

Phillips Exeter Academy  
Exeter, New Hampshire

# The Exonian



The oldest continuously running preparatory school newspaper in America

## NEWS

Read about the OMA-hosted candlelight vigil for the victims of the Atlanta anti-Asian shootings,

## LIFE

Read about "What Comes Next," an original musical written by Music Instructor Jerome Walker, 4.

## OPINIONS

Read about Anna Kim's '24 reflection on her time so far at Exeter.

## Students Respond to Anti-Asian Hate Crimes



Senior Lucy Cai looks out on the Academic quad.

Teja Vankireddy / *The Exonian*

By ANVIBHATE, ELLIE ANASPERANTAS, HANNAHPARK and ANDREWYUAN

Student organizers, in collaboration with the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA), hosted a candlelight vigil Monday night in response to the March 16 anti-Asian

shootings in Atlanta, in which eight people, six of whom were of Asian descent and seven of whom were women, were killed by a white gunman.

To recognize and honor these victims, the student-led vigil started with a reflection from Sarah Huang and a poem by Lucy Cai, followed by a guzheng performance

by upper Lina Huang. Eight minutes of silence to honor each of the eight victims of the shooting followed, and the estimated 400 attendees were invited to stand after the vigil and reflect at four tables on the quad, each table bearing the victims' names.

"I hope Exonians take the time to honor and remember the victims of the Atlanta

shooting. General media coverage of the shooting has been disappointing and has dehumanized the Asian American women victims," organizer and senior Emily Kang said. "We wanted to create a space that recognizes the victims for their humanity and clearly acknowledge that the shooting was a hate crime fueled by anti-Asian racism and misog-

yny."

"We thought that creating this space was important for a lot of reasons, including honoring the lives of the eight individuals that were killed in the Atlanta-area and recognizing gender- and race-based violence that it was," L. Huang said.

Dean of Multicultural Affairs Sherry Hernandez invit-



The Exonian encourages our readers to visit the following GoFundMe, which is raising money to benefit Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta (*Advancing Justice-Atlanta, AAAJ-Atlanta*). Donations will go to supporting the organization's civic engagement & organizing, deportation defense fund, solidarity with detainees, impact litigation, immigration legal services, mutual aid and policy advocacy, and directly to the victim's families.

ed the community to attend the vigil in a school-wide email on Sunday, March 21, following a campus-wide statement offered by Principal Bill Rawson on March 17.

"This was a concerted effort calling on all adults and the many ways they support our students in and outside of the classroom," Hernandez said.

ANTI-ASIAN HATE CRIMES, 2

## PEA Admissions Rate Drops to 10%

By JETTGOETZ, MICHAEL YANG, ELLIE ANA SPERANTAS and ARHON STRAUSS

Prospective students applying to the Academy received admission results March 10. The select few from the large applicant pool of students from around the globe have until April 10 to decide if they want to join the next wave of Exonians.

This year, students were not given the chance to schedule an on-campus visit and interview due to COVID-19 health concerns. Instead, the Admissions and Communications team provided numerous online resources, ranging from Q&A webinars to virtual tours in hopes of allowing prospective students to experience all that Exeter has to offer. Since many students did not have the opportunity to take the Independent School Entrance Examination (ISEE) or Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT), Admissions waived the standardized testing requirement, allowing students to apply test-optional.

The Academy altered the admissions process to remain accessible during the COVID-19 pandemic. "We hosted close to 100 virtual events for prospective students throughout the summer and fall," Dean of Enrollment William Leahy said. "We moved to being a test-optional admission process just for this admission year as we knew online testing and in-person test centers would be impacted by the pandemic."

"We haven't made any decisions yet about our process for next year but anticipate some parts of our process this year will continue into the future such as offering some virtual fall events for families unable to visit campus," Leahy added.

Despite these challenges posed by the pandemic, Exeter saw an increased number of applicants. According to Leahy, the number of applicants increased by 23% from last year. "It is clear that COVID concerns globally played a role in the increased interest in applying to Exeter and other boarding schools."

Leahy said. However, due to the increased number of applicants, the school admission rate dropped from 15% last year to approximately 10% this year.

Students were overjoyed at the possibility of attending Exeter for multiple different reasons, from the prospect of discussions around the Harkness table to the boarding experience to the top notch faculty and great friends that I would make," Rui Jiang '25 said.

Jiang explained how Exeter offered math curricula Jiang did not have at their current school. "I currently take AP Calculus BC, and the schools in my area don't provide any courses for me to take in high school while Exeter provides years of math courses for me even with where I am now," Jiang said.

Victoria Liu '25 learned about Exeter through Exeter Summer. "The Exeter Summer experience also helped me understand the learning environment. Though it was online, it definitely was one of the best times I've had!" Liu

ADMISSIONS, 3

## Students Urge Financial Compensation for Labor

By LILYHAGGE, HANNAHPARK, ANDREWYUAN and ANGELAZHANG

The emotional labor that Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) clubs incur in their roles as student leaders has encouraged many OMA student leaders to push for financial compensation. The Student Council election debates of the 2021-2022 school year brought about schoolwide discourse on this issue, though affinity groups have been requesting financial compensation for several years.

In her 2021 Martin Luther King Jr. Day keynote address, Roxane Gay '92 said, "I think that students who serve in executive positions for all student organizations should receive stipends."

"The endowment can afford it," she added.

Rawson wrote in an email to The Exonian on January 19 that, "this proposal [for financial compensation] has not previously been brought to my attention. I would like to hear from OMA, the Dean

of Students Office and others to understand their views on whether compensation would be appropriate, for what students in what student organizations, and how they recommend those decisions be made."

"I know it's been brought up in StuCo, but if we're to really acknowledge where that idea came from, it's from ALES," upper Janessa Vargas, co-head of the Afro-Latinx Exonian Society (ALES) and La Alianza Latina (LAL), said. "There's been proposals about every four years, they've been around since 1968... the 2016 proposal is really interesting because it's the one that we were using."

"It would be beneficial for there to be avenues for students to be compensated for work they do as advocates for OMA clubs," senior and Asian Voices (AV) co-head JaQ Lai said. "Considering the school has paid positions such as library tech support, lifeguard, or game room monitor, the threshold for which students can be compensated for labor has been set at a pretty low precedent.

I don't see why students shouldn't be compensated for the very intense and difficult work that often goes beyond what they originally committed to in the context of what their club does."

Courtney Marshall, Associate Dean of Advising, adviser of the Afro-Latinx Exonian Society and former leader of the OMA Book Club, agreed and shared OMA club leaders' frustrating experiences. "I always say to the students, what do you get out of it? Right? Is this OMA club leadership role adding to you in any way? Or is it a headache? And if it's a headache and it's frustration and it's irritating, that has to change."

Requests for financial compensation have grown in response to the Academy's attempts to address global incidents of racism, which some OMA leaders have seen as lacking. "We saw [that] with the school, [there was a ] very delayed response to the rise of anti Asian racism, primarily in the Bay Area against elderly Asian folks," senior Sarah Huang, co-head of AV, said

COMPENSATION, 3

## Religious Services, Students Discuss Queer Religiosity

By ASHLEY JIANG, SELIM KIM and CLARK WU

The Religious and Spiritual Life team organized a display of solidarity in response to the Vatican Church's recent statement against same-sex unions at Phillips Exeter on March 22. Students of all backgrounds and identities were welcomed to gather for conversation on the state of LGBTQ+ rights

in all branches of religion. Students of different religious backgrounds, sexual orientation and gender identities attended.

Pope Francis, the head of the Catholic Church and Vatican City State, declared in a Vatican statement that the Catholic Church cannot bless same-sex civil unions on March 15. The Church found "absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual

unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God's plan for marriage and family."

Senior and Catholic Exonians co-head Stephen McNulty shared the Vatican's statement and his own thoughts about it to club members in an email on March 18. McNulty shared a quote from Father James Martin, SJ, a leader in the LGBTQ+ Catholic community: "The mother

of a gay teen once said to me, 'Does the Vatican realize what the language they use can do to a 14 year old boy? It can destroy him.'"

"That feeling is very real right about now," McNulty wrote. "Truth be told, it was not the contents of the document that most impacted me. It does not represent a shift in Church teaching in any substantial way, nor is it really a surprise. The language was

crushing and demeaning to me. I think it was a bit jarring for LGBTQ+ Catholics, myself included, because of what has seemed like openness from the church as of late. There's a bit of whiplash, and I'm obviously disappointed."

Religion Department Chair and event co-host Hannah Hofheinz explained their reasoning behind the event's organization. "My concern was the

pain people felt when they were told that the institution to which they belong invalidates their relationships and the shapes of their love," Hofheinz said. "Opening up that space to remind students that queer love is beautiful and to be celebrated is as important on campus as it is anywhere else."

Director of Religious and Spiritual Reverend Bonnie-Jeanne Casey

QUEER RELIGIOSITY, 4

# News

## » ANTI-ASIAN HATE CRIMES

Read about the OMA-hosted candlelight vigil for the victims of the Atlanta anti-Asian shootings, 2.

## » QUEER RELIGIOSITY

Read about the Exeter community's response to the Vatican Church's statement against same-sex unions, 4.

## » ANTI-TRANS BILL

Read about PEA's reflections on a bill proposing to ban transgender girls from competing on girls' sports teams in public high schools and colleges, 2.

# NH State Legislature Strikes Down Anti-Transgender Bill

By **STACY CHEN, SELIM KIM, SHEALA IACOBUCCI and EMILLEVINE**

The New Hampshire House of Representatives entertained House Bill 1251 (HB1251), which would ban transgender girls from competing on girls' sports teams in public high schools and colleges, beginning on January 8. HB1251 was struck down by the New Hampshire House of Representatives, and would not have directly affected Academy student athletes due to the Academy's status as a private institution.

Director of Physical Education and Athletics Jason Baseden wrote in a school-wide email on March 3, "Phillips Exeter is fully committed to supporting athletes of all genders in our athletics program." Baseden attached the Academy's Gender Support Plan created in 2018. The Gender Support Plan outlines transgender and gender non-conforming students' rights on campus:

"You have the right to be called by the pronouns and name of your choice... You

have the right to feel safe and comfortable on campus, including in your housing. You have the right to medical services that respect your gender identity and expression. You have the right to use the restroom/locker room you feel accords with your gender identity, or which is the most comfortable/appropriate option. You have a right to confidentiality, within the bounds of reporting laws, including confidential sessions with a therapist."

The plan also gives students the option to work with Baseden and LGBTQ+ Coordinator Joanne Lembo to make sure "facilities, uniforms, and team culture are appropriate."

"Phillips Exeter Academy recognizes that all students can benefit from having the Academy become less binary and more gender inclusive. The various constituencies of the Academy — faculty, staff, students, trustees, alumni, and parents — can also benefit from education and conversation around the topics of gender stereotypes and gender expression as the Academy moves towards greater equi-

ty and openness on campus," Baseden wrote.

Baseden discussed the impact of HB1251 on the Academy's athletics. "As far as the bill and its result, it does not change our support of our transgender students. We will wholeheartedly support all our students in their participation in our programming," Baseden said. "If public schools were not allowed to compete against us, that would not change our support for our transgender students and their participation in our athletic programming."

Although HB1251 does not directly affect the Academy and support offered to transgender students, many acknowledged the negative implications that the bill would bring against the LGBTQ+ community.

"I see this bill as part and parcel of a wider attack on LGBTQ+ rights. Trans people and especially trans women are quite vulnerable — easy targets," Queer Umbrella Group and Transgender Affinity adviser Alex Myers said. "This bill fits in line with the 'bathroom bills' of a few

years ago. Basically, the subtext is that trans women are not really women. These bills — sports and bathrooms — are wrapped up in language about 'protecting girls and women' but really the bills are not only anti-trans but also misogynistic." Myers was the first openly transgender student at the Academy and Harvard University.

"I think the anti-trans bills in New Hampshire and in state legislatures across the country are a new type of fear-mongering that have nothing to do with any actual threat, similar to the years of ridiculous slippery slope arguments around marriage equality and other forms of discrimination," Queer Kids of Color adviser and Music Instructor Jerome Walker said.

Many students shared similar thoughts on the bill. "It's already another form of othering that transgender students already go through if they don't pass as completely as the gender that they've transitioned to," senior Annie Smaldone said.

"To single out only one, seems like a direct attack,"

lower Philip Avilova said. "Trans people are already targeted, we are already discriminated against, and I don't understand why they are adding on to that."

Students also voiced their opinions on the Academy's Gender Support Plan. "I feel like all the things listed [on the Gender Support Plan] are incredibly bare minimum things, you know? These should already be a thing," Smaldone said.

"I feel like there's always a plan or there's always certain things that are proposed by the school and it's great and all, but you could always do more," Smaldone continued. "A lot of times queer faculty are the ones students think to go to because those are the people they identify with. The job shouldn't fall on just queer faculty to help students. It's great that there are allies and teachers who are like 'We're going to be here for you,' but those are not the same lived experiences."

Smaldone continued, "Me talking to the counselor about my identity is not the same as me talking to another student

or a teacher who has similar experiences. And even though they can be like 'I can empathize or I can sympathize,' it's only to an extent."

Avilova expressed desire for the Academy to further support LGBTQIA+ students. "One of the things I wish they did more of is reaching out. Personally, I felt anxious to come out to people, so that would be helpful," he said.

"This is not a new topic of discussion—we have had many conversations over the years and will continue to do so," Lembo, who is also a GSA adviser, said. "I hope that this bill motivates our students to actively support the Academy's inclusive plan."

Upper Charles Falivena expressed their exhaustion of constantly seeing similar events and headlines. "I think all of us are just really tired of this happening. There really isn't too much that can be done, but I suppose there could be...[a deeper] grasp on gender and trans issues, and a much deeper level of commitment on the part of those not necessarily in the community."

# John Jost Speaks to Democrat Club

By **LAUREN KIM and VALENTINA ZHANG**

Professor of Psychology and Politics and Co-Director of the Center for Social and Political Behavior at New York University John Jost spoke to Exeter's Democrat Club on March 15 at 6:55 p.m. on his theory on system justification and contemporary American politics. Club members agreed that whether it be climate change or individual identity, Jost's talk that Monday prompted informative discussion and learning.

Hailing from Toronto, Canada, Jost is a social psychologist known for his work on system justification theory, which gives insight as to why people defend policies that harm them. He received his PhD in Social and Political Psychology at Yale University as a doctoral student under notable psychologist William McGuire in 1995. He has contributed multiple theories regarding political ideologies over the years, and also served as President of the International Society of Polit-

ical Psychology from 2015 to 2016.

Jost noted that people have a psychological tendency to defend the status quo. "System Justification Theory, subjectively if not objectively, doesn't solve the problem but appears to solve the problem of epistemic, existential, and relational motives," Jost said.

For many club members, while they had previously heard of these ideas, it was powerful to see the data behind Jost's conclusions. "He provided researched, informed facts to justify a widely drawn conclusion — that people who benefit from systemic injustices are quicker to justify the system than those who do not," upper Riley Valashinas said.

Senior Bea Burak said that Jost's data backed her ideas as an activist for climate change. "Mr. Jost mentioned that one method he's found effective for convincing strong system-justifiers to support climate action is framing climate change as something that will disrupt the status quo—therefore a change in policy is nec-

essary to prevent even greater change to our way of life," Burak said. "I think in many ways that's how I already think and talk about climate change so it was interesting to see it backed up by his studies."

Burack also found that Jost confirmed her personal ideas and research. She said, "His talk reinforced something I've been thinking about for a while, which is that people's responses to particular issues tend to be highly predictable (similar to the idea of motivated reasoning). Mr. Jost's research shows that individuals tend to have a certain level of desire to justify the systems in place (government systems, social systems, etc.) and that mindset impacts how they fall on different issues. For instance, someone who scores higher on 'system justification' is more likely to defend the current state of wealth inequality, gender disparities, environmental regulation, etc. when they hear the status quo criticized."

While Jost's presentation reinforced many people's

previous ideas, there were also some unexpected pieces of data that raised new points of interest for club members. Lower Montana Dickerson said, "I think one statistic that a lot of people will come back to is the idea that Republicans are happier than Democrats, because I think there's a lot to unpack there. It's just something for people to keep in mind."

Upper and Democrat Club co-head Grace Valashinas agreed that the talk gave her new ideas to think about. "I thought it was interesting how we talked about how France was the only exception to mostly liberal people and Progressives being more likely to score higher on the system justification scale," she said. "I also got a lot out of the ways in which he tied politics to psychology as a whole, which I hadn't seen."

"Dem Clubbers got a taste for a different disciplinary lens through which politics can be evaluated. Political psychology is fascinating and an understanding of the biological basis for our political



*Courtesy of John Jost*

actions can help to further progressive change more effectively," co-head and senior Maggie Wainwright said,

According to Wainwright, since Democrat Club had mostly internal dialogues this year, learning about the psychology behind politics was a unique experience for many.

Looking back, Wainwright said, "Political psychology

is fascinating and an understanding of the biological basis for our political actions can help to further progressive change more effectively... I love politics so much, because really it's just shorthand for exploring how we should live together, and it makes me so happy whenever Dem Club expands my definition of what politics can be."

# Students Respond to Anti-Asian Hate Crimes Cont.

Religion Instructor Rabbi Jennifer Marx Asch, Dean of Students Brooks Moriarty, Assistant Principal Karen Lassey and Director of Student Activities Joanne Lembo supported the effort. Marx Asch ordered 200 LED candles with the hope that students could pick them up and place them on their windowsills in solidarity with the Asian American Pacific Islander community.

"Rabbi Marx Asch reached out with the idea of shining a light in our windows as a way to support our [Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders] AAPI community. In Jewish tradition, shining a menorah from their homes was a symbol of safety, a place to land home safely," Hernandez said. "[The students] took care of recruiting their volunteers to distribute the candles, writing comforting and healing words, playing music, and creating a QR code for their independent fundraiser to help support the Atlanta chapter for Asian Americans Advancing Justice."

Marx Asch spoke about the importance of the Exeter community to come together. "When I woke up Wednesday morning and read the headlines about the murders of the Asian women in Atlanta, I felt so many emotions, mainly anger," she said. "Here at Exeter, aside from caring for members of our own particular communities, we need to build coalitions between our communities to create networks of support, protection, and positive change to make our campus and country safe for all peoples."

English Instructor and Asian Voices adviser Weiling Woo expressed appreciation for the organizers of the event and the AAPI community. "This was truly a community driven effort, led by students, adults, and allies in solidarity with the Asian American community. For their work I am truly grateful," she said. "In my work as Asian Student Program Coordinator, time and time again, year after year, I have seen the AAPI community come together and organize the spac-

es and events that we need. This is a real source of power and strength. And together with the help of allies, we are even more buoyed."

Kang expressed concern for the lack of mainstream media condemning the systemic racism that the hate crime was rooted in and silence about the lives of these victims. "We wanted to create a space that recognizes the victims for their humanity and clearly acknowledge that the shooting was a hate crime fueled by anti-Asian racism and misogyny," Kang said. "I give credit to the administration on having a timelier response, as well as more resources available to students. However, I want to underscore that this is what should be expected. While it is a great improvement from the inadequate and tardy responses from administration in previous incidents, it is not something to praise or laud. This type of response should be the standard, the bare minimum."

Students who attended the event thought it was a respect-

ful way to honor the victims of the Atlanta shooting, but some were disappointed with the initial response by the Academy community.

"It's definitely not enough. I saw it. I looked at the [Rawson] email and I saw it and I was like, okay, that's it. Because it was three sentences. And I feel like without any context of what happened that day, anyone can write three sentences about Asian American violence [and] violence in the Asian community," upper Michelle Park said. "They really could be doing more. And I don't really know. I don't really know how they thought three sentences would be enough for the entire Asian community to feel somewhat supported in the Exeter community."

"Understandably the organizers had to take time for themselves to process the information and everything that's been happening, especially with the conflicting new sources," upper Gretl Baghdadi said. "Certain emails sent by the administration didn't

seem very sincere, but I do think the vigil was very helpful considering how many people showed up. It was very nice to see that there was so much support on campus, [using] their names helped to legitimize their personhood."

"I honestly wouldn't have changed a thing. I'm really happy that I've got to be part of the volunteering group and help out passing out handles, but I know that the AV leaders have been working tirelessly on this and I think they did an excellent job," upper and Student Council President Siona Jain said. "I loved Sarah's statement at the beginning. I think it perfectly encapsulated all of what the Asian Americans are feeling right now."

Upper Bona Yoo expressed appreciation for The Exonian's special issue on the Atlanta shooting published last week. "I am grateful that The Exonian has taken on that necessary work. In all of the other parts of the Academy, life has resumed with its usual speed and vigor, even amidst the break," she said.

"It's refreshing and relieving that at least one major pillar of Exeter, which is The Exonian, has chosen to put a pause on its normal activities and take a moment to encourage reflection."

"I applaud The Exonian's recent issue and Daniel Zhang's op-Ed. As I read it, I couldn't help but think, 'Yes. This is it. You have named it,'" Woo said. "As a friend and former colleague remarked, a high school newspaper is doing a better job speaking the truth than the mainstream media. Student voices are powerful."

"It's important that we remember the names of the victims and refuse letting them be reduced to statistics. I was also surprised but glad about how many people showed up—as an Asian American, I've been hearing about anti-Asian hate crimes from family and family friends for a quite a while, and it's nice to see the larger Exeter community address this issue I've been concerned about," upper Emma Chen said.

# PEA Admissions Rate Drops to 10% Cont.

said. “What’s really unique and attractive about Exeter is the Harkness method. Collaborating with other students always brings me new perspectives and ideas, and of course I love contributing too!”

Micaela Lopez ’25 chose Exeter for its emphasis on goodness and knowledge. “Exeter’s values of thinking deeply and creatively and practicing good citizenship match up with my family’s,” Lopez said.

For Naomi Wood ’25, the Academy’s virtual tours shaped Wood’s view of Exeter along with the opportunity to visit sibling Jackie Wood ’23 during Family Day. “For me, the ‘Chat With Exeter’

was super helpful because I was able to talk with current Exeter students and get their opinions on the school, as well as ask my own questions,” N. Wood said.

“Because my older sister is currently at Exeter, I was lucky to have the chance to visit her and the campus last year on family day. So while I was visiting Exeter, I got to sit in and watch some of her classes, and that was where I got to see the Harkness method and really how everyone was just happy to be there,” Wood added.

Although in-person events were cancelled, the pandemic influenced some students to choose Exeter. “In a way, the

pandemic affected my final decision by creating a big incentive to be out in the world again, to try something new by leaving the familiarity of home and to expand my community,” Lopez said.

However, due to the pandemic, many students could not consider in-person aspects of the Academy during their decision-making process. “Missing out on the chance to tour Exeter’s campus and get a feel of what the environment is like was a big loss for me and all other applicants,” Jiang said. “I couldn’t feel the environments of the schools in person.”

“I felt like I had to rely much more on research, as

well as hearing the perspectives of the students; at times, it felt like I was taking a leap of faith since my idea of what Exeter was really like seemed unclear,” Rina Fujii ’25 said.

“I also loved the idea of having Harkness present at every class, since I had already had the opportunity of experiencing it when I was at Exeter Summer,” Fujii continued.

Exeter offered webinars as a replacement for in-person opportunities. “The webinars Exeter offered really helped me understand what it is like to study at Exeter,” Liu said.

“I relied a lot on the Zoom presentations, the video links

on the website and my contact with administrators such as my interviewer,” Lopez added.

International students faced unique challenges brought by the pandemic. “The admissions process was vastly different for [international] students, as the SSAT was canceled. I also couldn’t fly to the U.S. for the interviews and the campus tour and had to complete all of these events online,” international student Zuzanna Szul ’25 said.

Finn Lorgen ’25, brother of current student Marcus Lorgen ’24 experienced testing difficulties while applying this year due to differences in

standardized grading systems between America and Norway. “One important point of reference for academics for international students like myself is the SSAT. My brother didn’t get to take it due to COVID,” M. Lorgen said.

For some, virtual visits were not as compelling as in-person school visits. Heewoo Jung ’23, brother of admitted student Daniel Jung ’24, said, “Many institutions provided virtual experiences, but they could never replace the actual school visits.”

Despite the unique challenges applicants faced in the applications process this year, many remained optimistic. “Exeter has a lot of great things about it, and the day I saw my admission letter was one of the happiest days of my life,” said Jiang.

# Students Urge Financial Compensation for Labor Cont.

in reference to a February 23 all-community email Rawson sent out to address anti-Asian violence. “The school’s response is very late. And one of the things we raised in the meeting [with Rawson] is that students shouldn’t have to ask you to make a statement for you to make a statement, because the whole point is that you’re expressing your care.”

“[The email] didn’t address the core of the problem. And so in order to voice that to Principal Rawson, [the co-heads] had to meet several times to go over how we were going to present what exactly was wrong to principal Rawson,” senior Emily Kang, co-head of AV, affirmed Huang’s stance. “If Principal Rawson then really knew how to support students and sent out an

email earlier and knew not to make the mistakes that they did, we wouldn’t have to go through this.”

Vargas explained that, due to the Academy’s inaction and delayed responses, student leaders within OMA had taken on anti-racist work themselves.

“It’s emotional labor. Ideally, no student would have to be doing this. Ideally, it would be [the] faculty, experienced sociologists, racial studies professors [doing the work], but because the school likes to take the unpaid emotional labor of students, [these responsibilities] rest on us. So for me, compensation is the bare minimum for years of taking work without giving credit, which is what Rawson did in his anti-racist update. He

credited The Exonian more than the Afro-Latinx Society, [taking] language straight from [our] proposals,” Vargas mentioned.

Marshall categorized OMA’s work into people-facing and administration-facing responsibilities. “If you are the club leaders and you are...planning events...going out to meet members, doing club stuff...that face other students, that’s one thing, and that’s what clubs do. The tricky part is when those same club leaders have to turn administration-facing. And they have to turn to adult-facing. And so that’s when I step in and say, ‘well, wait a minute, what then is the role of the school?’”

Huang shared the sentiment and added that the co-

heads of AV met over seven times preceding their meeting with Rawson. “We spent a lot of time writing emails, preparing notes, meeting with our advisors, and talking with [Student Council] Executive Board members. Ultimately, that’s a lot of work.”

“Affinity groups are not political spaces. That’s not what we’re here for. We’re here for each other, not to correct the errors and missteps of an institution or anyone else. And the fact that we do that for the school means we should be compensated. What we’re doing now exceeds the responsibilities of what facilitators of affinity spaces should do,” Huang said.

Kang explained her similar stance on the issue. “The reason why I’m asking for

compensation is because we’re told to do a lot of emotional labor and if this school really supported students, we wouldn’t have to go through that emotional labor, but we do,” she said. “We want the school to acknowledge the fact that this isn’t something easy for us.”

“I think the school could do a much better job really showing all the work that these clubs do. And not just like a one time here, let’s look at OMA club, but really integrating them into the life of the school. Let families know about it, because I also run the family newsletter. Do families even know about what OMA clubs are doing?” Marshall said. “Another thing is, you know, we did this one year where we went to the people

of color conference in Nashville and we took a group of students. So I think opportunities to travel, to connect with other student leaders at their schools. I think that would be fabulous.”

Marshall further suggested giving out non-financial compensation to OMA student leaders. “I think as far as compensation, my rule is to ask people what they want. So if it’s money, if it’s course credit, if it’s a nice dorm room, if it’s an office, right? We, as the OMA sponsored group co-heads and leaders, want a dedicated space where we can go in and we can have supplies for just those co-heads. So again, I think for compensation, you have to ask people what it is, what they want.”

# Exonians Address Common Misconceptions

By ANVIBHATE, LEELA GANDHI, ASHLEY JIANG and COLIN JUNG

Many misconceptions persist among the Exeter community—for example, international students are ineligible to receive financial aid, but financial aid is in fact available to all students at the Academy. Students addressed misconceptions about the various organizations they are involved with at the Academy to The Exonian.

## Dorms and Day Students

Many new students were initially concerned about experiencing dorm community while living in a single, including those in McConnell Hall. “I thought that you would just be very lonely in your room all day long,” senior and McConnell proctor Alicia Coble said. “But because we’re all in singles, we all make more of an effort to hang out with each other more.”

“The impact of having people of all grades being in a dorm and the sense of community here. It was definitely something that I felt here and I bet that a large

part of it is because of the dorms,” upper and Exeter Inn dormitory resident Toby Chan said.

Another misconception was that all-gender dorms are limited to students who do not identify on the gender binary, when they are actually open to all. “I wish I had known earlier that anybody can apply, and it’s a wonderfully safe space to grow into your identity,” upper and Williams House resident Anne Chen said.

In addition, some believe that day students cannot fully immerse themselves in school life, but day students say otherwise. “I spend so much time on campus and usually do everything with my affiliated dorm except sleep there,” senior and Dunbar Hall affiliate Caroline Luff said. “[Day students] still [have] those close friendships with everyone at Exeter, since we spend so much time together.”

## Sports

Students often hesitate to try a new sport at Exeter, fearing they must have prior experience in. Sports teams and physical education programs at the Academy,

however, are open to all. “Dance Company is a great environment, even for newer students, which can’t always be said about dance studios,” Chen said.

The same welcoming environment for newcomers also extends to other sports like crew. “Most novices don’t have any experience,” Coble, who is also a co-captain of girls’ crew said. “That’s the majority of people that try out, and those are the people that tend to do best because if you do other sports, and you’re good at taking corrections quickly, then you’ll be great at crew.”

Upper Michelle Park addressed the crew team’s reputation for exclusivity. “It’s a very privileged sport, which I think is why a lot of people think it’s very exclusive, which I think connects to the very cult-like vibe that crew gets. Because Exeter is such a privileged institution, it holds a sport like crew,” she said. “It’s also the time that we spend with each other, [because] crew’s just a time-consuming sport.”

## Clubs

“A common misconception of kids who do debate is that

everyone is argumentative and loud-mouthed,” upper and Daniel Webster Debate Society co-head Alexandria Westray said. “I wish people knew that. Of course, we get people who love to talk, but that oftentimes doesn’t translate to any talent at actually debating. Quieter people are just as present in debate, and often have a lot of well thought-out arguments and knowledge that make them indispensable parts of the team”

M. Park acknowledged Mock Trial’s “cult-like” reputation. “I think that we spend a lot of time together and thus, we spend a lot of time talking about Mock Trial and having meetings and going to the tournaments... It’s like any club. They do it for so much of their time at Exeter, and it’s just part of who they are. I think saying something [is like] a cult is just like a funny way of saying that these people spend a lot of time together... I think that it kind of just shows the love and appreciation you have for whatever you do,” Park said.

Upper and Exeter Association of Rock (EAR) co-head Allison Kim described a common concern.

“A misconception might be that EAR is a serious club, and you have to be really good at an instrument to join,” Kim said. “We are very serious about music and performing, but we try to create a chill environment where everyone can have fun.”

The same holds true for DRAMAT, Exeter’s theater and performance club. “More people should know that you don’t have to have any experience whatsoever with theatre in order to join DRAMAT,” co-head Grace Valashinas added. “It’s such a fun club, and everybody should be involved in it in some way if they’re interested.”

Extracurriculars outside clubs also have similarly warm communities, as Park recounted about the Academy’s orchestra program. “I was so scared because everyone seemed like they knew what they were doing, and they were really talented, and I didn’t have too much experience compared to these other people that were playing since they were little kids,” Park said. “But when I actually started playing, it was so nice to see these instruments come together

and create music. I became friends with people in my section. I realize this wasn’t the toxic, badly competitive environment I thought it would be, [but] it was a place where we were all working to the same goal to create music for people to listen and enjoy.”

Lower and co-Secretary Aaron Joy made clarifications about who can contribute to Student Council (StuCo). “Exonians often think that StuCo is just an organization for elected representatives; however, this isn’t true at all! StuCo welcomes and encourages all Exonians to be active members within council, be part of change, and share their voice,” Joy said.

Luff, who is also a co-President of the Exeter Student Service Organization (ESSO), noted that the prospect of joining ESSO outside of prep year is intimidating to some. “A lot of people are worried that [they’re] already an upper, so [they] can’t join and be a big part of this organization. Or a student comes in and is afraid to apply to the board, because they’re a new upper or new lower,” Luff said. “It’s never too late or too early in your Exeter career to be a part of ESSO. We’re always looking for new voices and new people in our activities.”

# Writing in Practice: The Craft of Academy English Teachers

By JETT GOETZ, MICHAEL YANG and EMILIA KNIESTEDT

Faculty scholars in the English Department shared their work outside of teaching in the classroom, ranging from poetry collections to novels, course policies to critical essays.

## Alex Myers

English Instructor Alex Myers has published three novels—*Revolutionary*, *Continental Divide* and *The Story of Silence*—and is currently working on a fourth projected to arrive this fall. His newest nonfiction book, *Supporting Transgender Students: Understanding Gender Identity and Reshaping School Culture*, comes out on June 1, 2021. In addition, Myers has written numerous essays and opinion pieces on gender identity.

“I enjoy the long form of

novels, really exploring character and place and idea. I favor historical settings though my two most recent have been fantasy (as well as historical, kind of),” he said. “I write because I find it both fun and satisfying – it makes my mind feel good.”

## Todd Hearon

English Instructor Todd Hearon is the author of three poetry collections: *Strange Land*, *No Other Gods* and *Crows in Eden*. He has also published a novella entitled *Do Geese See God*, as well as a number of plays and essays.

Hearon particularly enjoys singing and songwriting. “This spring while on sabbatical, I’ll be working on an album of original songs, tentatively titled *Where the Well Don’t Run Dry*,” he said.

When asked why he pursues writing, Hearon an-

swered, “I’ve never really asked myself why... I guess one answer would be that I enjoy putting things together, experience and imagination, in interesting, compelling and (hopefully) durable ways.”

## Chelsea Woodard

English Instructor Chelsea Woodard has published two poetry collections—*Vellum* in 2014 and *Solitary Bee* in 2016.

In the past year, she completed a manuscript of poems, called *At the Lepidopterist’s House*, which was inspired by her visit to Nabokov’s house and museum in St. Petersburg. Woodard said, “the piece explores various types of collectors and subjects from the natural world.”

“I’m working on a new project now, just going poem by poem. I’m also working on a group of essays about my father,” Woodard said.

When asked why she writes, Woodard responded, “I write to think more clearly about things I see, experience, or struggle to understand.” She continued, “I write, too, to record what is amazing or resists language—when contrary truths exist at the same time, or when something occurs in the human or natural world that is too great for words—the ineffable.”

Woodard remarked, “Writing provides me a means of looking more closely at others, the world, and myself. It also provides a rich imaginative outlet for which I am grateful.”

## Rebecca Moore

English Instructor Rebecca Moore bases her writing around being a teacher and educator. “I write course work, policy and pieces about educational pedagogy as a member of the English department,”

Moore said. “It communicates my experience and thoughts.”

Moore noted that writing is a great way to understand herself and others. “[Writing is] a means to express myself so that I may engage with others and they with me; clarity for ideas—‘how do I know what I think until I see what I say?’” she said.

## Courtney Marshall

English Instructor Courtney Marshall uses writing as a tool to confront injustices of society. “I am a Black feminist critic, and I’ve spent 20 years thinking and writing about Black women’s literature,” Marshall said. “I used to write a lot on the prison system and cultural representations of prisons.”

Marshall is currently working on two projects. “The first is an exercise journal filled with inspirational quotes and

photos. I’m writing this because it’s a book I want to have exist for myself. I’m also writing a series of critical essays on Black women, fatness, and fitness,” Marshall said.

Marshall’s favorite piece is an essay about the TV show, *The Wire*. “I wrote about the show’s female characters, and while I would probably write something very different today, those essays show how I’m always looking for the roles that Black women play in the media even when they aren’t the main characters,” she said.

“Writing is the way I find out what I think about a topic. It’s how I connect to other people who have thought about similar things,” Marshall said. “I also write with the knowledge that for so long it was illegal for Black people to learn how to read and write. My literacy is miraculous to me. I don’t take it for granted.”

# “What Comes Next” Draws Rave Reviews



By ANNA KIM, SAFIRA SCHIOWITZ, CLARK WU and ANDREW YUAN

When the curtains closed, there were few dry eyes in the house. The melancholy tunes still rang in the audience’s mind, and few wished to leave their seats.

From Friday March 12 to Sunday March 14, two casts brought to life *What Comes Next*, a musical originally composed by the Academy’s own Choral Assistant and Teaching Intern Jerome Walker and written by his former Yale classmate Noah Parnes as part of Walker’s senior thesis. Their work traces, in non-linear time, the Fisher family’s recovery from the unexpected death of their son, Max Fisher.

“We came up with the form of the show before the actual story,” Walker recalled. “I love this musical *Merrily We Roll Along*, which tells the story of these three friends who ended up growing apart but it tells it all backwards. I love playing with time, but we were trying to figure out the payoff.”

Parnes had worked on playwrighting prior to this project with Walker. “I love family dramas,” Parnes laughed. “And I love it when the show is grounded in one place. One of my biggest inspirations is *The Humans*, a play by Stephen Karam. It’s just a long family dinner scene. And that really helped us *What Comes Next*. A musical in one place but during separate times, separate snapshots of the different moments in their lives.”

“So then we literally sat down,” Parnes continued, “And we asked: ‘Okay, is it going to be happy or sad?’”

“We said sad at the same time,” Walker reminisced. “I think we succeeded.”

“The element of uncertainty really just comes from the both of us at Yale. We were both dealing with unexpected personal stuff and felt stuck and didn’t know what to do. *What Comes Next* speaks to that moment in our lives then, and in our lives now,” Walker said.

Walker and Parnes connected many personal details of their own families to the play. Walker has an older sister who went to law school and separated parents. Parnes inserted some of his own family’s dynamics and quirks. “My parents put mail on my sister’s bed, and my dad does shift every egg when he goes to the supermarket,” Parnes said. “I love those things about my family, but I absolutely made fun of them in this show because... well that’s what you do.”

The co-creators are proud of the little physical motifs scattered in the musical. “The Exeter iteration of the show really made me think it’s all about lasagna,” Walker joked. “We added the Michael portrait, the move, the unexpected guest, the ice-cream all as touchstones. We want the audience to feel like they’re in the same space, for them to feel safe and familiar as the show goes on. We didn’t put much thought into the lasagna, we just needed a certain dinner food. But now the meaning of the lasagna has grown on me.”

Neither Walker nor Parnes are *Star Wars* nerds. “In the original first draft we didn’t mention Yoda at all. And now it’s in all three acts, culminating in the third. Of course, the mention of the *Star Wars* prequels a little self-referential, a bit of a pat on my own back,” Parnes said. “I just find Yoda so fitting because he’s so calm, you know? ‘Do or do not, there is no try.’ There’s some meaning in that. This show’s also a trilogy, just saying.”

The co-creators loved the student actor’s interpretation of their play. “This project had been contained and just between the two of us for so long. It’s lived in Google Docs and practice rooms and voicemails. So whenever you have other people reading it aloud, singing it aloud, trying it out, reacting to it. That is huge,” Walker said.

Director of *What Comes Next* Lauren Josef spoke of the challenges that came with the pandemic. “We usually begin production meetings early on with the design team—lights, set, costumes, et cetera,” she said. “This show differed, because we went into it with multiple backup plans when it came to the actual production because of all the uncertainty.”

Cast members agreed. “On Zoom you don’t get a lot of opportunities to interact with those with whom you share scenes with,” upper Kiese Nanor (Cast 1 and 2, Ellie’s lover, Chrysanthemum Hastings) said. “My character’s a supportive one in Act I, and it’s hard to find your place. Thankfully our cast was really close to begin with and my lover is my best friend. We held our ground.”

Senior Oliver Hess (Cast 2, Max’s father, Michael Fisher) added that the virtual format did not work with the style of the piece. “The dialogue is really fast paced and it involves a lot of people cutting people off. It feels very natural and I love it, but it’s hard to pick up on the nuances on Zoom. Details like these enrich a musical, and

it’s a shame we’ve lost some of that,” he said.

Conditions during the pandemic only allowed 22 total rehearsals for the two casts, more than half of which occurred virtually. Nevertheless, Josef and the rest of the team prepared to the best of their ability. Josef expressed that a strong sense of teamwork and “upholding expectations” was more necessary than ever. “There’s a special relationship and understanding that’s developed between a cast and director when you’re meeting everyday in the same space, working together on a production,” Josef said. “I definitely missed that, but Mr. Walker and I tried to foster that same support remotely.”

Out of necessity, the set design was kept simple, but it allowed for profound creativity. “This show is cyclical, and represents past, present and future. I thought a turntable would help represent those themes, and also help with some of the blocking challenges presented by the dinner table. It is always a treat as a director to be able to lean on your designers,” Josef said.

Walker, on the other hand, considered the surprising blessings that came from being apart. “We were productive and enthusiastic, which is what matters,” he said. “The idea of learning all of the material then coming together to bring all your own puzzle pieces is also a process that happens out in the world with real productions. I’m glad the students had a chance to be involved in that process. In the end I don’t think it’s a production ‘really good considering this and that.’ It was really good.”

The co-creators found that the Exonians took their production to the next level. “The talents here have taught us so much about our own dialogue. And we’re learning to give space for them to take more liberty in interpreting our text and our music. We can take our hands off the wheel and we don’t, we can’t dictate how everything sounds or is sung or is reacted to,” Walker added.

Senior Yona Kruger (Cast 1, Max’s mother, Angela Fisher) noted the immense honor they shared as the original cast. “We’re the first people to ever put this work together, and it gives us the liberty to make all of the emotional decisions for these characters, making them recognizable and unique and genuine to ourselves,” she said.

Kruger’s favorite metaphor of the show was the ticking timer. “Angela’s constantly worried about the time and the chocolate lava cake. And

she’s running out of time,” Kruger said. “She wants to be there for her husband, be there for her son, her daughter, but time is running by. The turning stage, the turning table, the turning clock hands all remind me that Max’s time is running out. That’s just so powerful to me. It grounds me in the show.”

“I’m someone who does not like change. It’s the worst,” Kruger added. “But I’m thankful for Angela for helping me confront the unknown, especially going into my senior spring, and showing me how to deal with it.”

Senior Felix Yeung (Cast 1, Max’s father, Michael Fisher) shared his appreciation for the recurring physical motifs that add to the realism and emotional depth of the musical. “We set the table in every act, on every birthday. We discuss the photo—the similarities, or lack thereof, between Michael and Max. We talk about the mail on the bed. We mention Yoda. And, of course, there’s the ‘ritual,’” he said. “It’s the same every year, but each time the audience sees a different side. Each time it takes on a new meaning, even as old meanings persist. It comes to show how life is dynamic, you know? ‘It’s just cool storytelling,’ to quote Aaron.”

Hess, who also played Michael, appreciated his continuation of the “disgruntled father role” since his two major performances last year. “Michael is fascinating because in each act you find him handling emotions in a different way. He’s not the same as Tim. We hate Tim as a character because of his narcissism and his lack of regard for other people. Though Michael comes in and acts a little rude or insensitive, it comes from a place of deep caring and compassion.”

“Michael wants to freeze the time frame, to steer Max away from the path he followed. He wants to control everything, but he can’t. He can’t do that,” Yeung added. “I relate to that as a person, to some extent. I also want to control things. But I think that it is beautiful that he can’t control it and that he learns to accept it.”

“At the end of the show, Ellie finally has someone who loves her, yet her career hits a new low. The parents are about to separate. And Aaron is still finding his own ground. We get a resolution to this show, but we’re also suspended in this beautiful space between resolution and irresolution,” Yeung added. “I love that. It’s not a happy show. But it’s to some extent hopeful. We don’t know what comes next, and that’s okay.”

Yeung also praised the show for embracing queerness. “We don’t dance around the subject, and that’s just so common. There’s a lot of queerbaiting in popular culture. *What Comes Next* is a show that roots us in the specificities of queerness, but the show’s tragedy is also not defined by it. This isn’t a show about a family that hates their children because of their queerness. It’s about a family and their future, and queerness is an inalienable part of that,” he said. “I think that’s a powerful statement about the kinds of stories we can tell and the role that queer people play within such stories. Queerness is not synonymous with tragedy, even if this is a difficult show.”

Senior Stephen McNulty (Cast 1, Max’s friend, Aaron Anderson) considered Aaron’s part to be the “coolest quirky side plot.” “This is a character who is a massive intersection between grief and queerness, two big parts of my own life,” he said. “Aaron has so much beneath him that you could mull over for weeks and months. As you’re trying to piece together Aaron’s meaning, Aaron’s still piecing together what Max meant to him. It’s powerful.”

“I think it’s so hard to build a play that captures all of the complexities of how grief impacts people and family,” McNulty added. “And we see that there’s anger, there’s blame tossed around, there’s guilt, there’s despair, there’s disarray, there’s a family falling apart, but also moments of joy, and memories of *Star Wars*, making a cake. They’re trying to make sense of all this. And those are interwoven. The ability of the casts to hold all of these emotions and all of them in that same space, co-existing at once, is really difficult for teen actors. This is my favorite cast and the favorite show that I’ve ever been in.”

“The cast would over-dramatically dance to someone singing and be stupid together,” senior William Peeler (Cast 1, Ellie’s boyfriend, Tim McDonough) recalled. “A ladder got knocked over during one show, a mac pop-up appeared on a window in another, and a scene had enough dropped lines that we needed Yona’s improv to save us. It was chaotic, and I’d say we pulled it off. There was no small number of tears shed during rehearsals or performances.”

Peeler described his process for deciding how to play his character. “The most important decision for Tim was deciding on why, exactly, he acted like an ass. His mannerisms were a mixture of bad habits that annoy me from all sorts of people I’ve met, and his behavior can be boiled down to a lack of awareness, a lack of emotional control, and the fact that he never wanted to go to Max’s birthday in the first place, all mixed with a heaping dash of obliviousness,” he said.

Lower Polly Vaillant said that an aspect of the play that struck her was its relevance. “It was written before COVID, but it’s all about how much can change in a year.”

Prep David Goodall (Cast 2, Max’s friend, Aaron Anderson) spoke to the chemistry of the cast outside of the production. “If I ever needed help, I could just ask if someone else in the cast and every-

one was always there for each other,” he said.

“I hope the audience had a good time, of course. But I also thought that the entire play was an exceptional opportunity for me to reflect. We don’t know the whole picture. We don’t know what’s coming next. That’s heavy stuff,” Goodall said.

The casts’ hard work and talents certainly shone through. “The way that kids interacted with the parents, the way they argued. It was all so real,” prep Indigo Ogtiste said. “I also found the casts’ voices amazing. The way they flawlessly went from singing to talking. Wow.”

“I appreciated how the Ellie-Chris and Aaron-Max relationships portrayed queerness so realistically and normally,” Ogtiste added. “It wasn’t shown in an awkward, preaching way. It was just as teenagers would encounter it in life.”

“You know, the musical reminded me to take a step back and take a look at life with my eyes open,” prep Atishay Jain said. “I don’t want to constantly rush through life. Hustle and bustle. I want to look back and find my purpose in life and live every day slowly.”

Jain echoed Josef’s vision for the show. “I wanted the audience to see a piece of themselves in this show. The themes of ‘One Whole Year’ hit close to home right now,” she said. “It’s been a year of Covid, a year since we’ve been able to smile at each other walking along the path, a year where many of us have been cooped inside with our families or caretakers. I hope the audience walked away remembering that life is short, and it’s important to embrace what we do have, even in the hardest of times,” Josef continued.

“The show is about family and acceptance and I hope people felt moved by that, and maybe inspired to be kind and to hold their loved ones tight,” Vaillant said.

The casts are considering recording a spring term original cast album, and the co-creators are open to this possibility. “I love recordings of things,” Walker said. “The album idea pleases this dream part of my brain that’s dying to get a whole bunch of instruments and some lovely talented folks to come in and make really good recordings of the whole thing. I love it. It’s really cool. Oh my goodness it’s so cool.”

“I love that all of this happened physically. In space,” Parnes said. “It’s shockingly wonderful. It’s such a huge deal seeing your work be spoken and sung by other people. It’s crazy that people like it and want to do it and enjoy looking at it. People have said such kind things to both of us about this piece. And it’s a blessing to be able to waltz in here and just enjoy the amazing work everyone has put in.”

“I love musical theatre. I love that it all came together. This has been such a wonderful community, and that is really what I’m into in all of the work that I do,” Walker said. “We’re living in a pandemic but this show makes us feel otherwise. We’re together in this theatre. Someone’s calling the lights. Someone’s queuing the sound. Someone’s working the mics. Someone’s spinning the friggint turntable. And we’re all in this together. I appreciate that so much.”

## Religious Services, Students Discuss Queer Religiosity Cont.

shared similar thoughts. “We are an affirming and open community. The foundation of what we do is to support students wherever they are on their spiritual journey,” Casey said. “For LGBTQIA students this sometimes means grappling with an institution’s rigid theology and figuring out a way to carve out an affirming space within their religion of origin. Integrating one’s

sexual and gender identity with one’s spiritual self can be a complicated process, but we want to also make it joyful.”

“The Vatican statement is something I care deeply about as a Christian theologian who identifies as queer. I don’t think it’s a sufficient understanding of the Christian tradition. I respect the Vatican’s teaching for the importance that it holds, but I

do not respect it as being the final word,” Hofheinz said. “I’ve spent many years studying Christian theology, and there’s also so much love and beauty and play and desire throughout the traditions, texts, teachings and communities.”

“I hope that students left with a deeper sense of connection to each other and Phillips Church. No matter what callous proc-

lamations are made by the Pope, I want students to know that the Religious & Spiritual Life department here at PEA will always support them especially as they reckon with this kind of hurt,” Casey said.

McNulty appreciated the conversation on the role of institutions in influencing religion, acknowledging the importance of the Vatican to many Catholics. “On social media I

saw many people posting that the pope is not your country clerk, that you should go get married and have a glass of wine. For some people it’s not that simple,” McNulty said. “I think that a lot of LGBTQ+ people in the Church right now are yearning for a conversation that seriously and honestly grapples with the gravity and importance of the Vatican and its statement. At least from

my perspective, it’s not helpful to reject one part of that person’s identity in order to protect another.”

“You don’t have Friday without Easter Sunday, right? Even through the Lent, through the cross, through all the rejection, ultimately love triumphs,” McNulty said. “Easter is always before us, friends. Keep your eyes on the prize.”

# Life

## » ISA MATSUBAYASHI

Read about Senior of the Week, Isa Matsubayashi, and what she appreciates about her Exeter experience, 8.

## » VANESSA FRIEDMAN

Read about assembly speaker, Vanessa Friedman, and her journey to the fashion world from Exeter, 8.

## » BILL JORDAN

Read about History Instructor Bill Jordan and how he won the prestigious Horace Kidger Award.

# Musical Review: What Comes Next?

By CLARK WU

I've always suffered from a fear of returning.

When I was young, that simply meant a fear of returning to work or to the end of a day. Exeter blew this fear out of proportion — I remember when I broke my parents' hearts because I declined to take a week-end trip with them to Boston, simply because I knew I would have a quasi-panic attack on the car ride back onto campus. Sometimes I wonder if I'll ever be afraid to return home. Perhaps I already am.

The root of this fear is my unwillingness to accept uncertainty. If I could just accept that I'm powerless, maybe I'd ease up on my obsession to be able to know, process and control every single variable around me. If I could just accept that I am unsafe, living precariously, then I might feel a little more secure, a little more warmth.

In the last few months, I felt as if I had been bogged down by family issues, ones that I concocted in my own mind. And on such an

overwhelming evening as last Friday, my dear choral teacher Jerome Walker's co-produced musical *What Comes Next* really hit me.

His work traces, in non-linear time, the Fisher family's recovery from the unexpected death of their son, Max. As someone who has dabbled in the arts of fan-fiction playwriting, I can tell you storytelling on the stage is not easy. The cast brings to life an emotional weight imagined by Walker and his friend, Noah Parnes, truly making this musical the most engaging and introspective that I've seen.

What struck me in this show first and foremost was the straightforward, quick-paced dialogue. Especially in the exchanges between Ellie Fisher and Chrysanthemum (brilliantly chosen name) Hastings in Act I, I felt there was a lack of subtext and everything just felt so...awkward. But that couldn't be farther from the truth. As Ellie said in the show, "It doesn't have to be fake if you're genuine." Their open and emotionally vul-

nerable language is where I think we begin to see a certain blend of strength, forbearance, and trust — qualities the family desperately needed to rebuild after Max's death. The subtext of *What Comes Next* lies in the minutiae, in the easily missable compliments, in the rare comments of reassurance, in the queer puns, in the meta-jokes, and of course, in its music.

I'm by no means an expert in music theory, but I want to discuss the musical motif of the show. The repeated arpeggiated three-note phrase reminds me of the musical's three acts. We started off in the heaviest and loneliest place, when everyone was searching for an answer and trying to escape through the tunnel they dug with rusty spoons. Then we turned back time and saw what came before when we already know what comes next. It tasted like heavily burnt marshmallow — bitter bitter bitter-not-very-sweet. And our emotional ride corresponds perfectly with the low, high, and higher-but-minor tones of the motif. (For the record, I

find that the motif is highly reminiscent of Joni Mitchell's introduction to "River," which was an interpretation of Jingle Bells in the minor mode. Perhaps this is Walker's take on a minor mode "Happy Birthday.")

Grief is a hot topic right now, with the pandemic, WandaVision and just a general loss of normalcy. All of that has become almost cliché. We've all lost Max. I don't think it's accurate to say that Max held the family together. Max is the lasagna, the original, "normal lasagna." With Max gone, lasagna was a ratatouille-esque zucchini soup. And while each of us try to capture the essence of lasagna, the essence of Max, none of us really feel the same. Of course, we try to rationalize that as a new normal.

I wonder if the whole musical was a recording of Aaron's memory-related artificial intelligence. He wanted to build something that captured the unnoticed, the answers he would search for. Maybe he succeeded. And he showed us all this. Except that scene

in the car. Because that's the boundary. That's his own answer. In any case, in that final act and final scene, Walker and Parnes played dramatic irony to the extreme. The Fisher family, of course, has no idea that Max was about to leave his home forever. But the dialogue and the cast's delivery were so carefully crafted that I could feel an urgency and meta-awareness in their voice. Everyone in the family offers to grab the ice-cream, and in a way turning Max away from the heartbreaking accident we knew would occur anyway.

This tension builds up to my favorite song in the musical — "Grown-up Little Brother." I've always wondered what life might be like with a sibling. This prophetic my family goes to once told my mom that she would have a son, then a daughter. I'm still a single child. Sometimes I feel like a younger sister would just be horrifically loud and annoying and I would never be capable of loving such a person. I guess the musical gave me four, five minutes room for imagina-

tion. Where I had an older sister, who was proud of seeing my growth, who loved me, and whom I respected and cared for and didn't know I would never see again. The song's lived in my mind rent free since Friday. Max's suspension at the end is just a tear jerker.

This musical leaves us in a contemplative suspense. It showed us what came moments next after the very beginning, but never told us what came after that. Yet I'm confident that these characters will continue to grow, because none were ever static (not even Tim, the real insensitive jerk...he changed! He got dumped).

I won't try to circle back to the beginning of this review and tie it altogether in some kind of poetic way. I'm still all too afraid to return. But I can tell you now that this musical has inspired me to change. To change how I feel about the unknown, how I feel about not holding onto the answers. I think it's a lesson much too valuable for Exonians to miss.

# Bill Jordan Wins Horace Kidger Award



Standing on the steps of the Exeter Historical Society, history teacher Bill Jordan smiles widely as he accepts a gleaming silver bowl—the Horace Kidger Award.

By LEELA GANDHI and JENNA WANG

Earlier this month, History Instructor Bill Jordan joined the growing list of Academy faculty as a recipient of the prestigious Horace Kidger Award.

The Horace Kidger Award is given to individuals who show excellence in teaching, research, writing and commitment to the history profession, according to the awarding body of New England History Teachers Association (NEHTA). The award has been granted since 1952 and previous recipients include former Exeter teachers such as Henry Bragdon, William G. Saltonstall and Don Cole. This March, Jordan was awarded the prestigious award for the 2020 year after being nominated by his students. "It's a huge affirmation," Jordan said. "It's an inspiration that renews my enthusiasm for teaching."

According to fellow Exeter teachers, Jordan has exemplified the ideals of the award. "Dr. Jordan puts hours into his teaching and assessments and this award is a reflection of all this behind-the-scenes hard work," History Department Chair

Kent McConnell said. "He is most deserving of this award."

Jordan has taught at Exeter since 1997 and his passion for history started at a young age. "I grew up in Massachusetts and my family were ardent Kennedy lovers," Jordan described. "My father was really kind of addicted to the newspaper."

After college, Jordan found himself drawn to journalism, writing as a newspaper reporter for *The Beacon* in Acton, MA, and the *Malden Evening News* in Malden, MA. He then decided to pursue graduate studies to further his passion for history. "Journalism and history are related. It's not unusual because journalists are looking at history as it unfolds," Jordan said.

In graduate school, Jordan developed an interest in Black history. "I was really interested in how people got what they wanted through the political system and gained power. And so I thought of all the people in this country who have been able to do that and African-Americans are the most prominent and the most inspiring example."

Seeking inspiration from his dissertation advisor who had participated in the civil

rights movement, Jordan researched how the Black press "educated America about the need for racial justice while resisting persistent threats of censorship" and later published his own book: *Black Newspapers and America's War for Democracy, 1914-1920*.

At the Academy, however, Jordan teaches a variety of history courses, including a Classical Greece course in the fall. Former student and prep Tenley Nelson was a student in the class. "It was my first ever history course at Exeter, so I had no idea what to expect. He immediately clearly laid out the guidelines for the course, which helped me personally to see the big picture," Nelson said. "As the term progressed, he would nudge the discussion in various directions, but never forced it. Looking back on it now, I feel like it remains to be the class in which I had the most meaningful and conscientious discussions."

According to Jordan, fostering a positive Harkness experience is a key tenet of his teaching method. "My approach to teaching is to just embrace Harkness and try my best to create an atmosphere of trust in the classroom where students

feel comfortable at ease and safe and they're not being judged all the time," Jordan said.

Many students enjoyed Mr. Jordan's approach to relating material to outside the classroom. "I felt like for the first time I was thinking about our lessons from a real-world perspective first and a classroom perspective afterwards," Grace Gray '19 said.

Going into history his upper year, Senior Hojun Choi was "nervous especially considering how notorious and rigorous the '331-333' courses were rumored to be." However, Choi remarked, "Mr. Jordan immediately put me at ease with his calming and relaxed demeanor," he continued, "The relaxed but focused environment that he fostered in his classroom inspired me to bring my A game and I was always excited to do so."

"He had a very down to earth, relaxed personality that was very approachable, but that by no means took away from the rigor of his teaching style and his expectations," Emmett Shell '18 said. "He really has a good understanding of letting students start the discussion and take control of it, but also being there to point us

in the right direction or to jump in in moments where you might need a little help or a little clarity. And I think his down-to-earth personality fit really well with that."

Senior Maggie Wainwright reflected on her Politics and Public Policy course this fall. "He was always ready to challenge the class's liberal assumptions and always ready to be a neutral party and a neutral participant," she said. "He was really excellent as a mentor, but also someone who was really interested in getting us to see every single side of an argument."

Gray described learning about the economy in the same course. "Mr. Jordan knew how to hit on very serious and pertinent American issues while mixing them with just this love for history and this excitement for creativity as well. I remember sitting around and he would go up to the board and draw these amazing cartoons," Gray said.

Beyond the realm of his classroom, Jordan serves as an assistant coach to the Boys Cross Country team and dorm faculty in Peabody Hall. Prep Ayaan Akhtar and member of the cross country team commented, "Personally, he was one of the reasons I looked forward to cross country every day in the fall. The stories he would tell us while running made the experience much more enjoyable than it already was. There were plenty of instances where I would feel like stopping, but Coach Jordan was always there to encourage me and keep me going."

According to Choi, this encouragement was also present during meetings while Jordan was on duty in the dorm. "[Jordan's] willingness to take the time out of his already busy schedule to help us even more spoke to his commitment to help and really inspired me," Choi added. "I remember times where I would just come to the Peabody common room when he was on duty to first get help on a paper. Eventually our conversation branched out to conversations about modern politics and what not."

Fellow History Instructor Leah Merrill commented on Jordan's appreciation for history. "[Jordan] is passionate

about civics and keeps the Department focused on how best to prepare students to be engaged citizens." Merrill said. "A lifelong learner, Bill is always reading. I love talking to Bill about books, politics, current events, and we exchange articles and ideas regularly."

Jordan will undoubtedly leave a lasting impact on Exonians and the Exeter community, according to former students of his. "[My class] was two and a half years ago. And our class still regularly texts about political things that come up. We have Zoom meetings with Mr. Jordan to catch up on American political happenings," Gray spoke of her Politics and Public Policy class with Jordan her senior fall.

Juliana Merullo '19 reflected on how Jordan's class inspired her as well. "The things I learned in class, the different lenses through which I view our country's political discourse, none of that would be possible without his efforts as a teacher," she said. "I can think of nobody more deserving of this award. The mark of a great teacher should be someone who takes their passion for the material and finds new ways to get their students engaged in it, not just during the trimester, but for the rest of their lives. I think my experiences with his class are proof of just that," Merullo added.

Shell commented on this lasting impact during a visit back to Exeter his first year of college. "[Jordan] said, 'Oh hey, how's it going?' And we just started chatting. And then we took a walk and we went to a coffee shop and kept talking, I think we talked for over an hour. It was really fun," Shell recalled. "I could always count on Mr. Jordan, to be there to talk to and to hang out with."

"We have this problem where people are at each other's throats all the time and just try to win debates and cut down their opponents, but Exeter has such a great ethos," Jordan commented. "The goal is to work collaboratively towards a greater understanding of the truth. And we can have our disagreements, but we can also be in search of common ground all the time."

# Assembly: Elizabeth Acevedo



Acevedo poses for the camera.

Courtesy of Elizabeth Acevedo

By ALIABONANNO, MAYA COHEN and JANE PARK

New York Times best-selling author and poet Elizabeth Acevedo enraptured Exonians during last Tuesday's assembly: During her fun and high-spirited talk, Acevedo discussed her personal experiences as both an author and a poet, her challenges amidst COVID-19, her exploration of identity and finding her own path. Following her assembly talk, Acevedo met

with preps, who read her novel *The Poet X* over the summer, for a reading and Q&A session.

As a writer and a poet, Acevedo described that she aims to include themes of music into her writing as its own canon. "I don't like the dichotomies of how we create, like 'this is high art that we look at and then this is art that entertains us,'" Acevedo said. "How would I play with dialogue or how can I create a stanza that maybe slips

that way. I look to music just as much as I look to all the books behind me to create voice. I think music is a huge way to create an environment and ecosystem that someone is walking into."

According to Acevedo, her work is about taking an idea of her own canon and making it heard. "This is about the music in our ears. This is a certain rhythm," Acevedo said. "I'm going to teach you how to read so the music seems like an important part... It is also just saying [that] you

know these folks deserve to be on the pages, to be printed, to be talked about in the same way that I've read in a young adult novel. For me, it was my canon is just as dope, it's just as deserving."

When asked about the parallels between her characters' lives and her own, Acevedo explained how many of her books draw a certain inspiration from a "hodgepodge" of others' personal experiences. "I didn't go in writing *The Poet X* wanting to tell my story. I'm asked if I'll ever write an autobiography of myself and I think my personal story is pretty boring. I kept trying to [find] the most interesting story," Acevedo said.

Acevedo still acknowledged how some of the big themes and events in her book often did come from specific anecdotes of her own childhood. "I was in the middle of writing [The Poet X] and I'm like, 'Dang, something has to happen.'...What was the biggest thing that happened to me? That will be realistic," Acevedo explained.

"One of the biggest things was this moment where I was on a train, making out with my high school boyfriend. I was not allowed to have a relationship at the time. And my dad was pressed against the window watching, so I remembered that. I was like, 'This would be a perfect moment.'"

For those who had read *The Poet X* over the summer, Acevedo's attempt to incorporate her own and others' experiences were successfully communicated. "The scene where Xiomara gets caught with Aman on the train did feel very real while I read it. So, when she said that it was

directly inspired by her own experience of having a secret boyfriend I wasn't entirely surprised," Prep Hannah Dirsa said. "It was such a raw, emotional part of the book that probably only could have been taken from her experiences."

Prep Ugo Barrah also enjoyed Acevedo's talk. "During the assembly, she stressed the importance of understanding 'full self,'" Barrah said. "I left the assembly with a better understanding of what it really means to check in with the person behind what may be, in actuality, an act."

"Acevedo did an exemplary job encapsulating the struggle behind establishing identity, with the themes of self-expression present in her writing."

Despite her use of personal anecdotes in some moments of her writing, Acevedo reminded her readers to lift the emotional resonance of personal experiences rather than copying them down as an autobiographical moment. "I begin lifting [by asking], 'What are the feelings here?' It's not necessarily that this is exactly what happened, but here's the thing I've heard happening in the neighborhood or here's the thing my mom told me happened to her that I'm gonna borrow," Acevedo said.

Later in the talk when asked about how she found her path from switching from an English teacher to a touring poet, Acevedo said, "I allowed myself to realize that I am unhappy. This isn't working for me. What is the next pivot?" While teaching, Acevedo poured all of her energy towards developing a curriculum and thinking about how to engage her students. "It took me a long time to realize, [that] this wasn't working for me. I spent two years where I did not write a single thing,"

Acevedo said.

While Acevedo was content with her decision to give up teaching, her parents were not so supportive at the beginning. "My life isn't about fulfilling my parents' expectations. They might just not get it. And I have to be okay with the fact that they might not get it. When you get to the point where you dread the work, that is the breaking point," Acevedo said.

English Instructor Courtney Marshall appreciated Acevedo's open perspective. "She encourages those who are marginalized to not stop writing and creating. Someone somewhere is waiting for what you have to offer. I love that about her writing and her presentation," Marshall said.

Similarly, English teacher and 9th grade Program Coordinator Tyler Caldwell appreciated Acevedo's inspirational words. "I deeply admire Acevedo's openness and honesty — with her students, her audience, and herself," Caldwell said. "Part of her power comes from her ability and her desire to write for her community without translation for a white audience."

Students can continue to expect more of Acevedo's powerful and honest work in the future. "I don't care what they say. I do me. I'm going to write the work that I want," Acevedo said. She encouraged everyone to search for and find their own path, a major theme of *The Poet X*. "[Learn] what is for you by realizing what you're afraid of."

Before signing off from the Assembly, Acevedo asked the Academy some important questions and presented simple advice: "Are you going to keep that or are you going to change? When is enough? Don't do the boring thing."

# Staff of the Week: Ikechukwu Njoku

By HANNAH DIRSA and CLARK WU

"Glad to be back?" On move-in day, you can always find custodian Ikechukwu Njoku holding doors, carrying boxes and sharing genuine smiles and conversations with excited students and families.

According to Njoku, his life was "really hard" in a remote village of Nigeria. "We didn't have electricity, schools aren't like what we have here," Njoku said. "We didn't have much, but we appreciated what we did have. A family. A community."

In 2003, Njoku left Nigeria for work in Europe and arrived in New Hampshire in 2007. For eleven years he worked for a window cleaning company, but had always looked to transfer to

the Academy. "I'd often take walks just to see the campus. It felt like a place where they'd take care of you," Njoku said. "Working on a campus meant some warmth during the freezing winters. The Academy also offers all your benefits. It's not just for me, it's for my family."

The Academy's Network Cabling Specialist Albert Spinale, a friend of Njoku from his church, helped him file the application. "A week or two after the interview, they called me and accepted my application over the phone. I was so excited," Njoku said.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Njoku worked the evening shifts in the academic buildings, cleaning and organizing classrooms. Now, due to quarantining guidelines, Njoku often works the morning and afternoon dorm-cleaning

shifts.

Throughout his work at the Academy, Njoku has developed friendships with the students. "We (as custodians) really love your appreciation for our work. We received cards from you guys last year, and that felt amazing because our work was recognized," Njoku said.

Njoku's kindness around campus is one of his most notable traits and he has positively impacted the lives of several students with his friendliness. Upper Anne Chen reminisced about Njoku's friendliness and outgoing personality. "Ike is one of the friendliest faces around," she said. "Seeing him is always so pleasant; he's got a fantastic sense of humor and even though I've only spoken to him a few times, he feels like a friend. Always makes my day when I see him unexpectedly on

the path."

Upper Chieko Imamura agreed. "I don't know anyone who doesn't enjoy seeing him around campus. He's really fun to talk to and he's always just so open to talk to anyone about anything," Imamura said. "He's also just so kind, you'll never find a kinder soul on campus."

Whenever Njoku and upper Anna Tran encounter each other on campus, they always stop for a chat. "Being able to see Ike around campus always brightens up my day. He is such a kind and warm person, and everyone I know always leaves an encounter with him smiling," she said. "Whenever I see him, he always teases me about how I only leave my dorm once a month (not true) and that he misses seeing me around. If anything, whenever I am out and about

on campus, I always hope to see him around."

Njoku formed especially close bonds with Nigerian students at the Academy. "Some students sent me personal letters before and after their graduation," Njoku said. "It fills my heart that I've made such an impact simply from the little interactions we've had in the hallways and dining halls."

Outside of work, Njoku puts his family first. "I love to spend time with my kids. I don't know if they'll allow it this year, but we normally go to the beach every now and then. They love the water," Njoku said. "Being around family is such a pleasure, such a privilege."

"It feels to me that this school is really challenging," Njoku continued. "I just want to see them keep up their positivity. Some-

times, we have to learn to take the world as it is. Hopefully things may change in the future. Please don't get stressed out. That only brings pain and you feel like the whole world is falling on you. If we just take a moment for ourselves and focus on what we can do, the world will be a better place because of it."

Njoku lights up the day of anyone he encounters and he has impacted the community in a wonderful way. "He never fails to make me laugh and smile, and I don't know anyone who is as deserving as Ike is of all the good in the world," Tran continued. "Anyone can tell that Ike has a heart of gold, and having him as a part of our campus community, further depicts the valuable qualities Exeter looks for in a member of our community."

# Exeter Crib: Kathryn Welch



Jeannie Eom / The Exonian

By JETT GOETZ, ANNA KIM and CLARK WU

"Bright and fresh" is how two-year upper Kathryn Welch describes her spacious

room in Dunbar Hall. Each part of her room is tastefully decorated and taken care of. "My pride and joy is my room," Welch noted, gesturing to a space full of life.

Welch's room is split into

two, each with a different personality. The left side is cozy: a tapestry with black and white flowers adorn the wall, plants perch on a bookshelf filled with books and supplies and curtains twinkle

with fairy lights. The curtains, which frame the windows, are one of Welch's favorite parts of her room. "I think they make the whole room a lot less gloomy," Welch said. "I really like the lights on them because at night, it looks like stars."

Providing ample light and keeping her broom bright, the two windows in Welch's room keep her room spacious and open. Welch's dorm mate Esme Shields said that the windows "fill the room with sunshine and [Welch's room] lights up and gives it a happy spring vibe."

Welch also keeps some extra lamps in her room along with a fireplace that glows with LED lights on the mantle to keep her room from getting "dark like a dungeon."

The abundant light in Welch's room illuminates her impressive "tribute wall," a collection of all her favorite things, on the other side of her room. Posters of her favorite movies and TV shows such as *Ocean's 11* and *Friends* add a personalized and lively touch to the otherwise white walls, which Welch dislikes. To fill up more wall space and

reduce clutter in her room, Welch hangs her backpacks on the walls. Resting on the mantle of a stone fireplace in her room is Welch's lacrosse stick, conveniently placed for her to grab it and go when pressed for time. Above the lacrosse stick hangs a fun photo collage of her friends and family. "[Welch] is very grounded in those she loves," Welch's advisor Hannah Lim noted. "Having her dearest ones posted up throughout her room in a massive photo collage helps keep them with her while she's on campus."

While decorating her room, Welch aimed to "fill up as much space as possible" while efficiently transforming it into a welcoming and homey place for everyone. She even has a TV at the foot of her lofted bed for her and her friends to watch movies on, which is one of Shield's favorite memories with Welch. "My room is like what me and my friends consider 'the hangout,' [my room is] like Safeway," Welch added.

Impressively, Welch put together her intricate room within one day. According to Welch, the photo collage

took the longest to assemble: around 3-4 hours. Lim is impressed with Welch's speed and attention to detail as well: "It looks like she's been in the dorm all year, but she only just arrived on campus in February!"

Despite her already comfy room, Welch would like to add more in the future. Since a blackboard covers the fireplace, Welch has plans to decorate the blackboard in the near future with random doodles or a fake fire as she has seen in other Dunbar rooms. Welch is also thinking about hanging a flag in the empty wall space in front of her desk as an extra embellishment. "If you have the things that you really like, then [your room] will come together in the way you want it to," Welch said.

"Bright and fresh" are the perfect words to describe Welch's room, which is the perfect balance of spaciousness and coziness and always open to everyone. Welch's room is also a reflection of her kind and welcoming personality, which makes "bright and fresh" the perfect words to describe Welch as well.

# Staff of the Week: Barbara Darby

By **ETHAN-JUDD BARTHELEMY, ALIA BONANNO and JOYCHI**

If you've walked into the music building before, you've probably seen Music Program Administrator Barbara Darby greeting students and faculty alike with a welcoming wave and a smile.

Before coming to the Academy, Darby worked a software job at PeopleSoft. However, with the arrival of her twin sons into her life, her career started to change. She transitioned to working as a paraprofessional in the special education field before finding a part-time job in the Music Department at the Academy.

Since joining the depart-

ment, Darby has been an exemplary colleague, and as its coordinator, Darby has been the backbone of the music department, according to Conductor of Orchestras Rohan Smith. "She is so open-minded and interested about everything that was going on in this incredibly complex music department," he said. "She's able to keep track of it all and make all the moving parts function smoothly."

Director of Choirs and Music Instructor Kristopher Johnson agreed. "She is an advocate for students, families, faculty, and staff—she is strong but also kind...Mrs. Darby is one of the people that glues this campus together, helping its many strong independent pieces function as

a whole."

Music Instructors Jon Sakata and Jung Mi Lee agreed. "She has other people's best interests fully at heart and is willing and able to do all she can to help others. We can't think of another person who embodies non-sibi like her! She is driven by doing good for others as a daily way of living, not just as an exceptional one-off or as an occasional platitude to be serviced."

Her coworkers have also admired her adaptation to the unprecedented school year. "Ms. Darby has done so much to help students reinvent their music study during the pandemic," Johnson said, "she has really been the anchor that helped keep our music program stable and thriving

through this difficult time."

Lower Polly Vaillant testified to Darby's contribution to the music community, sharing a conversation between Darby and her following the most recent soloist concert. As Vaillant left the stage, Darby said, "I'm so sorry that everyone had to leave before you got on to perform... I hate it but I had to do it." "It really shows she's doing what's safe and what's the best for our community, which I think is really important," Vaillant said.

Lower Jesalina Phan echoed a similar sentiment. "I had a piece and I wasn't really sure about doing a piano accompaniment because the piano couldn't be live and it would have to be a recording," Phan said. "I talked to

[Darby] about it and this was already past the deadline... for requesting a recording, but she just pretty much laid out all the options for me so that I could have a better understanding of what was going on... and she [helped] me get a recording."

Outside of her job at the Academy, Darby enjoys spending time with her children, who are both 19. "I love to spend time with my family and friends... My twin boys are now 19 years old and they are the best part of my life," she said.

As part of the music department, Darby's colleagues noted her passion for piano. "She found resources online and started practicing. She bought herself a keyboard so that

she could play in her home," Johnson said.

Darby once asked Johnson and Smith to step into Powell Hall, where she surprised them by playing a piano piece she had been working on. "She's got a lot of talent! I could see the pride and pleasure with which she played that piece on her face. I don't know where she found the time to practice that, but that is a very special memory of Ms. Darby that I cherish," Smith said.

Ms. Darby, through all of the complicated work, persists for her love of the students. Smith said, "Her first and main sense of purpose and mission in this job, if you will, is her real love and caring for the students."

# Lamont Gallery: Female and Flora

*Exeter alumna Alexandra Carter '04, along with alumna Tiffanie Turner '88, spoke to the Exeter community through virtual panel Female and Flora last Wednesday. Carter's work is featured in the Lamont Gallery exhibit A Collective Curiosity.*

*Carter grew up on a cranberry farm, an experience that informs much of her paintings, where she uses cranberry juice and various botanical materials to accentuate features of the female body.*

*Carter gave an exclusive interview to The Exonian staff writers Maya Cohen, Angela Zhang, and Joy Chi, where she discussed coming back to Exeter and the motivations and inspirations behind her art.*

**How did you and Tiffanie Carter collaborate to work on this exhibition?**

Tiffanie and I had actually never met before. It was Stacey Durand who kind of had the wherewithal to see the similarity in our work. I mean, if you look at our work, it's not that similar, right? But it's more conceptual. So the fact that she is kind of working with flowers and looking at the aging and wilting of flowers, the processes of beauty, and her materials were very different from mine.

And so with my work, I'm really looking, I'm using my background, having grown up on a cranberry farm. Normally I don't think I would have ever thought to put any kind of botanical elements in my

work, but because I'm really just drawn to the body, like the human figure, because I could kind of correlate it with the body and with my own story, it really started to make sense when I started using the cranberry imagery. Like bringing that into the body, kind of. Before, early in grad school, I was painting more landscape type scenery of the cranberry farm. Some of those paintings are nice, but there was something in me still that really wanted to get to a more visceral kind of imagery. I dropped the cranberry imagery for a while actually, and I dove deeper into a really intense kind of bodily and emotional human figure.

And then kind of when I moved back to the States (I was in London for grad school), I was reincorporating the cranberry imagery. I think mostly it was the process of my own thinking about fertility, which is like fertility of the land, but also fertility of my body and being at that stage of thinking of having kids.

I think that's where the similarity came up, and Stacey was really great in that she saw that duality in our work and it was really good territory to talk about, because it's really easy for me to talk about that aspect of my work, it's so much part of my foundation. And people always are kind of interested in it, because it's kind of weird. Who grows up on a cranberry farm, you know?

It's a really small industry and it's so, so specific. And

I remember actually when I was at Exeter, like that was, so that was the first time I lived away from the farm. I still thought living on a cranberry farm was kind of a normal thing, but like no one knew like no one knew what that looks like or anything. I was just so conditioned to it. It was just really good to have that talk because I could really just zoom in on that aspect of my work, which was fun.

**What are your motivations and inspirations?**

I did a panel for a group show in California that I'm a part of, and it's made up of all female artists, a lot of who are looking at the female body and really kind of on par with my interests, but it was really interesting. They asked the question of, 'what is your drive and what really contributes to you making work?' For me, I've always made work ever since I was a teeny little kid. I can't not make artwork.

And even at Exeter, I was always painting in different areas in the dorm. My teacher when I was there, she's not there anymore, but she was amazing; she really helped me figure out how to find spaces to make work and other resources, so that was great.

But I think what I started to discover at that stage and then in college was that I really wanted to make work about the emotional body and the female body. And I talked about this the other day—the disruptive body, the disrupt-

ive female bodies. You know, we're socialized as women to really need to contain ourselves and to cover up aspects of our body. Like, we don't talk that much about birth, we don't talk that much about menstruation, you know, all of these leaky things that happen to our body, and so I feel like a lot of my drive in depicting the figure has been making a very explosive body, one that really disrupts that narrative of the need for containment. I use my materials to exploit that, like using these very, very watered down inks that make puddles that are kind of uncontrollable.

I think that has always been my overall drive, exploring both a disruptive and emotional body and then also relating that to anything that can bring it more authenticity. So, things from my own story, that's why the cranberry stuff came into play. And then later on in grad school, I think that's when I really started to research different things. Female writing actually has a lot of influence on my practice. A lot of surrealist female writing, and piecing all these different aspects together into different compositions is how I've always made work.

**Are there any like specific female writers that you have in mind right now?**

Yeah, the one I was really focused on, and that I wrote my thesis on in grad school was, Unica Zürn. And she was really interesting because she's an artist and an author.

She wrote surrealist novellas, but she would also make anagram poetry. Her drawings were also interesting, they were these surrealist techniques of automatic drawing, and they're cool. They're not as interesting to me as her writing because her writing dives into the female psyche while still being very, entertaining and nonsensical. And I like that and I like that mix of maybe not quite nonsense, but fantasy and using fantasy in terms of allegory or representation of other kinds of ideas.

I'm really into fairy tales and using old narratives like that—fairy tales, mythology—to retell different stories. So another author that I've been into for a long time is Angela Carter. I love that she has the same last name as me, but we're not related, unfortunately. She is one of these people that rewrote a lot of fairytales and put a totally different spin on them. Really good use of language too; her style is just so colorful and beautiful, the way she tells these stories. So yeah, I'd say those two are my main influences.

**What were challenges you faced preparing the pieces for this exhibit or preparing for the panel?**

I mean, making pieces for me is always just a huge challenge. It's this very long process of decision-making mostly, and because a lot of it is very free flowing, right? And then what happens half the time is I make something bad and I have to just put that piece aside for a long time or just throw it in the trash. And I hate wasting my time, but it's part of the process. It's just

part of the game and to have to accept that. I think that's always my challenge.

And then for preparing for the panel, I don't think that was challenging at all, because I feel like having a narrow focus of just thinking about the kind of botanical aspects of the work is really nice. And knowing that my prepared talk would just be 10 minutes was way less scary. So it's always a challenge, but a really good challenge because I always feel so good afterwards to have shared. I'm so used to sharing images and I feel like people just get such a deeper insight into the work if they hear me talk about it. I always feel better afterwards.

**How did it feel to present to your old high school?**

Great! I still definitely credit Exeter with a for a lot of my development. And I think in a lot of ways it was similar to grad school for me because I was really pushed in the areas that I felt most uncomfortable. When I got to Exeter, I realized I really had to step up my game. I'm not very good at science or math or languages. I like the fact that it pushed me in those areas; I hated it at the time, but I just have such fun memories of my community there. I think that the best part of Exeter was the peers I had and how it opened me up to the world because it's an international student body and it's so amazing in that sense. Presenting in that context is really wonderful and fun because it will hopefully be seen by the current students at Exeter, but it's also for some of my peers to tune into, and it's just a fun way to reconnect.

# Faculty of the Week: Michael Matsumaru



Courtesy of exeter.edu

By **JETT GOETZ, EMI LEVINE and SAFIRA SCHIOWITZ**

As the sun tips over the horizon in the early morning at Exeter, hours before the first class of the day, History Instructor Michael Matsumaru runs through the Exeter woods. He arrives at his classroom just in time to chat with his co-workers about his mileage that morning, what soccer matches he caught last night and what he's excited to teach that day.

Before Exeter, Matsumaru lived in British Columbia, Canada and worked as a sports reporter for several small newspapers. "I wrote a

lot about junior hockey — being it was Canada — and beyond the world of sports I also covered the local city council and school board. I loved being able to meet new people and learn about their lives," Matsumaru said.

Soon, however, Matsumaru wanted more from his profession. "I wanted to dig into the subjects that interested me without having a project derailed by an editor who needed words to wrap around the advertisements." This is when Matsumaru began to find his passion for teaching history. "I never really thought I would become a teacher and I am sure my teachers in high school would be shocked to

hear of my intellectual journey," Matsumaru admitted. Now, Matsumaru lives in Abbot with his wife Sabrina and two children: Nina and Takeo.

As an advisor to the Multi-racial Exonian Society, Matsumaru strives to advocate for students of color in his work. A major motivation for him to become a history teacher was when he learned more about race and African American history in college. "As the son of two Canadian immigrants who settled in Vancouver, B.C. — one from Japan and the other from Holland — my ideas on race are ever-evolving and I love to hear what students are experiencing in their own journeys and to help them find common ground," Matsumaru said.

Many students noted that Matsumaru has an empathetic, kind and welcoming personality. He also makes a point of getting to know many Abbot residents. "Matsumaru is truly is an empathetic person. He is always making sure the Abbot boys have a smile on their faces. He's very approachable and a lot of fun to be around," Prep Ayaan Akhtar said.

Lower Tendo Lumala, who also lives in Abbot, said similarly, "Mr. Matsumaru is the special kind of adult which you can really connect with. He is fun and playful and will joke with the kids in the dorm but at the same time he's supportive and understanding

and there for anyone in need."

Apart from Abbott, Matsumaru has positively impacted the lives of his history students. Upper Anne Chen recalled a fond memory of Matsumaru from fall term. "Once, he assigned our class a reading centered around marine biology, and he asked us the next day whether we found it engaging. I was comfortable enough in the class environment to say honestly that I did not, and instead of interpreting it as an attack of the curriculum, he laughed it off," Chen said.

"He tries to show history from all angles, but he understands if they don't all hit the mark and that not everyone is interested in ten pages of historical marine biology," Chen added.

Outside the classroom, many of Matsumaru's fellow faculty members noted his athleticism. Science Instructor Melissa Peterson said, "He's a fantastic soccer player and avid runner. We have this continuous joke where he'll go out of his way to call me how many miles he ran that morning and then I pretend to be super excited about it by giving him increasing levels of ridiculous praise."

Modern Language Instructor Ning Zhou agreed. "He loves to play sports with students... Mr. Matsumaru is athletic as I occasionally see him run in the woods."

History Instructor Troy Samuels also noted Matsumaru's love for soccer and conversation. "I mentioned I liked soccer and coaching, he mentioned the JV girls team could use a coach, and we were stuck together for almost every afternoon for the duration of the fall...those practices (both coaching soccer and our discussions of Harkness, teaching, etc.) were some of the highlights of the fall," Samuels said.

Teachers praised Matsumaru's enthusiastic teaching style as well. "I would say the best thing about Matsumaru is his eagerness to learn and try new things in the classroom," History Instructor Dionna Richardson said. "He is not set into any kind of pattern or structure (nor am I), so that has made collaborating with him fun and easy."

"The excitement he gets out of working with the students here is infectious. I remember when he started working with the Multi-Racial Exonian Society here in the fall and the excitement and joy he took out of working with students in that venue was fantastic," Samuels added.

Besides having a strong passion for teaching, Matsumaru has many other interests. "My hobbies now mostly revolve around hanging out with my kids. I am all about having dance parties with my wife Sabrina and our two children when the weekend rolls

around. Their favorite artists are Celine Dion and Stevie Wonder. I also like reading them Mo Willems books, an author they adore," Matsumaru said. "One of my other favorite hobbies is watching boxing. I've told Sabrina that when I retire, I want to move to Vegas and work part time as a boxing writer. She pretty much hates the idea."

When asked how to describe Matsumaru, Samuels said, "In one word, awful. In two words, the worst. In three words, a Barcelona fan (ugggh). Although I heard he is improving and coming to love Chelsea Football Club."

"He spatchcocked a turkey for Thanksgiving. In the fall, he repeatedly told our team that he would join us for our weekly strength training, only to go eat at the food trucks instead," Samuels added.

Richardson also shared her thoughts on his soccer team preference. "He's a Barcelona fan, which tells me he has good judgment (unlike Mr. Samuels who is a Chelsea fan - BOO!)," she added.

Richardson concluded by emphasizing Matsumaru's passionate and caring nature. "Mr. Matsumaru is passionate about people and about justice. He really cares about whether or not we are doing a good job at helping students to think critically and become good global citizens."

# Senior of the Week: Isa Matsubayashi



Mohamed Kane / *The Exonian*

By ANGELA ZHANG and HANNAHPARK

Isa Matsubayashi often jokes that it was her childhood obsession with Harry Potter that sparked her interest in the Academy. “I really wanted to go to Hogwarts. The concept of living at school, studying with your friends was fascinating to me. I came to the summer school, really enjoyed it, and I decided to apply to Exeter!”

In the classroom, however, Matsubayashi proves to be a passionate student. Most interested in biology, she aspires to become a doctor and is currently taking a field course, BIO 999, in human behavior. “It’s been one of my favorite classes I’ve ever taken at Exeter,” Matsubayashi shared. “It’s fascinating how all these little tidbits about

evolutionary biology and how our DNA works can be applied to all these big concepts. For example, the other day we talked about how free will fits into how our brain makes decisions, and how that applied to the criminal justice system.”

Matsubayashi is currently taking an English course on Samuel Beckett as well, which has proven to be equally as challenging and rewarding. “It’s one of the most confusing things that I’ve read in my life, but when I come back to the table and dissect the different elements of Beckett’s writing with my classmates, it’s mind blowing,” Matsubayashi said.

Matsubayashi is just as engaged in life outside of the classroom. In her free-time, she listens to podcasts, crochets and goes on long walks and bike rides with her

friends. When school is not in session, she enjoys skiing, which she has loved since middle school. “I used to take the train a few hours every weekend just to go skiing! That was a really big part of my life back in Japan,” Matsubayashi said.

Dancing has been one of Matsubayashi’s greatest involvements at Exeter. Matsubayashi began pursuing it more seriously in her prep year, inspired by the dancers she saw online. “They were able to follow the beat and looked really comfortable in their bodies,” Matsubayashi said. “The seniors on the dance teams really took me under their wing, and I was able to really improve and find a community in my dance clubs.”

Matsubayashi reflected on her earlier experiences in dance, laughing as she shared,

“I did ballet when I was really small, but my mom took me out after my first recital, because she was so embarrassed.”

Matsubayashi continued, “Dance also just helps me appreciate the moment. When I’m dancing, I’m not really worrying about other things in life. I just think about what’s ahead of me, what movement is next.” During her time at the Academy, Matsubayashi has taken dance classes for credit as well as been part of three major dance clubs: InMotion, Beat of Asia and Imani.

Matsubayashi was also the chair of The Exonian’s Business Board until the recent turnover for the 143rd Board, and has made significant contributions to the success of the Business Board. According to upper Emily Wang, who succeeded Matsubayashi as one of the current chairs, Matsubayashi “was responsible for all the financial, logistical, advertisement, outreach, and subscription aspects of the newspaper.”

Wang added, “It is a lot to keep on top of, especially when we had to coordinate everything over Zoom during spring term of the 19-20 school year. But she did it so well and always took good care of the other board members, maintaining a good balance between kindness and still getting the team to get work done.”

When asked what impact she believes she had on Exeter, Matsubayashi remained humble and responded, “I don’t think I’ve made that much of an impact. I’m not a Student Council president or anything, but I guess what really makes me happy is when I can help individuals, even when it’s on a really small scale. Like making people smile on a daily basis, just listening to their concerns, or making them laugh.”

Despite her modest view of her own legacy, other students testified to the great influence Matsubayashi has had on Exeter on both a large and indi-

vidual scale. Upper James Urquhart, another successor of Matsubayashi as chair of The Exonian’s Business Board along with Wang, described the incredible leadership skills she displayed both in and out of the club.

“She was a fantastic leader, always willing to help me while being a joy to be around at the same time. I’ve idolized her determination and confidence since taking over the position myself. She keeps a positive attitude and great sense of humor while being hard-working. Just a great person that every young Exonian should strive to be,” Urquhart said.

Wang added, “She welcomed everyone, and really took me under her wing and helped me learn. I would never be where I am right now without her help and advice. Whenever I talk to her, I’m just really happy and calm. She’s a role model for the standards I set for myself.”

Matsubayashi’s close friends noted her leadership and other great qualities extend beyond just clubs, but to all of campus. “She brings her dedication, leadership, and intelligence everywhere. She’ll leave behind a legacy that all students can admire. To me, she’s radiant. Her presence lights up any room she walks into, and I can’t help but be drawn in by her seemingly boundless energy,” Senior Eunice Kim said.

Senior Sophie Liu, who was roommates with Matsubayashi during her prep and lower years, added, “Isa is so incredibly exuberant and friendly. She can liven up any room she walks into. She has so much to offer, including her wonderful personality, valuable friendship, and commendable leadership. I’m very impressed with how driven she is in all aspects!”

Lower Cassie Perez, who lives in the same dorm as Matsubayashi, shared a sentimental moment between the two of them during the last school year. “Last winter, I

was having a hard time during midterms and Isa would leave Matcha Kit-Kats with little notes attached to help support me and get me through it,” Perez said. “They would absolutely make my day and I’ll never forget it.”

“Isa brings a positive atmosphere with her wherever she goes! She’s always laughing and making jokes and seems to know how to make everyone smile,” Perez continued.

Matsubayashi’s advisor, History Instructor Sally Komarek, agreed. “It’s not uncommon to hear her contagious laughter coming from the common room. She’s often the one to set-up a movie or game night, and is always looking for ways to keep our dorm community connected and having fun,” Matsubayashi said.

Matsubayashi shared that what she cherishes most throughout her Exeter experience is “human connection” and “being able to develop relationships that are important to me in my life.” Clearly, Matsubayashi has succeeded in forming truly meaningful connections within the Exeter community, inspiring those around her.

One of the most important lessons Matsubayashi learned during her four years at Exeter that she wishes to pass on to future students is to “prioritize your own happiness.”

For Matsubayashi, learning to spend time doing things that made her happy instead of comparing herself to others gave her a better purpose in life. “That’s been really important for me because there are times I really doubted myself,” Matsubayashi said. “Exeter can obviously be a really hard place, especially when everyone around you is doing amazing things and everyone seems to be succeeding in their own way.”

“Stop caring about whether there are any consequences to being yourself,” Matsubayashi concluded. Matsubayashi is indeed unapologetically herself, and by doing so, brings joy everywhere she goes, including Exeter and beyond.

# Assembly: Vanessa Friedman



Courtesy of Vanessa Friedman

By ASHLEY JIANG, ANVI BHATE and CLARK WU

36 years ago, Vanessa Friedman ’85 donned slouchy corduroy pants and printed t-shirts when she traversed the Academy campus. “I don’t think the term ‘fashion sense’ is one that could be used,” she joked. “If anyone told me I would one day step into fashion, I would’ve told them in very rude terms that they were wrong.”

Friedman spoke at a student-moderated assembly with lower Claire McConnell and senior Violet Goldstone last Tuesday. Assembly Committee Chair and English Instructor Alex Myers shared

that the Committee invited Friedman as part of the 50th co-ed anniversary programming and for her experience with visual arts and politics. “I hear students talking about brands and clothing every now and then, but I think a lot of people would deem fashion as trivial and irrelevant. Yet it’s an interesting subject that lends to meaningful analysis. It’s important for us to realize that one can talk about and process politics in a variety of ways.”

Friedman recalled that “fashion was superficial” when she was attending Exeter. “We generally think that anyone who wanted to think of themselves as smart

wouldn’t spend much time caring about clothes,” she said. “Back in the day, fashion wasn’t a subject to be studied.”

After leaving Exeter and graduating from Princeton University, Friedman freelanced for *Vogue*, *The New Yorker* and *Entertainment Weekly*, before stumbling upon the field of fashion in London as a newlywed. Friedman received a call from someone at the *Financial Times* (FT) who assumed that she “wrote about boots.”

“At that point, you know, if she had said ‘write about tire treads and we’ll pay you,’ I would have done it,” Friedman said.

is really for America, so he wore Ralph Lauren, the most American designer,” Salmone said.

To Friedman, the events of 2020 spurred the fashion industry to finally “grapple with its own history of racism, cultural appropriation, and what it all means.”

“Action is incredibly slow. We can see changes in imagery, like the covers of a magazine or the models you book for your runway. But those aren’t huge financial commitments or require a lot of work to change,” Friedman said. “The executives, the designers, the fashion education, however, stay the same. There’s an enormously long way to go.”

“Every industry is in a period of flux. Fashion as an industry is one [which is] geared towards acknowledging and giving shape to identity” Friedman continued. “You like a piece of clothing because you recognize some of who you are or who you want to be in that garment. Fashion is always attuned to how society and the world are shifting. The pandemic made us question a lot of the things we practice.”

Friedman also believes that the age of sweatpants will fade with the pandemic. “We’ve been through a really hard, complicated, and tragic period,” she said. “I don’t think people want to come out of this and wear clothes reminding them of this time. You’ll want to wear clothes that celebrate life in a new era. There’s no reason you can’t be comfortable in clothes that are right and happy and creative and sparkly.”

Friedman hopes that “last year has taught us to express ourselves in different ways.” She especially acknowledged Jonathan Anderson, a fashion designer who photographed models for his pandemic shows, then shrunk their images to produce physical paper dolls, “artifacts of the lost year.”

“If I was a cultural anthro-

pologist, this would be something I would look at in 50 years to think about how people dealt with the pandemic,” Friedman added. “It’s a fashion statement and a cultural statement. I don’t save most fashion things. I recycle them because I find it irritating and wasteful. But these have some kind of archaeological meaning, and I probably want to see them again.”

Hagge agreed. “Having to wear masks is a great example of inhibiting the mark you make on people, since you’re not able to express yourself through your face,” she said. “You have to find other sources like clothing to make connections to people.”

Friedman finds her role in the *New York Times* crucial in the increasingly noisy fashion world. “Everyone should have access to style; that’s a good democratic impulse,” she said. “But it somehow then evolved into everyone should have access to new stuff at all times, which is a bad impulse and encourages bad, unsustainable behavior. We now produce way too much stuff, none of which we value enough at all.”

In the end, Friedman hopes that more of the younger generation will see fashion as a sophisticated subject. “I think what’s changed is that I have understood fashion as a lens through which you can talk about everything you know. It’s one of the three universal subjects. Everyone has to think about what they put in their bodies, which is food, where they put their bodies, which is shelter, and what they put on their body, which are clothes,” Friedman said. “Even nudists think about clothes, they just reject them. So it’s an incredible and universal tool.”

“We all should acknowledge to ourselves what we’re trying to say with our clothes when we choose them,” Friedman said. “And if anyone ever says to you that they don’t think about what they wear, they’re lying.”



## » ANTI-RACISM

Read about Thora Jordt '22's call for Exeter to make anti-racist financial decisions, 11.

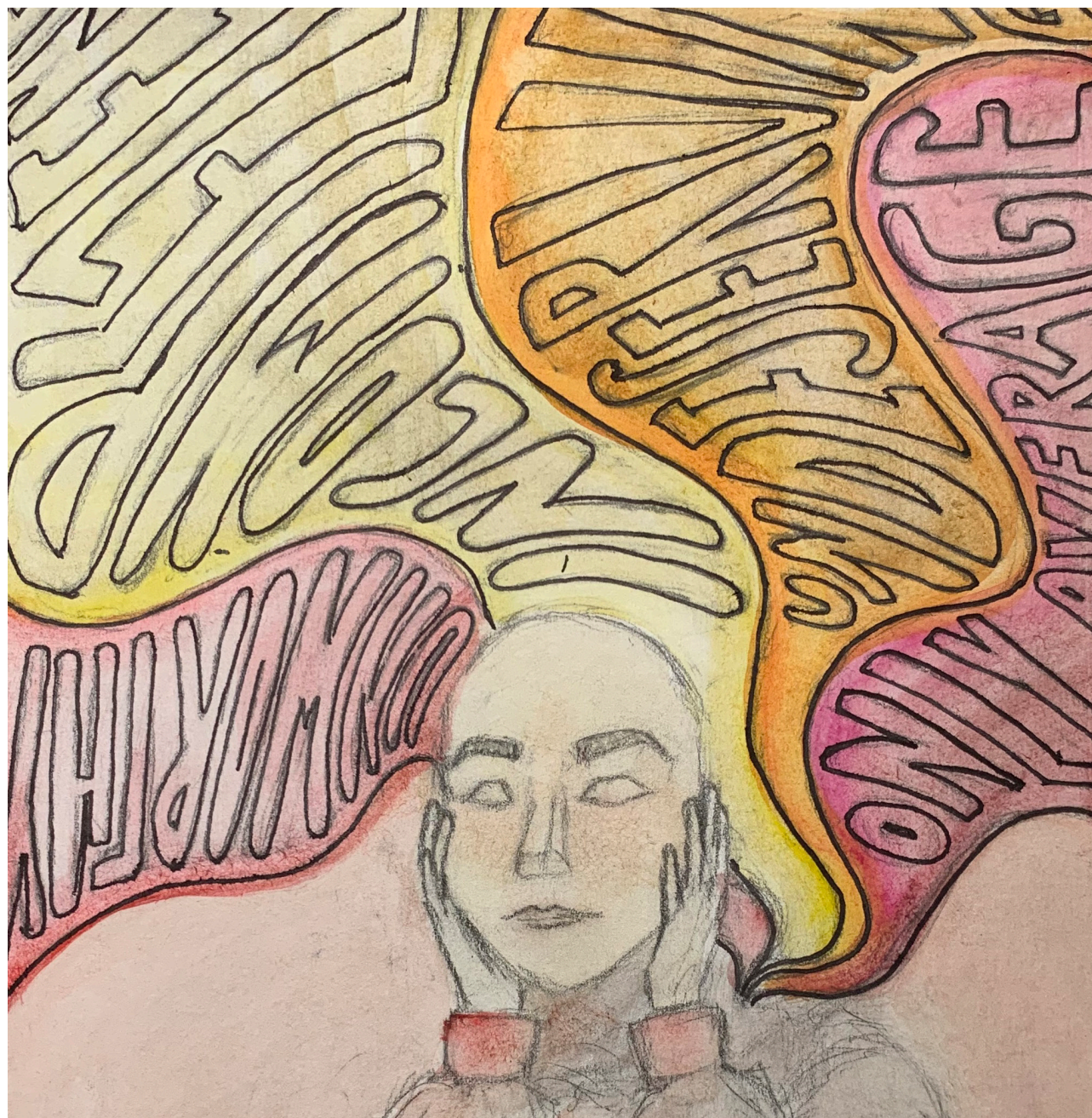
## » IMPOSTER SYNDROME

Read Anna Kim's '24 reflection on experiencing imposter syndrome after arriving at Exeter, 9.

## » NORTH KOREA

Read Andrew Yuan's '24 demands for Exonians to hold North Korea's government accountable, 11.

## Coming to Exeter



Joy Chi/*The Exonian*

By ANNA KIM '24

To all of our newly admitted students, congratulations! The thrilling feeling of receiving an acceptance email is one I will never forget. Perhaps you have already set your mind on Exeter, or perhaps you are unsure.

As an incoming prep preparing to go to school almost 500 miles away from home during a pandemic, I had many concerns about how I would fit in. Two terms later, some of my worries have been answered, but some still haven't. Yes, I have had late

nights and stressful tests. No, I can't say that I've found my people yet, or that I've never felt awkward in a conversation. However, I can confidently say that you will meet incredible people here, and you will learn so much from them.

When I received my Exeter acceptance packet in the mail, I was exhilarated. When I received my first graded math test of the term, I was devastated. I had gotten As in middle school; that was what I expected of myself. When I came to Exeter, I knew that the transition would be rough, but I didn't expect it to hit me

as hard as it did. I've cried over math in middle school before, but here, it was constant.

When friends complained about receiving 90s on their tests, I quietly drifted out of the conversation. A 90 was the grade I would be jumping up and down for. A 90 was the grade I stayed up late studying for, only for my hopes to be dashed and beaten down by reality. Even in the classes I considered my strongest, I felt isolated. I would zone out for a minute in English to then discover the class had moved on to an entirely different subject: instead of

brother-sister character dynamics, we were discussing Doaker's hidden meaning and symbolism in his monologue about the train. It was draining. Why was I never good enough? When would I be good enough? Everyone around me seemed afloat. Everyone here was good at something or at everything. And I was good at nothing. Nothing.

Why was I accepted to Exeter? I've thought about that question a lot since coming here. There are students here with national records in swim. There are those who can run a sub-6 minute mile,

and then there are others with callused fingertips as they practice their instruments for hours. There are some who are secretly or not so secretly math geniuses, and still others who can write beautiful prose. Where did I fit into that puzzle? This community that Exeter presented didn't emerge right away for me.

As I have adjusted to Exeter and its rigor, imposter syndrome strikes me now and then. I have days where I feel confident in my descriptive paragraph or in explaining homologous chromosomes, and then others where I'm confused about the differences between meiosis I and meiosis II, or why the fall of Roman Empire has anything to do with nature. I'm told that I'll get this club head position, or that I'm good at this, so I should "stop feeling so inferior." It somehow rings hollow. Why me? What makes me so special and good to deserve being at Exeter?

Some things greatly help ease away feelings of inferiority—like signing up for cross country. At the time, I didn't know why I had clicked the register button. I had never heard of diagonals, and I had never run over five miles. If it was raining, I wouldn't go outside much less run through the rain. All this changed my prep fall.

I showed up to that practice already looking forward to the end of the term. I immediately doubted athleticism, and wondered if I'd even be able to fit in socially.

The coach clapped her hands together and brought the attention of twenty-some girls. Suddenly, cheers—"let's have a great season!" - "Go XC!"—rang through our group crowd. Unexpectedly, that first day is now ingrained into my memories. Coach Coogan told us to go on a "social run". "Get to know each other! Have fun!" I loosened up a little, and off we went into the trails. The older teammates peppered us with friendly questions, and I could sense everyone's smiles beneath their masks.

Later that evening, I called my parents and told them how fun my first cross country practice had been. Almost two months later, at the end of fall term, I was telling my parents the same story. The memories, the advice from the upperclassmen, the friendships—it gave me what I wanted so desperately from Exeter.

You'll get to bake banana bread with other preps and upperclassmen at 1 a.m. You'll find people who will listen to you ramble about your worries for hours. You'll find people that will answer your frantic texts at 12 a.m. because you didn't understand your math homework. You'll meet upperclassmen who listen for hours to your rants about your friendship struggles. You'll meet upperclassmen who bear with you contacting them at 1 a.m. with sudden inspirational ideas. You will receive so many open invitations from other Exonians as they extend their warm personalities to you.

I recently read Sam Weil's '20 senior reflection, where she discusses "connection through suffering." That's what's great about Exeter. I came thinking that it wouldn't be easy, and it is indeed hard. Brutally hard. Some days, I'm able to finish my homework early and watch Netflix all night. On others, I just have to tell myself to do the work and continue to push on.

Exeter, at its core, is a welcoming place filled with welcoming people. I learned this on my first days on campus, and still feel it now as I exchange greetings on the paths and express thanks as I pick up my food. I realize that the hardest times can be some of the best times. Vulnerability allows us to realize the strength of our community—a strength that the Exeter community embodies which comforts me whenever I feel incapable. I'm beyond excited to continue to experience the strength of this community—and I am sure, when you arrive, you will too.

## Put Show vs. Tell on the Backburner

By ELLA BRADY '24

One of the first rules that any prep will hear when they walk into their fall English class is "show, don't tell." This basic dictum for writing seems very simple and easy to follow, but in truth, I doubt anybody actually knows what it means. And it's not always applicable because there are obvious instances of dead narration. There are obvious instances of scenery and description. But, by the time students arrive at Exeter, they rarely fall into those extremes. Here, show don't tell becomes vapid, misguided advice that leads poor

impressionable preps into refusing to say anything without 20 adjectives, a familial scandal and Freudian trauma to back it up.

The advice "show, don't tell" often misunderstands the only true "rules" I see in writing: economy, verisimilitude and dedication to capturing life and human spirit as it truly is.

Economy is the management of words in a text, keeping sentences and descriptions as short as possible without losing key meaning. Economy not only keeps a reader interested, but it provides negative capability, the core quality of a text to welcome a reader's imagination. What makes reading enjoyable is the

possibility of rapid and expansive connections, which is provided not in the details, but in the spaces between. When something is left unsaid in the text, the reader is left to imagine all the things that could have been expressed. Scene-building should get the reader in the mindset to accomplish active thinking and to provide a general direction, but should not mold the mind of the reader into the exact image that the writer might hope for.

This imaginative potential is called negative capability. It assumes that the reader can make more connections with images in their mind than a writer can create with words. When a teacher

tells a student that they have to show something more, a student will understandably resort to using more pointless adjectives or making every piece of information a puzzle to work through.

More issues arise when the writer tries to "show" their internal mind. Excessive imagery is easy to create and often appears compelling, but only if you ignore the fact that no person's mind works that way. Often people think in flashes, memories, snippets, and that is only portrayed well with economy. When extemporaneous connections and anecdotes are forced upon the reader because the student doesn't want to be too bland, it

ignores the reader's ability to project their own internal lives/emotions and does not even seem real. While what the writer mentions might be "part" of the character, it blocks the reader from the wholly present incarnation.

The biggest problem is that teachers and students alike expect each other to intrinsically understand showing versus telling, when I'm doubtful anybody does at all. It is a phrase thrown around which blocks students from engaging each others' work and from intelligently editing their own writing. Often a student who is told to "show" more will just tell a few more details, painting an equally bland but increasingly suffocated image. In peer and teacher reviews, this "universal rule" makes it very

easy to disengage with work while seeming like one is paying attention. In the current English curriculum, there is very little incentive to consider why something must be shown vs told, or how one can do so intelligently without boring or overwhelming the reader.

Students should learn to differentiate between important and unimportant details. They should learn to naturally weave these important details into their scenes in a way that seems true to real life where connections are made in flashes, with subtext and without excess context. Such skills should be prioritized in classes. The best way to do this is with dialogue and creating unique scenarios that could only apply to the relevant characters.

## Does Democracy Work?

By PHILIP AVILOV '23

Democracy doesn't work. America's approach to democracy doesn't work. If we define democracy as "a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives," the concept is so vague that it's difficult to point out its faults. However, America's definition of democracy as rule of the people excludes a vital part of the government: the people themselves.

Popularity and competence have become nearly indistinguishable when it comes to

politics. According to CNBC, \$14 billion was spent on congressional and presidential campaigns in the 2020 election. It is important for us to identify if it was spent on more closely examining the needs of the American people, or if they gauged their interest on every platform possible. In a rush to be chosen by the majority, politicians put more value on their popularity than on making sure they help those they represent.

The recent Mississippi bill prohibiting transgender athletes from participating in public schools' women's sports serves as a glaring example. Not one member of the Mississippi House of Representatives is

transgender. Regardless, they were given full authority to pass a transphobic bill. This highlights that minority voices often get lost in an inherently majority-based system.

The detriments of such a system are highlighted by this very possible situation: let's say, a state needs to renovate all of its bridges. Everyone approves it. However, it just so happens that the governor has never seen a bridge in their entire life and vetoes the bill. Not having seen a bridge alone does not make them an unqualified governor, yet they make an unqualified decision because they cannot physically represent the life experiences of an entire state.

What if we take the unfortunate governor out of the picture? What if we put up easily accessible digital voting booths that have a searchable list of problems across the country? This way, the legislators would hear more from people living in an area that requires new bridges. This way, trans girls in Mississippi wouldn't have to give up sports because they would have a more direct say in the matter.

We can also see this in history. When serving as President, Nixon appealed to the silent majority, referring to less outspoken individuals who did not protest against the Vietnam war. However, Nixon failed to cite data backing this assumption

that most people were pro-war, creating a sense of enigma that allowed him to speak about the masses without tangible proof.

By implementing law booths—a practical and more unified petition system—any public sentiment would show itself. Moreover, voter abstention would be less of a problem because people would vote for the specific laws they care about, as opposed to voting for people who run on general platforms and may or may not care about their specific needs.

The reasoning is simple; the technicalities of the process would be the most difficult part. How would voters confirm that they are involved with the passing of a law? Would the position of the booths and possible certification further inequities

in already split communities? Would we have to put more resources into a hacking police? There already is a decently working system—why even put up a new one like it's 1776 again?

Regardless of whether this type of democracy will work, we have to acknowledge that speculating about its efficacy is like buying a new house when a window cracks. This in no way will be a perfectly executed system. However, it is much better than letting the current system stand: the sentiment that some people matter less than others, the corruption, the neglect of some issues and the exacerbation of others needs to be fixed before we can expound on an ideal society.

# On Small Dorm Destruction

By ARHON STRAUSS '23

On some nights last year, all of Front Street House would sit in the common room cooking steak, playing Super Smash Bros and simply enjoying each other's presence. Nights like those created a sense of community akin to that of a family, which made me feel truly close to my dorm mates. Having a small community allowed me to develop friendships which I do not think I could have gotten in a large dorm.

I am someone who functions better in a more intimate environment. The houses at Exeter have played a large role during my time here and have greatly improved my living experience.

Thus, the administra-

tion's plan to combine two houses— Knight and Dutch House, according to the campus master plan— into one large dorm, the Front Street Commons, greatly alarmed me. Such destruction will dismantle their existing communities and make it harder for students who prefer closer environments.

The two houses being combined have their own communities and cultures. These dorm groups would be dissolved if they were combined into a larger dorm, losing all closeness unique to houses at Exeter.

Not only will the move affect currently enrolled students, but it will also limit Exeter's ability to provide for students' specific needs in the future, as there will not be enough

houses to accommodate new students. Ensuring students can live in housing most suitable to their needs is of utmost importance. Dorms and houses are centers of student relaxation and escape from the overwhelming stress of Exeter academics. As such, students must feel comfortable in their dorms, and must not be forced into different living environments they may feel uncomfortable in.

One of the key aspects of the Front Street Commons will be the academic additions included in the building. The dorm will have classrooms in it, which will likely create another layer of discomfort for students living there. Having classrooms in a living space, while convenient, will make that area

less homely and will foster the encroachment of stress, academics and work into an area which should be treated as an escape.

The transition from a strictly living space to a partially academic one will worsen the already jarring change from a small to large dorm. As stated previously, Exeter can be extremely stressful for students. Between classes, clubs and sports, there is always an event or activity driving us forward. For many Exonians, dorms have become a place to at least partially escape the constant rush of academics. Dorms are a place for students to play some games, hangout with their friends and make ramen late at night; they are not spots for more academic influence. The change will instead bring the stress

of school even closer to student life and will minimize any true separation from Exeter's academic life.

It is easy to point out that students' old dorm mates will be in the Front Street Commons as well and make the claim that there will be no substantial change. However, such transformation into a much larger community will greatly alter and harm the existing relationships within these communities. Some might argue the change will not be entirely bad, as meeting and interacting with new people may be helpful. But this is not something that should be forced upon droves of students, much less in their living environments. The students in these houses are often there because they prefer smaller environments; forcing them into a radically different and larger environment will cause significant harm.

Any benefits afforded by a change in dorm are obsolete due to the unsuitable situation which the transferred students will find themselves in.

The Front Street Commons plan to merge houses into a dorm stands in stark opposition to what a living space should be. This plan signals a shift away from small dorms on campus, which will be detrimental for students who desire smaller living quarters. The shift will be exacerbated by academic aspects of the Front Street Commons, which will result in a worse situation for Exonians forced to move there. The students are what matter most in this transition, and they are not being adequately cared for. The administration's plan must be carefully reconsidered, and, ultimately halted, for the sake of all students involved.

# Stop Anti-Asian Hate

By NHAN PHAN '24

Know their names. Everyone should know their names. Soon Chung Park, Hyun Jung Grant, Suncha Kim, Yong Ae Yue, Delaina Ashley Yaun, Paul Andre Michels, Xiaojie Tan, Daoyou Feng.

Words cannot explain how I felt. I'm very sure other Asians and Asian Americans are kicking themselves cursing. We're hurt. The 8 women and men at the spa in Atlanta on Tuesday are dead.

As a Vietnamese student, I still don't understand how this is still happening. Why are we allowing extremism to prevail? Why do we know more about the shooter, focus on him and offer him more of our attention? I shouldn't have to write this piece. I shouldn't have to feel these emotions.

Xiaojie Tan was going to

celebrate her 50th birthday with her little daughter, who now has lost their mother for the rest of her life because of a man who couldn't overcome his "sex addiction."

"She did everything for me and for the family. She provided everything. She worked every day, 12 hours a day, so that me and our family would have a better life," her daughter, Jami Webb, told USA Today. Randy Park, the son of Hyun Jung Grant, recalled that she was a teenager at heart. She loved to hang out with her friends. She loved to go dancing, she loved karaoke. She dedicated her whole life to raising them and even then she still found time to go and hang with her friends. Delaina Ashley Yaun died because she went for a massage.

Her husband, Mario Gonzalez, was engaged with her for less than a year. "What

am I going to do?" her husband asked on MundoHispanico. They have two children—an 8-month-old baby girl and a teenage son. "The killer only left me with pain."

Paul Andre Michels was a loving godfather to Kikiana Whidby's son. He was doing maintenance work for the spa when the shooting happened. He built his last shelf there.

Suncha Kim was an employee at the spa, who worked multiple jobs to provide for her family, her granddaughter Regina Song said. "She represented everything I wanted to be as a woman, without an ounce of hate or bitterness in her heart," she said.

Yong Ae Yue was a South Korean native who immigrated to the US during the 1970s with her husband. Her youngest son Robert said, "she was an amazing

woman who loved to introduce our family and friends to her home-cooked Korean food and Korean karaoke. We will miss joining mom on her weekly Sunday routine to the grocery store and traditional Korean Dinner."

As a Vietnamese person, I'm a proud Asian, and this hits close to home. Imagine if one of those women was your mother. Imagine if it was your father, your Nainai (grandma), your Yéyé (grandpa), your imo (aunt), your samchon (uncle), your anh chū em (brothers and sisters). How would you feel if you had to talk about your memories with your family in the past tense?

Imagine all the things you lost, all the love they gave, all the food they cooked and all the effort they made to provide you with a better life. That's what pushed me to speak out—I just cannot hold in my emotions anymore. I am mad at how we have chosen to reach this point where there are still people in the world who think that Chi-

nese women are prostitutes and are immoral. Where there are still people in the world who criminalize Asians for the spread of COVID-19, who target Chinese people specifically for the spread of the "Kung Flu" or the "Chinavirus."

I'm hurt at how the same man who assaulted a 76-year-old Chinese woman, Xiao Zhen Zie, also assaulted an 83-year-old Vietnamese native, Ngoc Pham, for similar racially motivated purposes. I'm astonished at the audacity of Captain Jay Baker, who dared to say the shooter "had a bad day." A "bad day" does not come close to the realm of justification, explanation, or remorse. Think about the audacity of such a statement.

I spoke out because I had to. I spoke out because I wanted to speak for everyone who is hurt but are not willing to voice their frustration and sadness because they fear it only evokes more anger and hatred. I spoke out because I am proud of being a yellow-skinned, slightly

chubby Vietnamese Asian, and I spoke out because I hold my undying love and respect for the 8 people killed that day, as well as my ongoing anger towards the people in the world who views Asians as useless, immoral and harmful aliens.

The candles and flashlights on the Academic Quad Monday evening was a show of solidarity. It reminded me of how united the Exeter community and the Asian-American community is. It was also a stark reminder of the inequalities still present in our world today in terms of the social struggle Asians and Asian Americans are facing, the differences in treatment we are facing in Western culture, as well as the ongoing racism and hatred we are still seeing. We should have never had that vigil in the first place if the shooting had never happened. But I now urge everyone to wonder: why things happened the way they did, and how do they keep happening.

# The Exonian

We would like to acknowledge the Squamscott/Penacook peoples who were the first peoples of this land. We would like to honor their ancestors, descendants and future generations for caring for this area and allowing us to be here today.

**DANIEL ZHANG**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

**LINA HUANG**  
*Managing Editor*

**OTTO DO**  
*Director of Design*

**MOKSHA AKIL**  
**ANYA TANG**  
*Directors of Writing*

**NEWS EDITORS**  
Andrea Luo  
Amy Lum  
Tina Huang  
Hansi Zhu

**LIFE EDITORS**  
Indrani Basu  
Jeannie Eom  
Taraz Lincoln

**OPINIONS EDITORS**  
Evan Gonzalez  
Manan Mendiratta  
Max Park

**SPORTS EDITORS**  
Toby Chan  
Sydney Kang  
Ginny Vazquez-Azpiri  
Georgie Venci

**HEAD DESIGNER**  
William Lu

**LAYOUT EDITORS**  
Joy Chi  
Max Chuang  
Anna Kim  
Avery Lavine

**HUMOR EDITORS**  
Jack Archer  
Dorothy Baker  
Chieko Imamura  
Blake Simpson

**HEAD PHOTO EDITOR**  
Teja Vankireddy

**PHOTO EDITORS**  
Ethan-Judd Barthelemy  
Joy Chi

**HEAD ART EDITOR**  
Sabrina Kearney

**SENIOR COLUMNISTS**  
Anne Brandes  
Cheikh Fiteni  
Noah James  
Stephen McNulty  
Alexis Ramon  
Emmanuel Tran  
Felix Yeung

**FACULTY ADVISORS**  
Ellee Dean  
Erica Lazure  
Avery Reavill  
Chelsea Woodard

**BUSINESS CO-CHAIRS**  
James Urquhart  
Emily Wang

**ACCOUNTING**  
David Kim

**ADVERTISING**  
Anderson Lynch

**OPERATIONS**  
James Broderick

**SUBSCRIPTIONS**  
Claire Fu

**OUTREACH**  
Alysha Lai

**CHIEF DIGITAL EDITOR**  
Sabrina Kearney

The Web Board staff members are listed on *The Exonian's* website: [www.theexonian.com](http://www.theexonian.com).

To subscribe to or advertise on *The Exonian*, contact [exonian@gmail.com](mailto:exonian@gmail.com) or call 603-777-4100. A subscription to the paper costs \$90 off campus and \$150 overseas.

*The Exonian* welcomes Letters to the Editor sent to the care of [dzhang@exeter.edu](mailto:dzhang@exeter.edu).

*The Exonian* reserves the right to print Letters to the Editor in a timely fashion and to edit them for content and clarity.

# We Are North Korea's Only Hope

By ANDREW YUAN '24

North Korea is an abnormal society—at least, this is what the rest of our world thinks of North Korea, and what North Korea wants us to think of them.

For years, North Korea has intentionally created rising military and diplomatic eccentricities with the West to distract the outside world from its notorious human rights persecutions. It is a master of spurring chaos and then stantly resolving the tensions it created.

In June of 2017, just a few months after Former President Trump's inauguration, American student Otto Warmbier died after returning from North Korea to the United States. Accused of stealing a propaganda poster, Warmbier was imprisoned in North Korea as he experienced severe neurological injuries and eventually fell into a coma. Warmbier's death exposed the free world to the hidden history of North Korea's immoral suppression of human rights. It was a grievous premonition that arrived far too late for the U.S., and in particular for former President Trump, the danger of North Korea. But the news? It soon faded away, not even lasting for more than a few days as a headline. Trump didn't even have the time to publicly condemn

Kim Jong Un for Warmbier's death.

Six days following Warmbier's death, North Korea responded, but not with a public apology. It was a cloudy Independence Day when the Associated Press notifications on my phone flashed "North Korea claims it tested its first intercontinental missile." It marked the beginning of a year-long missile crisis between North Korea and the U.S.. The world seemed to have forgotten the tragic death of an innocent American citizen, and could only focus itself on flashy pundit debates about America's future military strategies and further sanctions against North Korea.

This isn't the first time that North Korea has exploited its foreign relations as a disguise. In August of 2016, following the defection of high-profile diplomat Thae Yong-Ho, Kim Jong-Un renewed his nuclear testing program for the first time in ten years. After Trump accused North Korea of its human rights abuses in his 2018 State of the Union address, North Korea completed a series of historical diplomatic moves in merely two months: sending delegations to the Pyeongchang Olympics, signing the Panmunjom Declaration with South Korea and eventually meeting with President Trump in Singapore.

Nor is North Korea's notorious record of human rights

persecutions a new phenomenon. This suppression traces all the way back to World War II when the theocratic Japanese Empire first seized control over the Korean peninsula. After the Cold War, another autocratic regime (the Soviet Union) re-constructed North Korea with their socialist policies.

After North Korea gained independence, the Kim family quickly seized power over a country whose citizens that have long subserviently lived under the shadow of totalitarian regimes. The country began with minor economic successes and witnessed reform. North Korea's brief prosperity came to a halt during the Soviet Union's dissolution, which forced the Kim regime to roll back its ambitious economic policies.

Eventually, famine swept across North Korea. Kim Il-Sung, the beloved "Sun God" of his people, deliberately centralized crop supplies for armies. As the Supreme Leader and his beloved military enjoyed their meals in Pyongyang, hundreds of thousands, if not millions, were starving to death in other provinces. Digging through trash cans to find filthy crop residues was a crime, and eating the crops produced by your family became a felony. Using the words "famine" and "starving" was considered treason.

The famine forced many

North Koreans to defect from the country, to swim across frozen rivers in harsh winters, to trudge on foot from Northern China to Thailand or Vietnam where they could eventually seek asylum. But before they could complete this journey, most were shot to death by the troops guarding the bordering rivers.

It was at this very moment North Korea became a silent and tyrannical nation, a prototype of the modern North Korea as we know. Over the next few years, North Korea began rebuilding its economy, but their reign of terror didn't stop there. It continued to combat free speech, press and religion. The Kim regime evolved over time, their authoritarian grip becoming more powerful than before.

As North Korea continues to distract its human rights persecutions with foreign diplomacy, the U.S. is faced with a choice of whether to negotiate with this cruel regime that neglects fundamental morality to ensure world peace or to further agitate North Korea by condemning its abuses. Eventually, it always chooses the former.

We are tired of it. I am tired of it.

Once this choice is made, the human rights accusations brought forth into the light by North Korean defectors always die away in darkness. When a country willing to lock up its

own citizens in concentration camps is left unchecked, its systematic oppression against freedom of speech continues to grow without notice.

Per this week, all humanitarian and intergovernmental organizations have moved out of North Korea, leaving citizens more vulnerable to the government's atrocious policies than ever before. Yet Biden is still scrambling to create his own strategy against North Korea as he balances his political interest with China and Russia. If the government is unwilling to take up the responsibilities to directly confront North Korea on these issues, we, the American people, must do the job for them.

I introduced the Flash Drive for Freedom campaign last November, a project in collaboration with the Human Rights Foundation to our Exeter Rescue Team (LiNK). I had great passion for this project, but acted mostly with great grief for the fate of North Koreans. I knew that this program was going to face obstacles and doubts from the very beginning. Everyone knew that it was challenging for us, a handful of high school students, to indirectly deliver flash drives containing outside information into the most clandestine country in the world. But whenever I think back of the infants who starved to death in the famine, or the citizens persecuted, I would resolve.

I was utterly shocked and mostly disappointed when our proposal, previously approved by the ESSO board,

was cancelled by the Academy. Even by this day, we heard no explicit explanation from the board about the motivations behind this cancellation, no follow-up on future campaign processes, not even a meeting. I know that it's difficult to understand or even to imagine the conditions North Koreans suffer from. I know that by the time you are reading this, you would stare in disbelief at my words, or assume that I'm only exaggerating the situation as most media do. I know that you might have the urge to shake your head and curse at this piece "what does this have to do with me?"

And you are right, this doesn't have anything to do with you, or with the Academy, or with any individual living in the free world. But it doesn't mean you shouldn't care. This thinking directly led to decades of the government's failed response against North Korea's human rights record, empowered North Korea to continue its abuses of its people and silenced the voices of the oppressed.

We enjoy the most prestigious education in the world—so prestigious it has made us less empathetic, so prestigious that it's trapping us into the small world we built around us, so prestigious that sometimes we selectively choose to care for some parts of the world, but not the others.

To the Academy and to everyone who is reading this article right now: North Korean citizens need your help.

# Classics Needs to Change

By ASHLEY JIANG '24

The United States stands on legs borrowed from the civilizations of ancient Rome and Greece. Yet, classics, the academic field dedicated to the remnants—literature, history and languages—of these once illustrious empires, does not occupy a prominent space in most people's thoughts, and understandably so.

Derived from the Latin *classicus*, meaning "belonging to the highest class of citizens", the name of this esoteric discipline has recently been the center of controversy; several classicists have pressed for change. A retitling, however, would be

performative at best and almost undoubtedly purposeless.

The meanings of words adapt through usage and time; as such, classics in the 500s A.D. named writers of superior quality, and now the label of classics in itself does not maintain a significant connotation except in reference to this subspecialty of humanities. Thus, the reconstruction of the sentiment associated with the discipline must be the foremost priority.

The Academy, a school with an abundance of resources and erudite teachers, has a greater responsibility to educate its classical students on the social issues of the two ancient societies and their ties into modern

social injustices.

Students by-and-large do not have the luxury of studying Latin or ancient Greek. Educational institutions, especially public schools, lack sufficient funding to offer any (let alone multiple) secondary language courses. Overlooking financial barriers when presented with the choice, many still choose modern languages because of the impracticality and low merit of understanding a dead language to almost all working class occupations.

Another enduring inequity in classical studies is its eurocentrism. Though the Roman and Greek empires both encompassed parts of Asia and Africa,

the legacies of Black emperors and Sino-Roman trade relations are disregarded in favor of war, philosophy and religion. Exeter's Classics curriculum is not exempt from this. In LAT220: Intermediate Latin, Julius Caesar and his *De Bello Gallico*, or his commentary on the Gallic Wars, are the main focus; Caesar's spontaneous auctioning of 50,000-plus captured Gauls and the matter of slavery in ancient Rome is again left unbroadened.

Furthermore, alt-right proponents have pushed the melding of Greco-Roman culture and elitism to promote white nationalism and justify slavery and misogyny. The Greek city-state

Sparta is wielded as a common exemplar for its heavily abused population of slaves—the *Helots*—celebrated militarism and extreme xenophobic approaches including *xenelasia*, or the expelling of foreigners.

One possibility for change is an expansion of the field to subsume the other ancient languages, notably Sanskrit, classical Chinese and Arabic, pivotal in driving cultural evolution. The literature of these three languages indeed hold great significance to their respective regions and histories. Nevertheless, it is unfair and more importantly infeasible to group eastern with western civilizations with regard to their profound and fundamental differences in ideology.

The field of classics is in desperate need of modification;

while not formally addressing the deeply rooted issues at hand, a temporal expansion is a straightforward and conducive threshold for thoughtful change. Fixated on the martial aspect of the western Roman empire, the field wholly neglects the religious developments and economic strength of Byzantium, its continuation and the longest-enduring medieval empire. Exploring with a wider scope the civilizations that preceded and influenced ancient Romans and Greeks and the civilizations which followed their demise will allow for well-rounded appreciation of past peoples and nations, off of which finer deductions can be made.

# A Wholehearted Approach to Anti-Racism

By THORA JORDT '22

On June 29, 2020, Principal Rawson outlined twelve specific initiatives Exeter would undertake to combat racism on campus. While a few of these initiatives, such as the anti-racist minicourses and anonymous reporting system EthicsPoint, have come to fruition with moderate success, these initiatives have not progressed quickly enough. At the present moment, I believe that the administration has still failed to fully commit to anti-racism.

First, we must consider the issue of perpetrator accountability. According to many Black at Exeter posts, perpetrators of racist acts are often highly-regarded members of the Exeter community. These perpetrators range from Exeter faculty who have been teaching for decades and may have gained notoriety in their field of study to students from well-connected, wealthy families that make major financial contributions to the school. If the administration were to take action against such individuals, even if such action were warranted, it could

affect personal relationships among faculty, threaten financial growth, and damage the school's reputation among legacy families, who are an important source of financial support. Enforcing just consequences against individuals who commit racist acts may require financial sacrifice. However, it is imperative that Exeter define its values and emphasize the well-being of students of color regardless of any trivial costs. Without the prioritization of anti-racism over finances, reputation, and connections, any action to promote anti-racism will be purely superficial and performative.

The administration must examine past accounts of racism on campus and establish a formal disciplinary protocol for faculty and students who partake in acts of racial violence. Acts of racial aggression, both past, and present, continue to traumatize Exonians of color. One recent post on the Black at Exeter Instagram account made it clear that, regardless of anti-racist workshops, many white students remain ignorant, and even "try to scout out who wrote certain posts on @blackatexeter because they

want to confront the experience."

Racial biases are so deeply ingrained into the minds of many community members, whether they recognize it or not, that the only way to ensure a minimal amount of racial aggression is to set specific guidelines against racism for all Exeter students and foster an environment where racism is unacceptable. Most importantly, any discussion of these consequences must incorporate the input of those affected by racism on campus. The establishment of clear rules and consequences will not only discourage racism but also foster Exonians to truly realize our non sibi pride and be advocates for others.

It is easy to overlook the vast influence of finances on social change. As a private school with more than \$1 billion in endowment, Exeter is no exception. Exeter has failed to fully commit to anti-racism in the financial sector due to isolationist motives. When asked to support Black Lives Matter organizations, Principal Rawson responded:

"The trustees believe our mission - and our obligation - compels us to direct the hu-

man, financial and physical resources of the Academy to the education and well-being of our community members. We are establishing a new Principal's discretionary fund to support the Academy's anti-racism and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives."

He effectively avoided the requests of community members directly impacted by racial aggression and implied that financial spending for anti-racist initiatives would only occur within the limits of the Exeter community. The issue with this response is that racism is a nationwide disease and initiatives within Exeter are not enough. This self-centered perspective on anti-racism highlights shallow, elitist motives, highly ineffective in truly resolving the deep-rooted racism that pervades our school. Exeter can no longer be a bystander to the tragic events occurring every single day in the name of racism. It must use its financial power to the full extent in order to show true commitment to anti-racism.

However, Exeter is not simply a bystander to racist activity. The lack of transparency in regard to Exeter's

investments is a major issue because it suggests that leadership is actively funneling money toward businesses that may not necessarily align with anti-racist values. Whether through racist hiring practices, unlivable wages, or the use of prison labor, the majority of large corporations actively perpetuate and feed into both systemic and blatant racism. How can Exeter preach anti-racism on its campus while providing capital to businesses that profit off of inequality? While the importance of maintaining Exeter's wealth is completely understandable, in order to make real change, one must make sacrifices. Anti-racism demands active resistance against racist systems and Exeter must evaluate the individuals, companies, and industries its money goes to.

Exeter's incomplete approach to anti-racism and lack of financial transparency reflects larger fallacies across the entire American racial justice movement, specifically performative activism and the hesitation to address the more deep-rooted causes of racism. For example, on June 19th, 2020, Unilever, an international consumer goods

company, joined the CROWN (Creating a Respectful and Open World with No Racism) Coalition with the mission of combatting race-based hair discrimination. Meanwhile, Unilever continued to sell its Fair & Light brand, a product line based upon racist eurocentric beauty standards that lead many darker-skinned women in Asian countries to desire a lighter complexion. This example of blatant contradiction exposes the depraved nature of the world's most powerful companies and proves that the fight for true racial justice is very far from over. Individuals who support racial justice must unite and consistently pressure those in power to fully commit to combatting racially-motivated discrimination and violence. The Exeter community is no different. We must not settle for half-baked promises and performative initiatives. We must fight for our friends and remind the administration of its commitment to anti-racism. We must unite against injustice and defeat the moral corruption of the modern profit-driven world.

# Humor

## Simpson’s Ethics Corner: Cheating

By BLAKESIMPSON

Welcome, make yourself comfortable. “Why am I in a corner? Why not a curved wall, or perhaps some sort of open space like a meadow or an empty Costco?” you might ask. To these questions I offer one simple answer: you have arrived at Simpson’s Ethics

Corner (NOT Simpson’s Ethics Costco). Today’s topic: cheating. Is it ethical? Just as each day we plunge into the viscous pool of joys and challenges awaiting us, let’s dive in. Cheating, referred to in The Holy Bible the E-book as “Academic Dishonesty,” may be defined as using others’ work to gain an unfair advantage. [1] Riddle me this:

has the thought ever crossed your mind to plagiarise or copy someone else’s answer? I didn’t think so. This is because our whole lives we’ve been told that cheating is wrong. I pose, however, that cheating is just innovation with consequences. Imagine the magician-like dexterity it would take to sneak into someone’s backpack to steal

their notes, or the Neo from The Matrix-like skill it would take to hack their computer. Call to mind the genius needed to expertly paraphrase a quote with enough precision to leave out any original thought! In fact, in the same way that I like to see how fast I can lose minesweeper, I think we should give some credit to Exonians who are able to craft a research paper of adequate substance and length through as little effort as possible. For

too long, our standards of “Academic Honesty” have depended on the assumption that each piece of work will contribute something to the community. If we so rigidly punish cheating, then so too must we punish bad papers. “Ridiculous!” you cry. “How utterly foolish it would be to send a paper that is rife with errors or simply bad to the Community Conduct Committee.” Right you are! And thus, I conclude my

unfeasibly infallible argument as to why plagiarism is not only ethical, but the most Exonian thing you can do.

[1] The E-Book 2020-21, (accessed 3/21/2021); available from <https://www.exeter.edu/sites/default/files/documents/E-Book-20-21-11-4-20.pdf>

Ok, you’re sure no one’s looking? The answers are: A, B, A, C, A, B, A, D, C, D, E (none of the above), A, and D.

## What is Supermatch® and Where Did It Come From

By JACKARCHER

Every Upper remembers where they were when they discovered Supermatch®. Maybe you were chugging coffee while throwing together a last minute college list on Naviance half an hour before a meeting with your college counsellor. Maybe you were waiting for a prep to let you into your dorm (because you’d forgotten your lioncard again) and decided to do some quick college searching. Maybe you

were crying your eyes out over a 332 that was two pages too short while your friend who had already taken U.S. History laughed. No matter where you happened to be or what you were doing, you remember looking up and catching a glimpse of the registered trademark that changed your life: Supermatch®.

Supermatch®, the personification of the “rebirth” stage of the Hero’s journey, appeared in Naviance last monday, just above the link to

Advanced College Search. It allowed you to modify your search criteria as it simultaneously updated a list of colleges that fit them. You could decide if your criteria were must-haves or nice-to-haves. You could sort colleges by acceptance rate, major and whether or not they had a LARP club (not that I did this). Suffice to say, Supermatch® made “Advanced” College Search look about as advanced as Exonians who read the entire Exonian instead of skipping to the Hu-

mor section.

While most simply praised the college admission god and went right back to scrolling through pages and pages of tertiary education options, others were more skeptical of Supermatch®. Where did it come from? Why had it not been on Naviance until now? Why was it a registered trademark? Something about it didn’t add up.

Some suspected it was spyware — a deceptive way to gather data from desperate

high-school students all over the nation, just like Tik Tok, but slightly more useful. Others swore that it was a top-secret senior project, crafted in complete secrecy by nameless Seniors who wanted those who came after them to have it better than they did. A few conspiracy theorists thought it was a new strain of COVID-19. And fewer still truly believed that Supermatch® came with no strings attached, a powerful search engine built for stressed uppers sick of having to reload

Naviance every five minutes in order to see their search results. All this begs the question: What do you believe? Will you put your faith in Supermatch®? Or stick with the old but faithful Advanced College Search? Or just, like, read one of those college guidebook things that people keep talking about? Whichever you choose, may your grades be high, may your eyes stay dry, and may you be sure your college list isn’t all category 5’s.

## Inspired by Five Day Break, Administration Enacts One Day Weekends

By BLAKESIMPSON

In an unexpected turn of events, the administration has decided that all Saturdays will now be full class days. Should the five day break be a success, this will take effect as soon as spring term begins.

An administrator, who wished to remain anonymous, said, “Nothing motivates a student like having two major assignments due after five days straight of teachers breaking homework limits and minimal sleep. The Ten Schools Admissions Organization measures school productivity in cubic meters of tears produced by students, thus this change will create an unprecedented boost for Phillips Exeter in the competitive world of preparatory schools.”

Some students have been here long enough to remember the occasional Saturday class day, but even on such days, classes extended no later than early afternoon. Upper A. Jarcher recalled, “inner turmoil, stress at the very concept, but some sense of relief that by 12:50 everything would be over. Now we have to survive yet another packed day when both our minds and bodies expect the week to be over.”

Others, however, disagree. Alumnus Wealth E. Donor said, “I, for one, am glad that we are returning to an admirable standard of academic rigidity. I think the school was getting too comfortable with the concepts of ‘mental health’ and ‘student well-being.’ I wouldn’t be where I am today if I hadn’t been awake for four years straight, screamed at con-

stantly, dress coded for having a tie that was too short. And I sure as [REDACTED] wouldn’t be where I am if I had ever gone-even once-to the health center when I was sick.”

While the administration is expecting pushback, it is highly unlikely that they will budge. “Though students may not see the benefits now, and though they may never see those benefits, and though we may not actually know what those benefits are, we are confident that this is the right decision in the long run, even if it is a very very long run,” said the same anonymous administrator quoted earlier as they cleaned out their desk and placed the contents in a banker’s box for reasons yet to be disclosed to The Exonian. “Mark my words. We will remain on top.”



## When you walk to class for the first time after sitting in front of zoom for twelve hours a day for an entire year



## Things Shorter Than the Five-Day Break

If Break REALLY Lasted Five Days, Then So Did:

- The elm line on taco tuesday
- The bus ride back from the E/A football game (so quiet too)
- The silence in assembly hall when someone wins an award but is not present to receive it
- All 5’4” of Chicko Imamura’s height
- That moment when someone’s phone rings while someone else is speaking in Harkness and everyone pauses while they scramble through their bag to turn it off
- The cry sesh after math in the girls academy bathroom stall (you know the one)
- The time spent outside during a 6am winter fire drill
- A coma
- A road trip to every single city in the United States. Every single one.
- All 32 seasons of The Simpsons
- A dunbar girl’s snapchat story after Back in Black
- The AP Chem curriculum (this is an inference. I’ve never taken AP Chem)
- The time between Frank Ocean’s album releases
- The line in Grill after assembly
- The dispersion of Pangea

The joke is that these things are long, unlike the break.

Moments that Feel Just as Long as Break

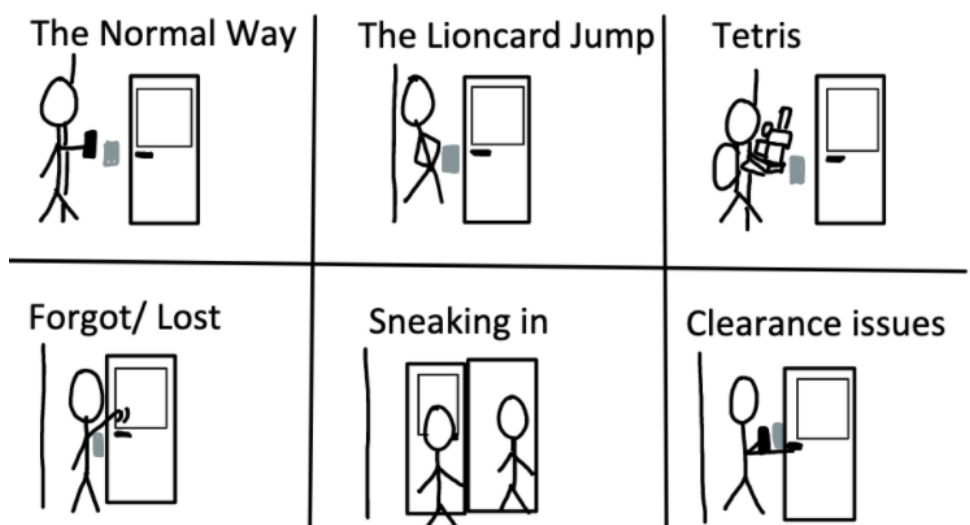
- My lowerclassmen years
- Chicko and my unicycle career
- The fun I had on Sundays during finals
- The lifespan of my “counseling pregame” playlist (it took about three weeks of 332 season before the songs became to repetitive to me)
- The lifespan of the water filter in the Exonian Newsroom’s Keurig
- The lifespan of the rope swing
- The lifespan of EP for the class of 2022
- The time in between when someone texts the dorm group chat that there’s pizza in the common room and the reenactment of that one scene in The Lion King
- My prep year dreams of getting straight As
- The time it takes to edit all the humor submissions we receive
- The joke here is that these moments are really short, similar to the break we just had

## TFW your winter term GPA starts with a 0.



## The Lioncard Struggle

By ANDREANYSTEDT



**The Normal Way:** When you swipe your card and get into the building.  
**The Lioncard Jump:** When it’s too cold to take one’s hands out of one’s pockets so one does jumps to bump the Lioncard against the scanner.  
**Tetris:** When you are carrying way too many things and have to juggle them while reaching for your Lioncard.  
**Forgot/Lost:** When you either lost or forgot your Lioncard so one frantically knocks to get in.  
**Sneaking in:** When you don’t have your Lioncard and you follow someone in the building.  
**Clearance Issues:** No matter how much you swipe your card and pull at the handle it doesn’t let you in the building because you don’t have the necessary clearance.

# Sports

## Athlete of the Week: Aiden O'Brien and Aren Mizuno



*Courtesy of Aiden O'Brien*



*Courtesy of Aren Mizuno*

By HENRY LIU and JONATHAN JEUN

Seniors Aren Mizuno and Aiden O'Brien are the captains of this year's Boys Varsity Swim team. Despite the ongoing pandemic, they lead the team everyday in the water. Not only are they excellent swimmers, they are great leaders who incorporate having fun into the sport.

Mizuno began his swimming career early on. "I got into swimming when I was seven years old," Mizuno said. On top of swimming, Mizuno spent his childhood playing other sports along with swimming. "I also played soccer everyday and ran."

Similarly, O'Brien's passion for the sport started at five years old. Like Mizuno, he was an athlete for various other sports alongside swimming. "I played water polo, lacrosse and soccer. However, I've been swimming the longest," O'Brien said.

When he came to Exeter, Mizuno decided to swim for the majority of the year. "I used to swim year-round so

it took time adjusting to only swimming in the winter," Mizuno mentions. "I picked up water polo so that I could continue to swim in the pool and be with my great teammates."

For Mizuno, many of his friendships at school have come from the sport. "I'd say that a lot of my friends come from water polo and swimming," Mizuno said.

Outside of swim practice, the team's culture and traditions are some of the things that Mizuno enjoys. "We always hang out and eat after practice," Mizuno said. "We have built a strong sense of camaraderie."

Senior Adam Tuchler found Mizuno and O'Brien to be the life of the team. "Aren was always very encouraging, motivating us to train as hard as we could so we could perform at our best. [Mizuno's] own hard work paid off spectacularly, winning the 'Most Improved Swimmer' award last year," Tuchler said. "[Aiden] was always cracking jokes and such, keeping the morale high throughout the practices. Swimming is a very grueling sport, so I'm glad that we had

them to lead us through this past term of challenges."

Lower Dax Knoll shared his own experiences with the captains. "I looked up to them last year as a prep, and I was extremely happy that they were selected to be captains," Knoll said. To Knoll, the captains are good leaders because they are great at motivating their teammates. "Aren would lead more by example, grinding out the yards in the distance group, but Adam would be more vocal, playing music and cheering teammates on. I still vividly remember how hyped up Adam would be going into dual meets on the bus, playing hype music and preparing everyone mentally for the races ahead."

"Having been here since prep year, their improvement has been incredible," senior Josh Yu said. "I still remember when I was beating Aren in the freestyle events but he gives me a good run for my money now, beating me every now and then. He put in the work every practice, going to pretty much all of the optional practices in the morning to get extra pool time in, no matter how hard the sets

would be."

Their personality differences is one reason Mizuno and O'Brien work so well together leading the team. "Aren and Aiden are basically polar opposites, but it makes the captainship work. Despite Aren being calm and collected and Aiden being loud and excited, the pair manage to piece it together and get fun in along with work," lower Caleb Yu said. "It's impressive how we manage to get our sets in but still have time to mess around and hang out. I would credit a lot of it to the leadership that they have demonstrated, making it clear that swim comes first, but within swim, we can still have fun. They make being on the team enjoyable and community like."

Lower Zach Quitkin attests to the community-like nature of the team. "I was off-campus all of the swim season, like Aiden, but they never failed to include me in the team activities. I received a few FaceTime calls from them to update me on the state of the team, and the occasional throwdown race between team members for the coveted Throwdown Belt,"

Quitkin said. The Throwdown Belt is a W.W.E.-style championship belt awarded to a swimmer who displays athletic and personal excellence. "They checked in with us off-campus people pretty consistently, making sure we were getting our workouts in and training properly."

"I was swimming off-campus with my club team, and they always wanted updates on my progress in the pool," prep Michael Yang said. "As seniors, they have a lot of commitments but I found it to be very kind for them to find time to check up on us. Especially as a prep who wasn't on campus, it was comforting to know I still had a place on the team, despite not being there in person."

The good memories made from end-of-season swim meets have been an integral part of the sport. "My favorite moment would be the Easterns swim meet last year," Mizuno said. "Everybody performed really well and it was awesome rooming with Milo and Chaz in the hotel room."

O'Brien shared a similar sentiment for the Easterns swim meet. "My favorite

swimming moment was Easterns last year. Coach Mills made a deal that if one of us went 47 in the 100 free, he'd get garlic knots for the whole team," O'Brien recalled. "The thought of garlic knots must have motivated me to go my best time. In reality, though, seeing all my teammates hype each other up and band together was the best feeling. We feasted like kings that night."

As the captains finish up their last season of being on Exeter's swim team, they reflect on their future swimming career. "I'm not sure if I'm planning on swimming in college. If I do, I'll have to walk on," Mizuno said. "I'm definitely ready for that challenge though. I feel like Exeter's tough practices have prepared me for any workout." On the other hand, O'Brien is certain that he'll swim at his next school. "Team culture was like being in a family and we were all leaders in our own sense," O'Brien said. "Being a freshman again, I will take that sense of doing my part and leading by example onto my college team."

## Girls Varsity Hockey Concludes

By MICHAEL YANG and ETHAN KLEIN

The Girls Varsity Hockey team capped off their unusual season by hosting intrasquad games on the weekend of March 13. Instead of being a five-on-five player match in a regular hockey game, the games consisted of four-on-four gameplay due to the limited number of players available on campus.

Lower Anjali Frary observed differences with these new obstacles. "The four-on-four offered a chance for ex-

perimenting with a new style of play," Frary said.

Lower player Kate Nixon further described the new gameplay format. "Our intrasquad competitions generally consisted of four-on-four play for three ten-minute periods with a warm up beforehand. After the four on four we usually incorporated something different like a three on three for a short period, some power play/penalty kill or a shootout," Nixon said.

Frary commented on her gratitude for being able to compete on the ice again.

"Although these intrasquad games were no replacement for a regular season, they were a great way to foster an intense and competitive environment for everyone to grow as players and bring the team closer together," Frary said.

Upper Grace Emmick talked about the practice leading up to the games. "Practices usually included some drills for specific skills in the beginning, full-ice flow drills, and some fun games intermixed," Emmick said.

Goalie and lower Sami Smith added to Emmick's comments about their new

training schedule. "The practices leading up to our games were really high intensity, and they felt just like how practice would go if we were preparing for a normal game," Smith said.

"The bi-weekly intrasquad games added structure to our practice schedule and helped the team build up momentum to the competitions," Frary added.

Captain and senior Alyssa Xu explained how teams were chosen for the intrasquad matches. "Usually, at the end of practice, we announce the rosters for the two

intrasquad teams and then do a little competition to see which team gets to pick their jersey color," Xu said. "This typically consists of a game called five-puck, where you race to score all five pucks first on breakaways."

Xu also talked about her experience being captain at each game. "While we are all competitive people and love to win games, it was also fun to play against teammates and have a good laugh on the ice," Xu said. "The four-on-four games were helpful as there's always something to improve on, so it was great

talking with linemates on the bench about ways we can get better."

Smith treated the games as ways to improve. "Although we were all teammates, everyone played with competitiveness and effort in order to make each other better," Smith said.

Although the girls hockey team was unable to have their ideal season, these intramural competitions towards the end of the season helped to emulate the competitiveness and team environment that is apparent during a normal season.



Christian Petry competes at a wrestling event.

Courtesy of Petry

## Wrestling Team Reflects on Unprecedented Year

By MICHAEL YANG

As the end of the winter term approaches, Exeter's Wrestling team will cap off their interestingly unique season. They have battled the remote period before returning to campus in February and had to accommodate pandemic regulations into practices. Captain and senior Christian Petry, along with head coach Dave Hudson, kept the team motivated despite the new restrictions that came with wrestling.

Petry was introduced to the sport at a young age. "I started wrestling for a club in Danville, New Hampshire called Smitty's Wrestling Barn. I was already playing soccer and baseball, but my parents and I needed something for the winter. We decided I would try wrestling because my local high school was very good and even the middle school had a good team." His passion for the sport grew from there and continued in his wrestling career at Exeter.

Petry explained what first drew him to wrestling. "Baseball is my first love, but there is something about wrestling that draws me back to it time and time again. I

find the competitive individualism of the sport to be extremely fascinating and the mental aspect is incredibly challenging and draining. To step out onto the mat against another person, just you and him, with only one person's hand raised at the end is an indescribable feeling, especially with hundreds watching your matches."

Looking back on his time as captain, Petry commented on what it was like being appointed to the job this season, considering the challenges brought by pandemic conditions, "It certainly feels strange to be a captain of a team that didn't get the chance to compete this year." Petry continued, "I am disappointed that I never got to walk out to the middle of the mat before a dual meet as captain, as it was something that I had been thinking about since prep year."

Assistant Head Coach Bob Brown credited the Academy for their efforts to give athletes the season they deserved. "If not for the resources, hard work and creativity of this organization, PEA athletes may have been among the masses and forced to miss out. It was with that 'gratitude' that our team came together each day. The

team was excited to have the opportunity to practice and participate in a sport that we love. Wrestlers improve with what we refer to as 'mat time'. I am confident that this season provided quality 'mat time,'" he said.

Although the season was not optimal for the athletes, Petry and the team were grateful for the opportunity to keep participating in the sport they love. Hudson applauded the players as well. "Overall I felt the athletes made the best of the situation. Participation, effort, and energy made for a positive experience given our restrictions."

Brown explained the focus of the term. "We were able to slow things down and focus on strong, foundational technique and solid fundamentals concerning the sport. The absence of competition, travel and making weight on a regular basis also gave us a chance to focus on things that were beneficial to this young group of wrestlers." Even with a relatively new team, everyone learned a lot under the leadership of their captain.

Petry talked about the leadership skills and experience he has gained this past season. "This was a different

experience for me because I had to use my knowledge to help to teach new kids about the sport. It has taught me a lot about leadership, and I think that it is a skill that is helping me outside of Exeter."

Lower teammate Liam Brown testified to Petry's role as leader. "Christian has been dealt a bad hand with this season, but with the few weeks of wrestling we've been able to get, he has led by example and been hard-working and motivated on the mat." Even with the various setbacks that the season provided, Petry rose to the challenge.

Prep teammate William Bernau expressed his admiration for Petry's leadership, "There's no doubt that the captain has had more on his plates this year in terms of leadership and responsibility. Still, he set an example for the rest of the room. He wrestles with no excuses and refuses to take his hands off of his drilling partner."

Keeping the team motivated despite the less than optimal conditions was a challenge that Petry had to face. "When you don't have a match to look forward to you start to ask yourself why you are even there. My main

way of keeping the team motivated is to keep everyone focused on the current task during practice and then to push my teammates to be their best when we do conditioning," he said.

After returning in February, the team went to work right away. "Practice has been every weekday except Wednesday, with competition on Fridays (for these past couple weeks)," Brown said. "We warm up as a group with some running, stretching and drilling. Then, we get with a designated partner(s) and begin practicing at the coach's direction," Bernau added.

"Practices consisted of a drilling period, then transitioned into live wrestling with a partner. During drilling we practiced certain moves and positions, while live wrestling put us in a more realistic wrestling environment," lower teammate Nate Puchalski said.

Senior teammate Ozzy Gomez-Santana talked about Petry outside of wrestling. "He's a fun loving guy who is insanely good at any competition he touches. That competitive drive always translates to the mat and it's amazing to see the years of hard work pay off when he can pin his opponent in re-

cord time. It's also amazing to see that talent being transferred to the preps and lowers he wrestles during practice. I'm confident in what the underclassman can do in the following years because of him."

Petry spoke on the loss of a former amazing wrestling coach. "Wrestling has meant a great deal to me throughout my life, and I am extremely grateful for all of the people that I have met along the journey. On behalf of the Phillips Exeter Wrestling Team, I want to honor one of those people, Coach Davis. This past winter the wrestling team, coaches and alumni were shattered by the passing of Coach Davis. Coach Davis always brought a smile with him to practice, and he was the first guy to greet you when you walked into the wrestling room. I didn't get to wrestle this year, but if I never wrestle a competitive match again, I will walk away happy knowing he helped coach my last ever match. He meant so much to me and so many others and I know that both myself and my peers on the wrestling team miss him dearly. Thanks for everything coach, we will never forget what you meant to us."

## Varsity Swimming Pennington Meet

By HENRY LIU and JONATHAN JEUN

This Saturday, Big Red's varsity swim team faced off against the Pennington School for the chance to compete in a meet despite pandemic conditions. The boy's team Senior Captains Aidan O'Brien and Aren Mizuno led the team in their last dual meet of the season against The Pennington School in New Jersey in a virtual competition. Although the teams were not

able to compete in-person, they were able to compare times with each other to spark some much wanted competition.

Big Red performed admirably considering only having a couple weeks of preparation before facing The Pennington School. Senior Adam Tuchler, who won a few events, commented on the team's performance. "I think that we could have done much better, but given the limited pool time we were given, and the very long process of getting back

into shape, we did really well," he said.

Senior Cooper Walshe agreed. "Everyone was working extremely hard leading up to the meet and we all knew it would be a fight to beat Pennington. I think everyone performed to the best of their ability and everyone played their part in the win. We had the depth needed to outscore them." Walshe was optimistic about the team's growth and their performance last Saturday.

Looking back at the results, Prep Michael Yang

was especially impressed by the times Tuchler put up. "Given the different times, I think he performed very well, winning both events on our side and scoring a lot of points for the team. I was virtual for the term, but I was cheering for them on the whole time."

Lower Dax Knoll also gave a shout out to Tuchler. "He kept the morale high and was always encouraging when we felt down. Despite him not being captain, he always acted like he was in charge, which made every-

one laugh, especially the captains."

On the girls' team, upper Lindsay Machado mentioned, "I had a great time getting back into racing, but it was sad knowing it was our seniors' last meet. I am happy they were able to represent Exeter one last time."

Lower Nathalie Kpodonu was also sentimental about the departure of the seniors. "They were always there for us in this short season and I wish them the best of luck wherever they go. Concerning the meet, I think

that we, once again, did the best we could with the limited practices that not everyone made."

One of the top performers was prep Vedika Amin. "I really enjoyed the high school swimming experience, despite it being scuffed. It was extremely eye opening to be on such a supportive team with so many handworking swimmers. I will always remember all the seniors helped me with in this unprecedented season that we had this winter."

Overall, Big Red made the most of this season, despite the extremely long virtual period and the short and inconsistent practice and preparation schedule.