tsibikov '26 (1st singles), Jai Rizvi '26 (2nd singles), Jackson Grace '26 (3rd singles), Nate Reif '27 (4th singles), and two doubles pairings: Tsibikov and Grace (1st doubles), and Zach Chen '28 and Liam Pastella '28 (2nd doubles).



ALICIA FENG '28

Spring Season Upcoming Games

Boys Varsity Lacrosse
4/18 @ Brunswick

Boys JV Lacrosse
4/18 vs. Brunswick

Girls Varsity Lacrosse
4/18 @ Loomis

Girls JV Lacrosse
4/17 vs. Rumsey

Boys Varsity Tennis
4/17 @ Kent

Boys JV Tennis
4/17 vs. Rumsey

Girls Varsity Tennis
4/18 vs. Hoosac

Girls JV Tennis
4/22 vs. Kent

Varsity Rowing
4/18 @ Suffield

Boys Track and Field
4/18 vs. Deerfield

Girls Track and Field
4/18 vs. Deerfield

Varsity Ultimate
April 18 @ Home

Varsity Baseball
4/18 vs. KO

Boys Varsity Golf
4/22 @ Wyantenuck

Girls Varsity Golf
4/18 @ Hotchkiss

Varsity Teams Travel Around the Country for Preseason Training

GRAPHIC BY BELLA CHEN '29



COMMUNICATIONS

Athlete of the Issue: Mark Zhu '26

By RIKAKO UMEZAWA '27

For most high schoolers, waking up before dawn to train at 5 a.m. sounds like punishment. For Mark Zhu '26, it's just a normal Tuesday.

Zhu is a four-year Senior from Suzhou, China and co-captain of Boys Varsity Rowing. He will row next year for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Zhu also plays alto saxophone with the Right Brain Logic jazz band. He is on the board of St. Luke's and a proctor in Dana Dorm.

Head Coach Phil Hodoso said, "I've never seen a high schooler with Mark's level of commitment and self-discipline. His energy draws people in. He leads without saying much; you just watch him, and you want to be better. He truly doesn't know the words 'give up!'"

Teammate Emerson Murdoch '27 said, "Mark is the biggest influence of my life. Everyone knows he works the hardest. That pushes all of us to be stronger, faster, and more ambitious."

How did you get into rowing?

I've always loved water sports: surfing, scuba diving, anything that kept me close to the water. About six years ago, I stumbled across a rowing club near a canal close to home and fell immediately in love

with the sport. I stayed with it until I came to Hotchkiss, where rowing became something far bigger than a hobby.

What do you like about rowing?

Rowing is a sport where the output is proportional to the input. There's so much pain, but the results are very clear. And when you're training with friends and coaches, the pain feels magically lighter. It actually makes me excited for practice every day.

What kind of leader do you try to be as a captain?

I try to lead by example. I promise myself to show up for practice earlier than anyone else, give everything I have, stay consistent, and smile.

Even when things are hard, I think it's important to push through and stay positive. After really tough practices like 2Ks, I try to smile (not because it's easy, but because I want my teammates to feel like we can get through it together).

What does rowing mean to you?

Rowing has taught me discipline and the value of pushing through boundaries. It has made me reflect on my daily routine, health

regulations, relationship with others, and most importantly, self-confidence. I feel like I can face any type of challenge now and not back down.

The team means everything. The guys on the boat feel like real siblings. We go through everything together, and that creates a really strong bond.

Why did you choose MIT for college, and what are you most excited about?

MIT felt like the right balance for me. Besides rowing, I am passionate about Chemistry and Music.

I'm not too sure I am capable of balancing everything I want to do (I have so much I want to do), but I'm excited to think about a new chapter of my life there and the family I will make on the team.

What are your goals for the rest of this season?

This team has a lot of depth and experience, and we have a real shot at doing something special at NEIRAS this year. I'd love for us to finish in the top three, but more than that, I want us to keep pushing each other and make the most of the remaining time we have together.



BELLA CHEN '29

Zhu will row next year for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Spring Season Recent Results

Boys Varsity Lacrosse vs. Fred. Gunn : 15-10

Girls JV Lacrosse vs. Canterbury: 14-1

Girls Varsity Tennis vs. Choate: 9-0

Varsity Baseball vs. Loomis: 4-5

Boys JV Lacrosse vs. Berkshire: 0-9

Boys Varsity Tennis vs Salisbury: 4-3

Girls JV Tennis vs. Choate: 6-1

Girls Varsity Golf vs. Taft: Loss

Girls Varsity Lacrosse vs. Canterbury: 17-2

Boys JV Tennis vs. Millbrook: 7-0

Varsity Ultimate vs. Choate: 7-6

Boys Varsity Golf vs Canterbury, more: Win

