



The Exonian

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Thursday, January 10, 2019

Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, New Hampshire

Rise In Thefts Closes Grill Indefinitely

By ERIN CHOI, JACOB FEIGENBERG and EMILY KANG
Staff Writers

Grill has been closed indefinitely since Dec. 17 as an additional measure in response to the increase in Grill thefts, following the initial removal of hi-chews and dove milk chocolate bars. Meanwhile, these developments have raised questions around stealing culture on campus and possible solutions.

Dean of Students Melissa Mischke, Head of Campus Safety Paul Gravel, and Interim Chief Financial Officer Marijka Beauchesne will hold a meeting on Fri, Jan. 11 with the Dean's Council to discuss next steps for Grill.

Grill Manager Scott Jeffco said that the administration, not the Grill staff, made the decision to close the store. He clarified that Grill is not an independent business, and that its purpose is to serve the Exeter community. "It is a branch of the Academy's Dining Services department," Jeffco said. "Any revenue from Grill is used to support dining services." According to multiple workers at Dining Halls, some Grill staff members have been relocated to Elm Street Dining Hall.

According to Beauchesne, following the announcement that hi-chews and dove bars were stolen and therefore removed from shelves, the overall volume of thefts actually increased. [quote about how it's disappointing] This led the administration

GRILL, 2



Student walks into gender inclusive restroom.

JaQ Lai/The Exonian

Administration Drafts Inclusive Bathroom Policy

By CHARLOTTE LISA, LOUIS MUKAMA and PAUL ROGERS
Staff Writers

The faculty presented a new draft policy at Student Council on Dec. 18 that grants all individuals, regardless of gender, the right to use the bathrooms and locker rooms in which they feel most comfortable.

The draft further outlines the revised signage that will be posted on bathrooms and locker rooms. It includes an excerpt from the Vision Statement written by the Board of Trustees outlining the school's goal of fostering diversity and cultivating the environment of inclusion required "to unlock the richness of that diversity."

According to Director of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Stephanie Bramlett, beginning in Summer 2017, the Gender Inclusion Steering Committee worked together with a Project Team to analyze discrepancies between the Trustees' vision statement and the E-Book. Prior to the draft, the Academy did not have any policies addressing inclusivity in locker room and bathroom spaces.

According to LGBTQ+ Coordinator and Director of Student Activities Joanne Lembo, the two groups conducted additional research on these policies and their success at other schools, in addition to talking with PEA community members about the feasibility of these policies on our campus.

After drafting the policy, Assistant Principal Karen Lassey, Lembo and English Instructor Alex Myers held discussions with student leaders on campus. Student Council President and

BATHROOM, 2

141st Board Sets Goals for Tenure

By THE 141ST BOARD

Executive Board

Freedom of the press, like all freedoms in a democracy, is more fragile than we think. It is never a given; it must be fought for, always, through the constant strife of journalists and editors working with diligence and integrity.

The Exonian is currently at a turning point—in the past year, we've established our willingness to publish hard news while honoring the community's right to know. We're proud to have redefined what a school newspaper is and what it is able to do with our breaking-news journalism and in-depth investigations. But we've also made mistakes.

In the real world of journalism, when the press errs, the people remember. The last month of 2018 saw "Spiegelgate," the firing of journalist Claas Relotius by Germany's most reputable magazine, Der Spiegel, over charges of fabricating upwards of fourteen articles. For allegedly misquoting then-President Tran Dai Quang, Vietnam's largest state-owned media was fined a debilitating \$10,000, had its website forcibly shut down for three months and four of its top editors sanctioned. In the US, faith in the media is at an all-time low, with untruths and half-truths paving the way for Kellyanne Conway's allegation of "alternative facts."

FIRST WRITES, 3

PEA Alumni Documentary Featured on PBS

By ANNE BRANDES, LINA HUANG and STEPHEN McNULTY
Staff Writers

Six groups of hikers walk among the white houses and slanted clay roofs of Jean Pied de Port, a village in Southern France. 500 miles away lies their destination: a Gothic Cathedral in the heart of the Spanish city of Santiago de Compostela. Through their journey, they are followed by the documentary crew of Walking the Camino: Six Ways to Santiago through muddy waters and tall grasses as each of the hikers searches for their own way.

The PBS documentary is the vision of Lydia B. Smith '82, who traveled the Camino trail herself in the summer of 2008. The walk inspired her to direct and produce her first feature-length film. Walking the Camino aired on PBS in over 1,000 broadcasts across 40 states last December and will continue to air in 2019.

Camino Francés is one of several medieval pilgrimage routes toward the remains of the apostle, martyr and Iberian missionary Saint James. The trails, which follow old Roman roads and trading outposts, developed a special significance to Christians in the Middle Ages as a route of penance. Today, they are collectively known as the Camino de Santiago, and in spite of blisters and the other difficulties of foot travel, the Camino hosts some 250,000 peregrinos every year, each with their own motivations, some religious and some secular.

On April 22nd, 2009, the camera crew began conducting interviews and hiking alongside the travelers during the six week journey. Since 2014, Walking the Camino has won several awards including the American Documentary Film Festival, the Rainier Independent Film Festival and the Hollywood Film Festival.

Smith identifies the power of the Camino itself as a strong influence on the film's reception. "My intention was to make the film that the Camino wanted," Smith said. "All of these rewards have been fantastic, but I don't feel

CAMINO, 6

Faculty Vote to Keep Pass/Fail for Preps

By ANNE BRANDES, DANIEL CHEN and LINA HUANG
Staff Writers

Faculty voted to approve the prep pass/fail policy as a permanent addition to Exeter's curriculum the week before winter break.

Previously, prep pass/fail was only a pilot program, with the first three-year trial in February 2013 and the second one in December 2015. Originally proposed by the Curriculum Committee, the policy ensured that all preps would receive either a passing or failing mark for their fall term classes to help the adjustment to Exeter's rigorous academics.

The majority of faculty supported the policy on the grounds that by reducing academic pressure, preps would be given more time to adapt to boarding school. "Pass/fail allows preps to make social connections, learn how this place ticks and reach out to teachers and older students without the added stress of grades that would not reflect their true capabilities at this school," Science Instructor Michele Chapman said.

Similarly, Learning Specialist and



Lydia B. Smith '82 hikes the Camino trail and documents her journey.

Courtesy of Lydia B. Smith/The Exonian

Coordinator of Academic Support Jonathan Nydick stated that the program helps preps form critical learning skills. "Pass/fail allows preps the opportunity to focus more on how to learn at Exeter and less on the numerical results," Nydick said.

The Curriculum Committee administered surveys in 2014 and 2015 and found that the pass/fail program helped 73 percent of preps adjust to Exeter, while 19 percent of preps found that the lack of letter grades decreased motivation.

Some instructors, particularly those teaching cumulative subjects, worry that the policy can make preps less prepared for the following term. Mathematics Department Chair Dale Braile said, "In

math, for example, it is certainly possible for preps to pass their fall term [...] but find winter term math much more challenging."

Chapman, on the other hand, found no indication of poorer academic performance in science courses. "Most students still took their studies quite seriously and a big drop in average GPA was not seen," Chapman said.

Some faculty members, including Mathematics Instructor Joseph Wolfson, abstained from voting, believing that students perform the same regardless of a pass/fail policy. "When I teach a course like 23X, with both preps and lowers, they behave pretty much the same,

PASS/FAIL, 2

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Academy Proposes New Bathroom and Locker Policy

Continued from **BATHROOM, 1**

senior Elizabeth Yang, who met with Lassey alongside Student Council's Executive Board, recalled that the conversation between administrators and students had revolved around "how we should move forward to involve student input." Meanwhile, at Dean's Council, students primarily contributed to the policy's language and method of implementation, according to council member and upper Janalie Cobb.

Proponents of the draft soon brought it to Student Council as a whole. In the meeting on Dec. 18, members discussed the value of the proposal. Yang described the policy as "a natural extension of what students are actually living and valuing right now" the reason behind its support by most council members.

Cobb appreciated that the draft fully acknowledged students' own agency. "This

is the first time I'm hearing the school fully allowing the student to choose based on how they identify themselves, not on how they were identified when they applied," Cobb said. She commended the policy for increasing transparency between the students and the faculty.

As the Exeter community approaches this policy, upper and member of the LGBTQ+ community Pepper Pieroni feels that this policy will "[help] students feel accepted and supported... for the people that are affected, this is endlessly affirming and powerful." Pieroni hopes that "people will step outside of their own shoes and realize that not everyone feels safe in every space."

Lembo hopes the policy, once instituted, will allow LGBTQ+ students and faculty to feel more comfortable in their everyday lives and alleviate the trepidation aforementioned

by Pieroni around using a locker room. "This will hopefully remove that fear," Lembo said.

Upper Justin Li, who identifies as part of the LGBTQ+ community, highlighted the significance of explicit language regarding gender identity. "By creating and implementing a policy that directly benefits transgender or non-binary students, the school is effectively demonstrating its support, which is a crucial measure for queer students," Li said.

Prep Charles Falivena, a bisexual-identifying trans ally, recalled seeing a friend mocked in the past for using the bathroom of their preference. He appreciates that PEA is finally taking a clear stance on national debates around the topic. "I think it's a really progressive step forward for the Academy," Falivena said.

In a similar vein, upper Pepper Pieroni commented on the policy's significance in the

context of the recent reinterpretation of Title IX by the Trump administration, which defined sex by an individual's genitals at birth.

While trans-identifying upper Sam Park believes the policy is long overdue, she commended the Academy's progress and expressed her support. "The Exonian community has been in need of such a policy for many years, and I am very glad the Academy is working towards a better and more inclusive future," Park said. "I personally am in support of this drafted policy and fully endorse it as it is currently written."

Bramlett concluded by voicing her high hopes for the policy and its potential impact. "Our hope is that a new policy can create a better and more inclusive environment for all community members," she said. "It affirms our commitment to equity and inclusion and it is the right thing to do."

Students and Faculty Reflect on Community Thefts

Continued from **GRILL, 1**

to decide that shutting down Grill was necessary, although not ideal.

Some considered the shutdown an unfair response since it inconvenienced students that had not committed any of the Grill thefts.

However, senior Abby Zhang considered the shutdown an appropriate response to such dishonesty. She felt that Grill is a privilege rather than a necessity, and that the school has the right to revoke this when students breach trust. "I think the fact that this issue has gotten so out of hand just shows that maybe we deserve to have this privilege revoked for just a little bit," Zhang said.

Some community members proposed that installing security cameras would have been a more effective and reasonable solution to the thefts. Head of Campus Safety Paul Gravel said he held a conversation with the Grill management

regarding additional security measures, but did not mention any specifics.

Upper Paula Perez-Glassner reasoned that increased surveillance would have a fairer alternative. "Surveillance would be a better option rather than shutting it down because that would put pressure on the kids who are stealing and not take away from the kids who aren't," she said.

As opposed to implementing this solution, Assistant Principal Karen Lassey emphasized her preference for constructive campus-wide discussions about Exeter's values and theft. "Maybe we'll get to a point where we have to [install cameras] but that would be really sad if we couldn't address this in a more constructive, affirming way," she said.

[beau said something similar to lassey]

Arlo*, a senior who said he had stolen repeatedly from Grill in the past, explained that he had committed theft for

the convenience and financial savings. "At first, I was spending hundreds of dollars at Grill and I got into the habit of stealing because I didn't want to pay so much anymore," he said. "Also, the lines were always so long."

Dean of Residential Life Carol Cahalane criticized such excuses for Grill thefts and affirmed that students should obey the rules. "I think we are all tempted to take shortcuts in life when we are feeling pressured but at those times, we have to hold ourselves to the best standards because that is when we show our true character."

Meanwhile, senior Gabby Allen thought that some students stole for the thrill of rule-breaking without serious consequences. "I think it's simply that kids like being aggressive and rebellious," she said. "Especially at Exeter where there are a lot of rules but it is harder to break a lot of rules than at home, it gives a lot of kids this sense of rebellion they might

not otherwise get."

Senior Francesco Mondini said that the culture around stealing on campus may reflect general resent against the administration. "[Stealing] might also be a sign of rebellion against an administration that many feel leaves out its students in the important decision-making," he said. "Personally, I haven't been here long enough to form an opinion I can back, but I know for a fact that others will agree with this."

Lower Sofina Tillman added that the previous thefts of P.O. box doors and campus signs may reflect such anti-administration sentiments. "The one thing in common between all three of these instances is that every time, the administration told us very clearly that they didn't want us to do it," she said. "The general feeling I have found the student body has towards the administration is that when the administration tells us we can't do something, we'll take it as a challenge."



Grill cordons off shelves.

Eva Carchidi / *The Exonian*

Community Discusses Pass/Fail

Continued from **PASS/FAIL, 1**

even though preps are pass/fail and lowers are graded," Wolfson said.

Prep Madeline Murray believes pass/fail eased her transition. "With the pass/fail system I could spend more time adjusting to boarding school and life at Exeter instead of freaking out over my first grades in high school," Murray said.

Prep Jocelyn Sides elaborated that pass/fail was vital to her mental health in the fall. "I was already putting a lot of pressure on myself, and consistently had extremely high stress levels and little sleep," Sides said. "If there were grades on top of that, I wouldn't have been able to take it, and may have had to switch out of some of my more challenging classes, despite really enjoying them."

In addition to the prep pass/fail program, there has been ongoing debate among faculty and Student Council about implementing pass/fail for new lowers. Dean of Health and Wellness Gordon Coole, however, sees less reason to do so because these students "have had a year of high school and a smaller transition."

Students, including new lowers, have mixed feelings on the possibility of extending the policy. "I do not think [pass/fail] would be beneficial long-term," new lower Oliver Hess said. "Personally, I would not have put my full effort into homework if I knew my transcript wouldn't have letter grades on it."

On the contrary, new lower Matthew Chen argued that new lowers could still benefit significantly from pass/fail. "Since we are still underclassmen, new lowers may not all have had the time to develop Harkness or writing skills that returning lowers developed during their prep year, so it puts us at a distinct disadvantage in this regard," he said.

Regardless of whether the policy is extended to new lowers, Modern Languages Instructor Viviana Santos believes the faculty's decision to keep pass/fail represents a move towards a more holistic understanding of student needs. "In my 18 years here, I think we have moved toward a real consideration of a student's overall health and experience," Santos said.

PEA Transitions from Pilot Schedule

By JACK ARCHER, YUNSEO CHOI and TINA HUANG
Staff Writers

This term, students are transitioning back to the original schedule from the fall term pilot, which removed H format, instituted long passing periods and placed athletics solely in the afternoon.

According to Science Instructor and Fall Pilot Schedule Committee co-chair Scott Saltman, the committee's priority for the pilot was to move athletics to the afternoon while maintaining the frequency of academic classes and the length of meeting blocks.

The committee's survey at the end of the fall yielded results showing that 38 percent of student respondents endorsed the removal of H-format, while 14 percent reacted negatively. The remaining 48 percent were indifferent. Faculty responded similarly, with 54 percent offering positive feedback. The majority of both student and faculty respondents preferred having sports in the afternoon.

New students, who do not have previous experience with the original schedule, have been particularly struck by the differences in schedule this term. "I feel like [returning students] are more apathetic because they are used to this schedule," prep Kai-lee Walker said. "It bothers them less because they have to take less classes, so their day doesn't feel

as full. It probably would've been less jarring if we hadn't switched schedules partway through the year."

Prep Grace Ding expressed disappointment that the later end to the school day was significantly affecting her social commitments and extracurriculars. "There is little time I can go spend with my friends if I want to eat dinner, go to any musical appointments and try to finish all my homework before lights out," she said, adding that earlier check-in amplifies the challenging circumstances for underclassmen.

Prep Felix Zou agreed, elaborating that he had less time to manage his academic workload. "I prefer the pilot schedule because classes end earlier, which gives me more time for homework," he said.

On the other hand, some noted the benefits of the original schedule, expressing positive sentiments about the shorter passing time between periods. Despite the longer school day, Chen voiced that he was able to use his time more productively, describing the current schedule as "more streamlined with less time being wasted between classes."

During a Student Council meeting this past Tuesday, the Fall Pilot Schedule Committee co-chairs—Saltman and Math Instructor Laura Marshall—proposed a vote for two new schedules, one of which will be implemented in the spring.

Colloquially referred to as "Equal Impact" and "Super-long Block," both schedules include later starts in the morning. According to Saltman and Marshall, the Committee hopes that the later beginning to the day will allow students to get more sleep. The "Super-long Block" schedule shortens regular-length classes by five minutes and lengthens the long blocks to 95 minutes total. In contrast, the Equal Impact schedule includes more than one long block per format during the week.

Faculty have received both proposed schedules and will soon vote on which they prefer. After the vote, faculty will choose between the selected spring pilot and the current schedule. When asked about the concerns she expects to hear from the faculty, Marshall said, "I don't know, but I do know that questions from faculty are always very thoughtful. I think everyone does have the student's best interest in mind, but faculty have different perspectives on what is best."

Results from the fall term pilot schedule survey will greatly aid deliberations regarding the spring term schedule. "It was helpful to have the survey from the faculty and students and it allowed us to try some different things," Marshall said. "I don't think [the fall term schedule] will come back exactly like it was, but certainly, information we glean from it will become a part of future proposals."

The First Writes of the 141st Board

Continued from [FIRST WRITES, 1](#)

and politically-motivated silencing are undeniable realities worldwide. But in order to combat this, touting “freedom of speech” alone is not enough. The press must prove that it can fulfill its duty of unbiased, level-headed reporting, always. Trust must be gained and regained with every new issue.

The 141st Executive Board of *The Exonian*—Editor-in-Chief Suan Lee, Director of Writing Rachel Won and Managing Editor Mai Hoang—accepts the scorching torch with humility and hope. We do not promise to be flawless. But we do promise to ask, every week, before sending our paper to print—did we choose every letter and pixel with intentionality? Can we stand by what we publish?

And, most importantly: Is our reporting accurate and fair?

- Suan, Rachel, Mai

News

In our past two years as News writers, the four of us have made our fair share of mistakes. We have missed deadlines and (accidentally) included Oxford commas. We have written articles that the public received in unexpected ways, both positively and negatively.

And yet, with the guidance of the previous board, we learned from our blunders and grew, both as skilled writers and diligent reporters.

Now, as we begin our tenure as News Editors, we find ourselves pondering the question: How do we determine what is newsworthy for our community?

Since 1878, *The Exonian* has endeavored to meet the highest standards

of unbiased, investigative journalism and countless Exonian News teams have contemplated this very question. As writers, we reported on everything from mental health on campus, to the Academy’s history of sexual misconduct, to squirrel overpopulation in the fall. As editors, we will continue to document the history of our institution—both its successes and its shortcomings—and not shy away from maintaining our editorial independence.

The 141st News team—Sam Weil, Angelina Zhang, Benjamin Cai and Angele Yang—intends to publish all the news that’s fit to print, as *The New York Times* would say, while being conscientious of the impact it will have on our community. We seek to continue our section’s legacy by challenging our writers and prioritizing accuracy, honesty and fairness.

- Benjamin, Sam, Angele, Angelina

Opinions

As Adlai Stevenson II once wrote, “The first principle of a free society is an untrammelled flow of words in an open forum.” Within our granted domain in this paper, the 141st Opinions editors—Johanna Martinez, Andrea So, Cooper Wolff and Jack Zhang—will defend freedom of expression, open discourse and inclusivity of all viewpoints.

Exeter is a school founded on the idea of honest and productive conversation. Carrying over the Harkness model to the Opinions pages, we will foster a safe yet bold space for the sharing of ideas. In this manner, our section will shed light on viewpoints expressed in discussions permeating the school, from classrooms, to dorm rooms, to the dining halls. It is this exposure that

sparks intellectual discourse as well as a reevaluation of internalized beliefs.

Exeter is more than a prep school; with students from 43 states and 28 foreign countries, we are a microcosm of the global community. As editors, we aim to give a platform to all voices, representing the entire student body fairly and accurately. We will ensure that the Opinions section is inclusive of diverse points of view and expose readers not only to campus issues, but to those that go beyond our bubble and spark discussions that both question and challenge.

- Johanna, Andrea, Cooper, Jack

Life

Exonians possess a myriad of passions that extend beyond their academic pursuits. The Life section holds special potential to bring Exeter together and celebrate our community’s many talents, both on and off campus.

In every issue, we, the 141st Life editors—Ginny Little, Candy Tantichirasakul and Nikita Thummala—will strive to present an accurate portrait of our beloved community. We want Exonians to truly know each other, to build stronger relationships and deeper bonds of trust.

At Exeter, we are sometimes so wrapped up with our own responsibilities that in the craze of our daily routines, we forget to look around. Our education here is only made whole by the very people we share it with, the events that enrich our lives each day and the vibrant culture that makes Exeter, Exeter.

Our section is here to bring these topics to you every week. We are here to bring you inspiring stories from within our own community, to let you relive

every weekend event and introduce you to new media. Ultimately, we are here to remind you that there are many paths available to you at Exeter—each as valuable as they are different.

- Ginny, Candy, Nikita

Sports

Greetings Big Red Nation, these are your sports editors speaking. If you are an avid fan of our sports section, then get ready for the ride of your life. Over the course of 2019, our section will be action-packed with page-turning articles that will leave readers begging for the next issue. Gone are the days of your average sports articles. Introducing your new varsity sports editors: Leah Cohen, Caroline Fleming, Charlie Venci and Milo Walshe. Every Thursday is game day. Head straight to the back page for Exeter sports highlights, Outside the Bubble sports, Athlete of the Week and much more stimulating content. You won’t regret the read.

- Leah, Caroline, Charlie, Milo

Humor

What’s the difference between Exonian News and Exonian Humor? One’s on the front page, and the other’s actually read by students. In all seriousness, we’ll try to live up to the hilarious Wheelwright and Mock Trial-centered jokes from Abby, Ava and Lizzie. We’ll continue to bring you Eugene’s Memes for Space Filling Teens and Isabella’s quote of the week. We—Nick, Ryan and Fiona—promise to provide high-quality humor and keep you laughing at the grill-thieving, Bus-Ride posting, Harkness-warring lives all Exonians lead.

- Fiona, Nick, Ryan

Thoughts on Lower Race Training

At least in pockets of society that are superficially “woke,” our campus being one of them, I don’t think there is a greater fear than that of being called a racist. The stigma around the n-word appears to be so strong that people are more afraid of being called racist than being racist.

The student body is at vastly different levels of interest and understanding in racial matters.

As a result, a phenomenon I’ve noticed is that students, often white, hold back in discourse when they realize their current viewpoint doesn’t fit the narrow confines of what is considered “woke.” Examples include last year’s Academy Life Day, the Day of Dialogue, MLK Day and evidently, English class discussions.

The real conversations actually happen later: on the paths, in the dining hall, in the dorm. As soon as my peers stepped outside of the classroom, they began shouting sharp, accusatory questions to their friends, who they knew would agree with them. “How is ‘minority’ an offensive word? Minorities are advantaged in areas like affirmative action! Anyone who benefits from racism is racist? That’s a ridiculous definition. I’m not racist.”

I genuinely appreciate the fact that the English Department and the Office of Multicultural Affairs worked together to develop this curriculum. And at first glance, all of it makes sense. Ostensibly, the easiest way to promote diversity and inclusion on such a large campus is to have organized, mandatory discussions. And if we’re going to have mandatory conversations about race, lower winter English class seems like the appropriate timing and place.

However, in execution, discussions could go awry, leading to students disengaging with the topic.

I have other criticisms about the program, including the fact that only one of the many English instructors teaching this course is a person of color. However, a glaring problem stems from the nature of some of our readings as well as the unwillingness of students to be honest.

At the root of this problem is how much influence each teacher wields over the material being discussed. Some classes are reading books by authors of color or analyzing outdated depictions of certain races, which is the intention of the program.

Exeter English and its reliance on the Harkness method revolves around learning to critically analyze fascinating, dense texts. So why are we relying on instructions, definitions, and glossaries when it comes to one of the most nuanced subjects possible?

The student body is at vastly different levels of interest and understanding in racial matters. I understand the necessity of establishing consensus prior to beginning deeper conversations. But from what I’ve seen, our first classes have been too focused on defining subtle phrases or ideas as right or wrong. Even though I agree with everything that’s being taught, I know it’s only turning many of my classmates even farther away from uncomfortable discussions on race.

At the root of this problem is how much influence each teacher wields over the material being discussed.

Some classes are reading books by authors of color or analyzing outdated depictions of certain races, which is the intention of the program. And yet, if other classes aren’t using the same texts, this new program is not going to work out.

This is not about blaming individual teachers for their curriculum. But if the English Department intends to implement this curriculum for the long term, every teacher needs to be better trained and held to the same standards.

I’m usually for teachers having a decent amount of freedom over the literature they teach in the classroom. However, conversations on race are too sensitive, too personal for lax regulations.

Prior to this pilot, I heard too many stories of students of color feeling attacked or excluded in English class discussions. A course dedicated entirely to conversations on race has the potential to be educational for everyone, but if not executed carefully, every class could become a landmine where students of color have to explain and defend their identities before peers and adults.

I’m usually for teachers having a decent amount of freedom over the literature they teach in the classroom. However, conversations on race are too sensitive, too personal for lax regulations. The English classes this term should be an honest and educational experience, but students should feel safe and comfortable in the space. The stakes are too high for individual teachers, some of whom I suspect to be culturally incompetent, to hold the reins. Happy New Year!

Anonymous Columnist

This term, the English Department is piloting a new curriculum for lowers. In a joint effort with the Office of Multicultural Affairs, teachers will direct conversations to focus on themes of race in readings, ultimately using literature as a platform to explore race. I was very excited for English this term and eagerly anticipated deep, thoughtful and most importantly honest conflicts. Surely, everyone would learn.

At least in pockets of society that are superficially “woke,” our campus being one of them, I don’t think there is a greater fear than that of being called a racist. The stigma around the n-word appears to be so strong that people are more afraid of being called racist than being racist.

And yet, when I went to my first class this term, I was handed a glossary of terms we would need to use in conversations. Assimilation, Black Lives Matter, color blindness, systemic racism... The glossary was followed by a shortlist of outdated terms. “N-word. Colored. Minority.” A brief debate bubbled up at the table about whether the third term should be considered problematic. Once my teacher (who is white) offered an explanation, we switched topics, though it was clear not everyone agreed with what had been said.

The Exonian

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The Real War on Christmas

Stephen McNulty '21

Columnist

Every December, a chorus of conservative talk show hosts, and now the President of the United States, repeat the same message – that secularists are engaged in a campaign of warfare against the Christmas holiday, ready to erode the fabric of Christianity and America. As a Christian, this is laughable. I am not persecuted. Red cups do not spell the end of my faith and it is hard to argue that the faithful should feel threatened by the secular elements of Christmas. I see nothing wrong with a universal meaning to Christmas – one of bearing light to the world amid the dark winter.

In fact, this “secular” meaning of love and warmth is inextricably tied to the message of the Gospel, in my view—for it represents the entire arc of the New Testament: that a Saviour came down to Earth out of his love for us, born in an animal stable to a poor family living under a repressive regime, to spend his life preaching to the marginalized before facing an incredibly painful death, all for our sake. And throughout his entire life, he preached a universal message – to love

one’s neighbour as oneself. So it should make sense that Christmas, a holiday celebrating the Incarnation of Christ, would also carry a more universal meaning. I have no problem with this. In fact, I embrace it.

There is, however, a far more sinister war being waged, one that threatens both the Christmas holiday and spirituality at-large. It is not fought by multiculturalists and liberals, however; rather, its trenches are American stores and its weapons come in sixty-second television adverts.

There is, however, a far more sinister war being waged, one that threatens both the Christmas holiday and spirituality at-large. It is not fought by multiculturalists and liberals, however; rather, its trenches are American stores and its weapons come in sixty-second television adverts. Immediately following a day of “giving thanks,” millions of consumers line up outside stores, waiting to get the best deals available, mostly for their Christmas lists, written up by children, already looking for the

newest, most exciting toy. Parents rush around trying to buy a happy Christmas morning for their children, spending an average of almost eight hundred dollars on trinkets and gimmicks, half of which their children probably won’t use for more than a week. We’ve learned to fill our collective void with things, perhaps because we’ve been told that having more will make us happier.

Of course, it never does. But symbolically, it’s quite perplexing that we celebrate the birth of a baby in a manger “with the oxen standing by” by lavishing each other with gifts, egged on by corporate CEOs looking to make a quick buck off Christmas. It’s disheartening, particularly because that’s not how Christmas, in both its religious and secularized contexts, was meant to be. The holiday, like so many others (Easter, Mother’s Day, etc.) has fallen victim to what can only be described as a hostile corporate takeover. The irony is rich – we buy countless things to make us “happy”, spending thousands of dollars, all supposedly to celebrate a God who said that “No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” (Matthew 6:24)

To any culture warriors reading this, you are correct in acknowledging

that something has gone deeply wrong with the Christmas holiday, perhaps beyond the point of saving. But you were wrong in your diagnosis – the universality of Christmas is perhaps its greatest asset. That we can all come together and celebrate family and love, regardless of the holiday’s name is tremendously beautiful. Unfortunately, this isn’t happening.

To any culture warriors reading this, you are correct in acknowledging that something has gone deeply wrong with the Christmas holiday, perhaps beyond the point of saving.

And as it is with almost every hot-button social issue, the more time we spend talking about red cups and “happy holidays”, the less time we spend calling out the destruction of the very fabric of the holiday season at the hands of the ultra-wealthy. Of course, we’ve all already bought into their very narrative. They’ll keep on buying out the ads, and we’ll keep on spending. ‘The War on Christmas’ has already been lost, and we never even noticed.

Is the College Process Fair?

Emmanuel Tran

Columnist

In the first three weeks of December, Exeter seniors received an email that has, unfortunately, become the culmination of a 21st century American student’s education. In it, they were told whether or not they were worthy of success and recognition. Four years of work, growth and pain were analyzed by an obscure, opaque committee who divided them into winners, losers and losers with a slightly better chance of admission.

It was, particularly this year, a sad day for many. But the strangest part is how arbitrary the decisions seemed. Many of us have been taught our entire lives that if we work hard and satisfy high expectations that we will get what we want. For more than a few people, that turned out to be untrue; they discovered the reality that the “meritocracy” is a false idol, a lie that they fervently worshipped for four years. Everyone has their own gripes about the university admissions system: standardized testing, recruiting or whatever other facet they believe has hurt them the most. If just these one or two things had been weighted differently, maybe, just maybe, all would’ve been well. But the admissions system doesn’t need tweaking and reform. It demands a fundamental overhaul.

In order to understand the condi-

tion we’re in now, we have to look at the privileged history of American universities. In the beginning of the 19th century, “top-tier” universities like Harvard came up with a system to revolutionize American higher education. Previously, university enrollment was reserved for the children of affluent white families. America’s “old money” nobility went from schools like Exeter to elite universities and then on to key roles in business or government.

But a few progressive reformers, such as James Conant and Henry Chauncey, began to question rich, white Protestants’ domination of these universities. Instead, they imagined a world in which it didn’t matter that you went to Exeter or that your family had been in America for ten generations. In their world, anyone who worked hard could go to a top university and then on to a lucrative career. A new, socially conscious, merit-based elite would run America. Conant explained that he believed in “equality of opportunity, not equality of rewards.” But, they had one problem. How would they define “merit”?

To answer that question, university officials developed the “standardized test.” From then on, two factors would determine admissions: grades and national exam scores. All “subjective” criteria, such as character, would take a back seat in order to prevent racial or economic bias. But that utopian dream proved to be a fantasy. The “objective” exams tended to favor white

students from higher socioeconomic classes who could afford expensive tutoring. High schools adapted their teaching to prepare students for university. Students from expensive prep schools dominated the college system, and the “new elite” didn’t prove any more interested in societal problems than their “old money” forbearers. The “meritocracy” failed to achieve its intended goals.

Not only did the college admissions system fail to make universities more diverse and equal, the changes resulted in a homogenized high school experience that turns American students into automatons while crushing self-realization and moral growth. Humans have a diversity of talents and abilities, but the modern educational system rewards only one skill: the ability to regurgitate facts. In the real world, a number of other skills, such as critical thinking, are necessary. Unfortunately, we high school students aren’t developing these skills in a productive way, because we focus too much on exams to the detriment of other forms of studying.

High school was meant to be a time to grow up, to turn into an adult and to make mistakes. You could “mess up” one term, get a few C’s and be fine. Your teacher could assign truly difficult material. Now, one rough term can sink your chances at university. Students compensate by taking easier courses or steering clear of “tough” teachers. We have to choose

between social lives, schoolwork and our own extracurricular pursuits. Our entire high school experience is focused on the materialistic pursuit of getting into a university.

But the most egregious fallacy is that going to a “top-tier” university will ensure career success. We’re told the “prestige” and “connections” are worth sacrificing our high school experience, yet universities have become such big institutions that “connections” don’t really mean much. In the modern world, competence is more necessary than qualifications. Companies care more about work ethic and skills than about what university you went to.

In summary, the current university system is crucially flawed. I’m not saying that Exonians shouldn’t have to work hard, take exams or study. But, we do need to reform the way high schools and universities operate in the United States. Students need to learn skills, not memorize facts. We should be able to do all our work, pursue our own interests and spend time with our friends.

An admissions letter shouldn’t be the most meaningful moment of our high school years. We could get rid of standardized exams and replace them with essays. We could devise new exams that favor many different skills and types of student. But whatever we do, we need to reform the system fast in order to prevent American universities from turning into more of a farce than they are right now.

Response to Rabbi's Letter

Jacob Feigenberg '21

Columnist

I struggled to feel the holiday spirit during the break this year. When I got off the plane, the captain announced over the intercom: “Merry Christmas! Thank you for flying with American Airlines.” I cringed, correcting it to “Happy Holidays” in my head. The Philadelphia International Airport was strewn with red and green ribbons and streamers; the speakers played “Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire.” In years past, Christmas decorations and music had activated my Christmas cheer, but not this time. Guilt and wariness for non-Christians replaced festive warmth and joy.

In her letter published in The Exonian back in December, Rabbi Marx-Asch discussed how other faiths—in particular, the Jewish faith—had been underrepresented in the decorations around campus. She stated: “What may feel merely ‘seasonal’ to some may feel too ‘Christmas-y’ to others.”

As a Catholic, I don’t share the same faith as many Exonians. I am cognizant of how the Christmas decorations I connect to are foreign and unwelcoming to others. I live in Exeter, where one must jump from their perspective to the perspectives of others and be wary of to whom one says, “Merry Christmas” and to whom one says, “Happy Holidays.”

Although I am Christian, I grew

up celebrating Passover seder and Hanukkah seder with my dad’s parents. I learned to respect both faiths even as my Jewish grandfather joked about how “Jesus could not have possibly existed.” With this background, I took the mutual respect between these two faiths for granted and saw no inherent wrong in celebrating the one I identified with.

Holidays used to be a time for enjoying one’s own take on the world, religion included. In her previous article, Rabbi spoke of her struggle celebrating Hanukkah: the excessive Christmas decorations prevented her from enjoying her faith. I have spoken with my Jewish friends about this and they more or less share her sentiment. In sympathy, I thus found myself criticizing the Christmas decorations that I once found solace in, and began to feel guilty about the joy and cheer of the season. I now feel guilty for my traditions and my faith.

Does it have to be this way? I agree with Rabbi in that we must have more discussions about these issues, but in retrospect, I have found these discussions to have their shortcomings.

I think that the incident with Christmas decorations is part of a greater issue I’ve noticed throughout my time at Exeter: again and again, I have found majority groups to be portrayed in a negative light. In theory, our countless discussions of identity are meant to open the floor for all voices. I feel excluded from these because I cannot possibly complain, given my white-Asian-Christian privilege—

right? My guilt prevents me from entering these conversations. One time in English class, I unintentionally spoke at the same time as a peer. I then offered for her to go ahead, to which she responded sarcastically: “No it’s fine. I love being talked over.” In more serious conversations, I now refrain from contributing so that I don’t silence minority groups.

In sympathy, I thus found myself criticizing the Christmas decorations that I once found solace in, and began to feel guilty about the joy and cheer of the season. I now feel guilty for my traditions and my faith.

To be completely honest, I have never entered a difficult conversation with someone who had different views than me. I think that a lot of this is because of a lack of courage: I fear being labelled as ignorant for not “getting it.” I don’t think that people are actively excluding me, a member of the majority, but I nonetheless experience a numbing sense of discomfort.

Is this, after all, how it should be? Are there any benefits to not having the voice of the privileged majority? Shouldn’t the white, Christian man have a chance to experience what mi-

nority groups have faced for hundreds of years?

I don’t think so. “Getting even” against the oppressor is no better than becoming the oppressor. As Rabbi stated, Exeter can do a better job of fostering an inclusive community for all faiths. A one-sided monologue driven solely by minority voices is not the answer.

I recall an assembly last year when The New Yorker staff writer Jelani Cobb compared this one-sided conversation with boxing. Punching a punching bag is a whole lot different from fighting in the ring. The fighting aspect of the analogy should be omitted because these discussions need to be constructive, but it does show that discourse with similar views does nothing but widen the growing perspective gap. I fear that division of views could lead to labelling the Christian faith as the perpetrator of non-Christian suffering. In fact, I sometimes already feel that way.

Ultimately, we must move beyond a binary system of good and evil. The suffering of one group does not necessitate the blessing of another. Real, inclusive discussion about controversial topics will be hard for all, but in order to build any lasting change the next time holidays come around, as Rabbi said, we need to work together. Members of the majority like myself need to take courage and face the discomfort. It is hard to overcome the feeling of guilt. But when we do, I hope minority groups will also listen.



ExonianHumor



How to Start Off 2019

By RYAN XIE
Editing Genius

1. Stock up on snacks from The Grill
2. Oh wait
3. Buy some Hi-chew from Amazon
4. Start working on your 332
5. Tip back one of those tall orange stick jutting from the ground and watch it pendulate
6. Go to EP on Sunday
7. Join Mock Trial, I mean Debate, I mean MUN... I mean all three
8. Beg for someone to go to Winfo with you
9. Start going to assembly
10. Write for *Exonian Humor*

Humor Editors by the Numbers

By THE HUMOR EDITORS
Power Moves Only

FIONA

Seconds spent convincing Nick and Ryan to put her name first: 2
Average number of cacti interactions: 3
Number of hours spent studying Classics: 476 ;)
Number of teachers she has disappointed: 4
Cups of coffee per day: 6
Number of ribs dislocated: 3
Predicted number of years left at Exeter: 3
Number of appointments she should be at right now: 3
Number of recruited Humor writers: 2

RYAN

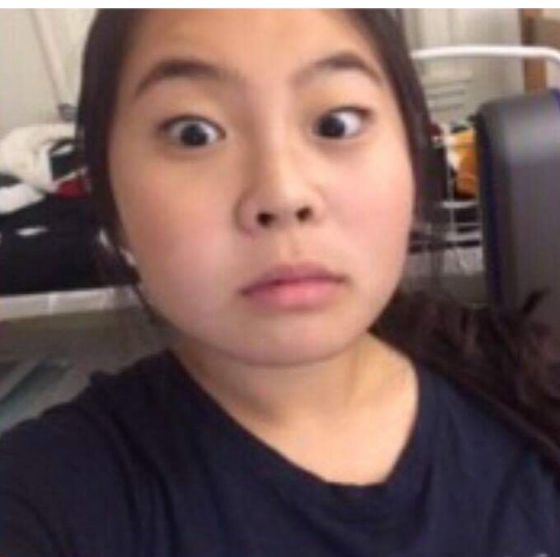
Number of times someone has asked about how Stillwells is: 38
Number of times someone's asked about Child Genius: 3
Number of times someone's asked about Ellen: 4
Number of repeated jokes: 476 ;)
Number of terms behind Alan in math: 1
Number of years doing Mock Trial: 1 (1 year too many)
Number of recruited Humor writers: 0

NICK

Number of times he's said "Oh Ghawd No!": Too Many
Number of phrases started with "As a Day Student" in STUCO: Too Many
Number of Hot Pocket-related Day Stud Jokes: Too Many
Pics featuring his hairy legs on Instagram: 1
Number of people who bought his Day-Stud gear: 69
Number of recruited Humor writers: 0.5

TFW you come back from break and Grill is still closed

By THE HUMOR EDITORS
Smug



Examining Campus Cults: XC

By NICK SCHWARZ
Used to do three sports, now misses them

A cult, defined as a group of people who religiously worship an object, activity, or person to a degree considered by the general public to be strange or even harmful, could describe the entire Exeter student body. Our veneration of any table even remotely oblong-shaped; our propensity to pack ourselves into a room twice a week, fingers aggressively and incessantly snapping; our adulation of intellectual challenge and masochistic rigor and simultaneous shunning, in the name of GPA, of teachers and classes rumored to be hard, along

with our ostentatious contempt for "Harkness warriors"; and our unquestioning hatred of Smurfs, all would be viewed as strange by any reasonable (or sane) outsider. Within this common cult, however, lurk sub-cults whose practices are considered extreme even by the standards of a wacky student body at large. One of the best known is the cross-country program. Between the boys' and girls' teams, there's a lot to be explained: Why do they charge through the Academy Woods in costumes uncondusive to athletic activity, such as cats, dino-

sours and sharks (the last of which, at least, is not normally associated with swiftness on uneven ground), startling unsuspecting dog-walkers? What happened to those who mysteriously disappeared after translating "Ache Te Vitu"? How to account for their perennial success when they obviously spend most of the season planning their E/a hype videos? Smiling to reveal their freakishly perfect teeth, Lucy Gilchrist, Grace Gray and Hanna Pak assured *The Exonian* that, all rumors to the contrary, the XC teams do nothing but run.

A Grill Diary Entry

By ANNA FAHEY
Really Hopes We Still Get Dorm Snacks

Ever since our beloved institution, The Grill, sort of closed down, I've been brainstorming some other ways our famished student body can quench their insatiable need for sweet sweet snacks that don't include loitering by the back countertop next to the potato chips or stealing boxes of Hi-chew in bulk.

We're obviously not going to turn to our free dining hall(s), so we might just have to forage elsewhere for our mid-afternoon Naked Juice cravings.

Lamentably, since this sad

lump of states we call New England doesn't feature any Wawas (where are my Mid-Atlantic Tri-State Area people?), I guess the closest place to pick up overpriced junk food is now the Shell gas station, which is reliable in that it always smells like a mixture of stale gasoline and french fries. Maybe along the way, you could check out some places in Exeter you never knew existed before, like that really big hardware store or Dutch House.

Alternatively, we could start our own blackmarket version of

grill, maybe called Stove or Grid-dle.

As for a new venue, I volunteer either the Museum of Archeology in the basement of the Academy Building that I've literally never seen unlocked before or the rooftop of Phillips Hall (DM me for Serious Inquiries Only!).

No matter what we lost and fumbling souls choose to do on weeknights 5 minutes after check-in from now on, I hope it includes a somewhat less illegal way of sticking it to the man person.

Embarrassing Stories: Vol. 2

By FIONA MADRID
Revenge of the Cacti

I am very much a city person. When I get hungry late at night, my first instinct is to go outside and see which fast food restaurants are open. I prefer public transportation over driving in a car. But, every winter break, my family goes to Arizona to be ~outdoorsy~.

I really do try my best; I swear. I hike and climb all the time, but there are always some things about the city life that stick with me. You see, normally, I don't have to wear foot protec-

tion to go check my mail because it comes into my house. I guess it doesn't work that way when you're not in the city. You have to actually walk outside to the mailbox. It's weird stuff, guys.

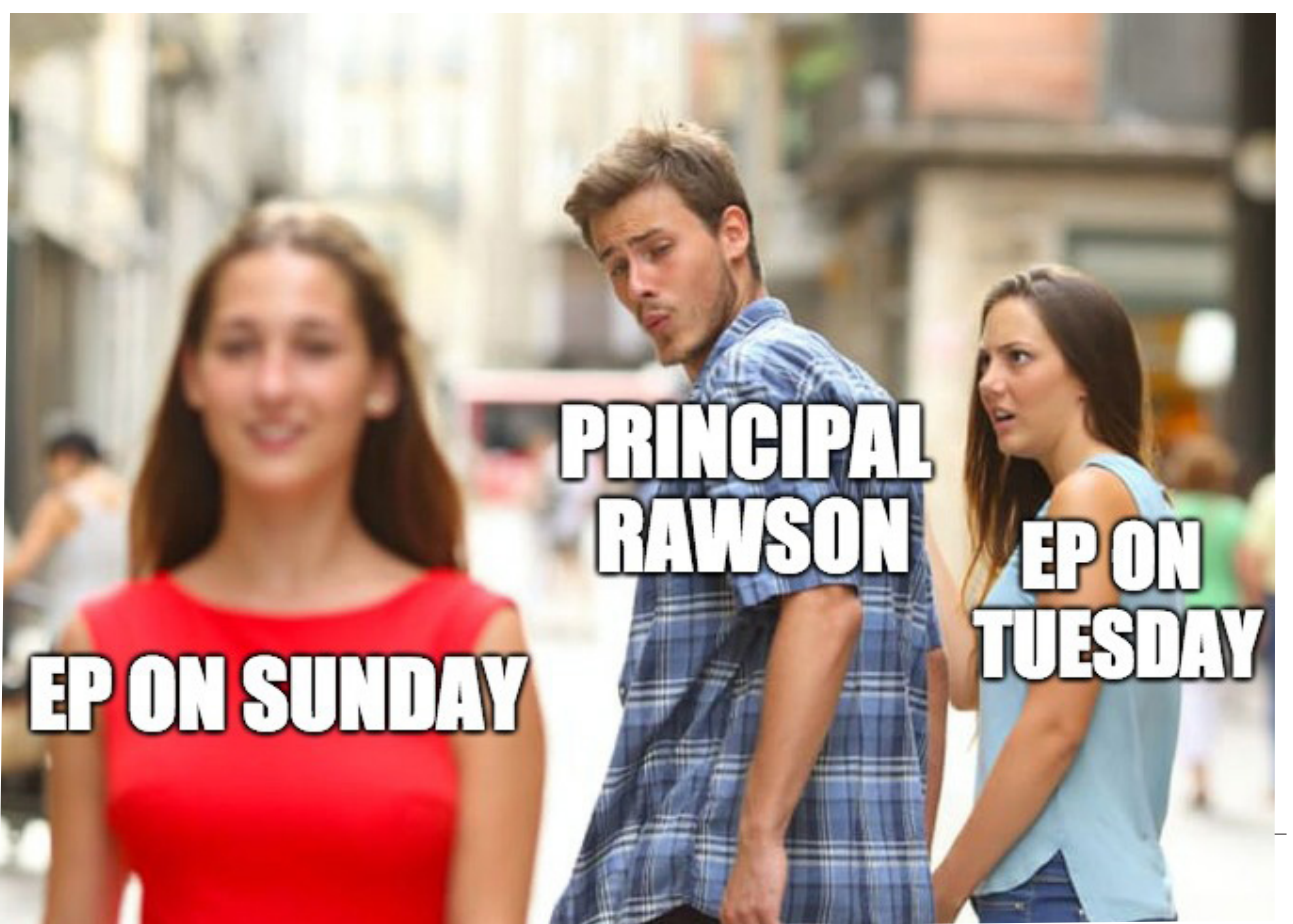
Anyway, my grandma asked me to get the mail, and I went outside without shoes, and I was listening to Dog Days are Over, so I was obviously jumping around spastically. In the desert. Where the plant life is particularly rude. And that is when I stepped directly on a baby sa-

guaro cactus hiding just beneath the dry sand. And that is when I fell forward into a prickly pear cactus.

I could tell you that that was the worst part of that story. I could tell you that I got up, got the mail, went inside and picked the needles from my skin, but that would be a lie. I got up, got the mail, walked back to the house and stepped on the same baby saguaro again. So yeah, I think my place is in the city. Or maybe just a place without cacti.

Thanks

By NICK SCHWARZ
As a Day Student, Thinks This Makes EP Inaccessible



Quotes of the Week

"Shakespeare probably laughed in iambic pentameter"
- Anna Fahey

"That fear that takes over when you're leaving campus for the airport, even though you definitely need a break, is because you're a masochist."
-Johan Martinez

Do you have too much time and not enough self esteem?

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Exeter Chess Team holds their trophies at the national competition.

Provided by Katya Davis

Exeter Chess Team Scores Big at Nationals

By ERIN CHOI, VERONICA CHOULGA and JONATHAN MENG
Staff Writers and Contributing Writer

The Exeter Chess Team took home two of the top five awards at the 2018 K-12 National Chess Championship held from Dec. 14-16, 2018 in Orlando, Florida. In the 11th-grade division, PEA placed first out of fifteen teams, while the 10th-grade team earned fifth place out of twenty teams.

The competition hosted over 1700 players of different ages from around the United States. Since the PEA team does not usually compete at high school national contests until the spring, team members went through a more intensive training period to compensate for the earlier championship date.

The 10th-grade team consisted of lowers Lucy Cai, William Clark and Thomas Guo; the 11th-grade team consisted of uppers Katya Davis, Harrison He, Ben Holderness and Zach Morris. Each participant played seven rounds against others in their grade level, with two matches on the

first day, three on the second and two on the third. Team standing was calculated based on each team's three highest individual scores, with a win scoring one point, a draw one-half of a point and a loss zero points.

Davis and He scored 5.0 in their seven rounds, while Morris and Holderness scored 4.0. They placed 11th, 14th, 29th, and 32nd respectively out of 86 individual competitors.

Davis recalled that although the upper team had high hopes going into the tournament, their victory was not assured from the beginning. A single game can last over three hours, and the Exeter team had to wait until the last round to see whether or not they had won. "Going into round seven, our team was ahead by 1.5 points, so in order to know we had won for sure, we needed to win two of our last three games," she said.

In addition to the pressure of intense games, the continuous flow of gameplay meant that Exonians had

little time to relax at the competition. "It can be stressful because you have to think about the upcoming assignments while focusing on your chess games," He said, emphasizing that club members have to be really efficient with work during the tournament. "We didn't really have a lot of downtime, so in the free time that we did have, we mostly just analyzed our games or did homework."

Even with both the busy schedule and homework assignments, the 10th-grade team managed to do very well in the competition. Guo (20th), Cai (40th) and Clark (82nd) scored 4.5, 4.0 and 2.0 respectively. Cai noted that while the upper team performed consistently well, the lower team did comparatively well in the last round.

"The 11th grade team is very strong so they were doing well for the entire competition. They were glad to be able to hold on to their team standings the entire way through," she said. "We were happily surprised by our

fifth place finish after doing pretty well the last round."

For the rest of the school year, the team plans to compete amongst themselves and at the local level. Davis noted that smaller competitions would grant additional experience before next year's national tournament. "Hopefully we'll get more members to go to local tournaments so that they can join the team for nationals next year," she said.

Morris is equally optimistic for the club's future endeavors. "The teams aim to keep competing and bring home more national titles," he said.

The Chess Club is currently looking for new members and He hopes to bring more competitors to next year's national tournament. "Going to a chess tournament can be a great way to take a break from classes," he said. "Even if you don't have a high rating, going to nationals can be a fun experience."

Continued from CAMINO, 1

like it's been me. People are seeing the Camino and its magic, that is what the awards are going to."

Smith is grateful for the support of Phillips Exeter Alumni, who assisted her financially and emotionally. "Over 40 percent of the money I needed to raise to finish the film came from Exeter alumni," she said. "Most of my largest donors were classmates and even more volunteered their time and energy, and some even hosted me when I toured in 2014 with my film. This film is a class of '82 film through and through."

One such supporter, Susan Ordway '82, first knew Smith in 1980 as her Langdell Hall dorm mate. She recalls first hearing about the Camino trail from Smith in a 2008 San Francisco alumni reception. "I remember Lydia talking about how her recent Camino walk had been a transformative experience and how she'd like to return to document the Camino with a film crew," Ordway said.

Ordway explained the importance of supporting "Walking the Camino" and the personal connection she felt to the film. "I support friends and classmates whenever I have the chance and means," Ordway said. "My life has been expanded by this project and I have Lydia to thank for exposing me to the experience of the Camino."

Another Exeter Alum, Mark Bradford '82, volunteered his own services as a lawyer involved in IP and entertainment law. "I put together, negotiated and revised all of the contracts for the film from 2012 to the end. It was a dream job and Lydia was a dream client," Bradford said.

Outside of the Exeter community, Smith's intent was to reach people from all walks of life. "It was really important for the movie to have a lot of depth and to speak to people on different levels," Smith said. "I felt like I was walking on a fine line, trying to be as inclusive as possible and ensuring that there is no judgement on how one completes the Camino."

One such viewer, Fran Szplyczyn, watched the film in 2014 while planning her trip along the Camino. Szplyczyn

explained how the film impacted her in ways that other famous films and books about the trail did not. "It affirmed that community and silence together would be part of the Camino," she said. "The transformative power of the Camino can change your life, but you must live your life, no matter what."

"Overall, Lydia has given the world a gift in this film," Szplyczyn concluded.

Meanwhile, Margaretha Finefrock spoke to how the film expanded her perspective, even after walking the 500-mile trek. "In just a short amount of time, Lydia really portrayed the history of the Camino and the different kinds of people, nationalities, experiences and stories of people walking the Camino," Finefrock said. "The cinematography is just stunning. It really captured, for me, the spirit of what I experienced."

Other producers like Kimberly Green were also impactful supporters. Green helped bring the documentary to the Nashville Belcourt Theater. "We promoted [Walking the Camino] as best we could through the local pilgrim groups, and the screening was packed—so packed, in fact, that the Belcourt decided to add a second screening night," Green said.

Green also noted how the documentary allows insight into the true experience of the Camino. "I want to believe that the Camino brings out the best in people, but the truth is, it can bring out the best, the worst, and everything in between," Green said. "Maybe it's possible to achieve some large insights on a very long walk, but I think they have to come from the seeds of something that's already in a person. I think all that came through in the film."

Reflecting upon the walk's significance, Smith compared it to a metaphor of life itself. "I think that's why the Camino is so popular," she said. "It is a journey to yourself, so it can be applicable to everyone. It's an inclusive experience. I think that 'Walking the Camino' brings out our true selves that get lost in the rest of life."

MOVIE REVIEW: MARY POPPINS RETURNS

By MORGAN LEE
Staff Writer

Amidst the Great Depression, the opening scene of "Mary Poppins Returns" reveals Jack, played by Hamilton's Lin Manuel-Miranda, as he tends to the streetlamps of the gloomy London streets. Though hints of economic strain touch the backdrop of his scene—from lines of families waiting for food to the gritty colors that surround him—he chooses to see the joy in life, eyes turned to the "Lovely London sky."

As the scene continues, Jack bikes down the cobblestone streets and alleyways, giving rides to children and throwing apples to the hungry while singing over the hum of a cheery and leisurely Disney score. The grin on his face is infectious. From the start of the film, we are shown sugary-sweet perspective to combat the darker days of our lives.

We then meet the Banks family; Michael and Jane, respectively portrayed by Ben Whishaw and Emily Mortimer, are original characters from the original Mary Poppins movie. Now all grown up with three young children of his own, Michael is struggling to cope with financial stress on top of the loss of his wife. His economic struggles have pushed him to take out a loan from a bank to pay for rent. With the payment long overdue, he is visited by two lawyers threatening to repossess his house if the loan cannot be paid in full by the end of the week.

It is in the midst of this distress that Mary Poppins makes her return gliding down to earth on an umbrella. Played by Emily Blunt, Poppins announces her desire to return to her job of caring for the Banks family. After her return Poppins tries to help Michael's children who are taking on heavy responsibilities after the absence of their mother and, in more indirect ways, to ease the pain of their grieving father.

The moment Mary Poppins appears

on screen, the film is brought fully to life. Though Blunt's performance nods at Julie Andrews' original performance of a prim, though young-at-heart and caring nanny, Blunt puts her own spin on the character, arguably playing Poppins with less overt warmth.

Regardless, the movie's most memorable moments are centered around the character's penchant for fun and tender fostering of the Banks children's imaginations. In one scene, the kids break a bowl with importance to their late mother. To fix the damage, Mary Poppins and Jack take them on a trip into the artwork decorating the broken piece. The two-dimensional animations are a colorful homage to the first movie, and the creativity of the drawings is thoroughly charming.

Though much of the appeal of the film lies in its optimism, it has received much criticism for its overwhelming sentimentality. Michael's heartbreak cuts some bitterness into the heaping spoonfuls of sugar. His sadness appropriately sobers the movie, from a movie that would have lacked conflict and had an unreflective vision of reality.

In the movie's final scenes, Michael's children remind him that their mother isn't truly gone but rather she lives on in their shared memories. It's a touching scene of the strength of family and the wisdom that kids bring to the world.

All in all, "Mary Poppins Returns" has succeeded in breathing new life into a childhood classic. This movie would be a nice study break for anyone who needs a burst of positivity. The cinematography brings color to contrast drab winter landscape outside. In moments where we're feeling down, this uplift is a much-needed reminder of the joy we already have and the joy that's to come—the joy of family, friendship, song and the cleverness within our own minds.

SeniorSpotlight

NUMI OYEBODE

By NANA ESI DONKOR and
YUNSEO CHOI
Staff Writers

With her innate compassion and exemplary leadership skills, four-year senior Inumidun Oyebode, better known as Numi, makes impactful connections with those around her. Known by Exonians as a person with diverse interests, Oyebode can be spotted around campus shooting photos, winning snowball fights or participating in athletic competitions—sometimes all in one day.

A native of Nigeria, Oyebode heard about Exeter through her older brothers who attended Andover. “I was really nervous about Exeter, the fact that I was going to school in a new country and the fact that it was a boarding school,” she said. Now, midway through her senior year, she can still recall herself as a prep adjusting to her new home. Since she was not accustomed to checking the weather outside, Oyebode had to depend on her dormmates for advice on what to wear throughout the seasons.

Three years later, Oyebode serves as a proctor of McConnell Hall, a position she describes as her favorite thus far. Oyebode’s accepting and compassionate nature allows her to form meaningful relationships within her dorm. “I love having the opportunity to get closer to girls in my dorm and knowing that I’m someone they can come talk to if they need it,” she said.

Oyebode particularly enjoys Tuesday nights when she walks around McConnell with dorm faculty and history instructor Michael Golay to check her dorm-mates in and chat about their days. “She helps everyone



Eva Carchidi/ *The Exonian*

as best as she can, and always introduces herself to and befriends the new kids in the dorm,” upper Selma Unver said. The impact that Oyebode has had on Unver is reflective of her efforts. “[Numi] is always there for me when I need her, and is definitely my favorite person to watch movies with. She’s really that kind of person [with whom] you can be yourself and let your crazies out,” added Unver.

Outside of the dorm, Oyebode can be found exploring her artistic persona as a photographer. After taking an introductory photography class during her prep year, Oyebode decided to continue pursuing her passion by shooting photos for *The Exonian* and *PEAN*. “In *The Exonian*, I went from a photographer to a photo editor and that

allowed me to get more involved in both taking and choosing pictures,” Oyebode said.

Oyebode’s interest in the arts is not confined to photography—she also participates in music and dance groups on campus. She is a leading member of the saxophone section of PEAs concert band and uses her art skills to design the band’s gear. “I’ve definitely met some of my best friends at band. Concert band had a relaxed atmosphere because of Mr. Schultz’s great musical puns and I’m glad I stuck with it all four years,” Oyebode said. Her love of music inspired her to further explore the subject through Exeter’s Academy Belly Dancing Society. As a member of the group, she practices the intricate dance to a variety of songs with other members of the club.

In addition to her roles as a leader and an artist, Oyebode is an integral member of the girls’ track team. Upper fellow track teammate Ademide Kosoko described her as one of the “best shootout throwers” on the girls’ track team. He mentioned how Oyebode’s hard work has resulted in her continuous improvement as she has broke her personal record on many occasions. “Even when I joined the track team, I wasn’t throwing very far myself and was never satisfied with what I was doing,” Kosoko recalled. “Still, Numi would commend me saying I was making great progress, and indeed I have.”

Oyebode is not only an athlete herself but also a supporter of other teams on campus. In a role that uses both her athletic knowledge and her leadership skills, she serves as the manager of the boys’ varsity football team. “My first impression of her was that she was very outgoing and friendly. I got hurt in the beginning of the season, so our friendship grew from that point on as I was on the sidelines with them during practice and games,” upper Dylan O’Sullivan said. “She does the best she can to make not only herself, but her teammates better as well.”

Oyebode intends to study environmental science and music next year in college. Although her friends are excited for her to develop her passions in a new setting, they note that her absence will not go unnoticed.

“I feel incredibly lucky to call Numi a friend,” upper Nick Schwarz said. “Between her loyalty, her ability to both make and take a joke and how she appreciates the quirkiest things about her friends, Numi is the kind of person I always hoped to meet at Exeter”

YEAR IN REVIEW: SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES

By ANJALI GUPTA and MEILI GUPTA

Co-Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor of *MATTER Magazine*

From the mastery of stellar navigation to inventions like the railroad, the car and the airplane, technology has always had a profound impact on society. Yesterday’s inventions inspire those of today, which, in turn, spawn those of tomorrow.

As we look back on 2018, which landmark developments are likely to keep reshaping our lives in the years to come? Here’s our list of the top five.

First, the emergence of immunotherapy as a mainstream cure for many types of cancer. The 2018 Nobel Prize in Medicine was awarded to James P. Allison of the University of Texas and Tasuku Honjo of Japan’s Kyoto University for their work on uncovering ways the immune system attacks cancer cells. For the body’s immune system to work, it must be able to differentiate normal cells from those it sees as “foreign.” The immune system then goes to work attacking the foreign cells while leaving the normal cells alone. Cancer cells proliferate by putting a brake on the immune system, thereby escaping destruction.

Immunotherapy drugs based on Allison and Honjo’s discoveries inhibit the ability of cancer cells to remain hidden. Such drugs are now increasingly used to treat several different types of cancer, including melanoma skin cancer, head and neck cancers and Hodgkin’s lymphoma. Immunotherapy drugs are becoming an important fourth arrow in the battle against cancer, in addition to surgery, radiation and chemotherapy.

Second, the controversial first-ever birth of gene-edited human babies, as claimed by Chinese researcher He Jiankui. In November 2018, He Jiankui announced that the genomes of recently-born twin girls Lulu and Nana had been modified to make them resistant to HIV. The girls were conceived via IVF and, while they were still in the form of fertilized eggs, He’s team had used CRISPR, a gene editing technology, to delete a gene called CCR5.

Even as He Jiankui has termed himself “a martyr to a higher cause,” researchers, ethicists and regulators across the world have condemned his experiment. MIT’s Feng Zhang, one of the inventors of CRISPR, has even called for a moratorium on the use of this technology for editing human embryos. Medical scientists are concerned that because we still do not know enough about the interlinked role of various genes, editing one gene in order to increase resistance to HIV may increase the risks of other types of diseases. Ethicists, on the other hand,

are concerned that we may now be on a slippery slope to an era of designer babies.

Third, the mainstreaming of artificial intelligence (AI). Everything around us, from our phones to our cars, is increasingly powered by AI. By the end of 2018, over a quarter of American homes had voice-assisted smart speakers – more than four times the number in early 2017. It was also in 2018 that Google unveiled a voice bot that could pass as human when making restaurant reservations. In addition to products, Google introduced AI into their online services. Google Translate, for example, has now learned to instantly translate words, phrases, sentences and entire web pages between English and a hundred other languages with a high degree of accuracy. Hospitals are also putting AI to use in assisting radiologists in the often-challenging task of interpreting CT or MRI images.

Like most technologies, AI is the proverbial double-edged sword. Although it has many benefits, AI brings untold dangers in its wake. Some futurists suggest that, with the growing usage of AI, as many as 30 percent of all jobs worldwide could simply vanish. How about a future war where swarms of robots are automatically programmed to attack and kill enemy troops? Russian

president Vladimir Putin has even speculated that whoever becomes the leader in AI could well become “the ruler of the world.” And, if AI learns to redesign itself, might it simply supersede the human race?

Fourth, the first-ever commercial use of driverless cars. In December 2018, after almost ten years of work, Waymo, the autonomous cars subsidiary of Alphabet (Google’s parent), launched the world’s first commercial autonomous ride-hailing service in Phoenix, Arizona. As Waymo builds on this experience and other companies such as Tesla and GM launch similar vehicles, driverless cars will rapidly become an everyday reality.

Since driverless cars are much safer than traditional cars, we can expect a major reduction in the 37,000 auto-related fatalities in the U.S. every year. Car travel should also become much less stressful. Yet, there is also a potential downside. As autonomous cars and trucks become ubiquitous, jobs such as driving trucks and taxis will vanish. In the U.S., the number of truck drivers alone adds up to 3.5 million. People have already begun to express their concerns. According to *The New York Times*, some people in Arizona attacked self-driving cars with rocks and knives this past December.

Lastly, rapid advances in space

exploration technologies. 2018 was the year when SpaceX, founded by Elon Musk, made reusable rockets a routine affair. Boosters (big cylinders that help the rocket escape the earth’s gravity and atmosphere) account for the bulk of the cost of a spacecraft.

Traditionally, these boosters are discarded after the manned or unmanned craft that sits on top of these boosters takes off on its own. Musk’s goal has been to return the boosters back to the earth in a condition in which they can be reused. Doing so dramatically brings down the cost of launching a spacecraft, thereby enabling more launches at a lower price.

In February 2018, SpaceX’s heavy-lift rocket, Falcon Heavy, made its inaugural flight. After launching a red Tesla roadster on a journey past Mars, its three boosters returned back to earth. In 2019, SpaceX is expected to achieve a similar goal with an even bigger spacecraft, BFR (Big Falcon Rocket). According to Musk, it’s the BFR that holds the promise of taking humans all the way to Mars.

2018 was a banner year in terms of developments in science and technology, and 2019 promises to usher in even more impressive developments. It’s both exciting and scary to think of what lies ahead.

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Exonian Sports



ATHLETES OF THE WEEK: CAROLINE MATULE, CHANDLER JEAN-JACQUES & URSULA SZE

By Charlotte Lisa
Staff Writer

Described as champions of camaraderie and dedication, girls' varsity squash captains and seniors Chandler Jean-Jacques, Caroline Matule and Ursula Sze are the leading forces behind this undefeated team.

Head coach Bruce Shang lauded the three captains' united effort to kick off another exciting season. "I have amazing captains this year," he said. "They all want what's best for the team."

Shang elaborated on each captain's individual attributes, saying, "Caroline is a great organizer and brings the team together. Ursula is a great teacher and also looks for ways to keep the team dynamic tight. Chandler brings that competitive spirit and winning attitude."

This winter marks the fourth and final squash season for all three captains, who agree the team has been a highlight of their Exeter experience. "The team is very special to me, and I wouldn't trade it for anything else," Matule said. "My favorite thing about Exeter athletics is how close teams grow over the course of the season, and I feel this especially with the squash team. I feel really lucky to be able to spend almost every day with the team."

Sze expressed her gratitude for her teammates. "I know it's only high school squash and not professional, but I get so into team spirit," she said. "I love being captain and leading the team. I'm so thankful."

When asked about her favorite part of being on the team, Jean-Jacques emphasized the team's positive dynamic. Acknowledging the toxic atmosphere that can sometimes emerge on competitive teams, she described her own experience as "the exact opposite."

Jean-Jacques added, "Upholding a respectful yet competitive environment is



Courtesy of Jaq Lai

something Ursula, Caroline and I encourage and expect." Their efforts have not gone unnoticed.

Senior and squash player Euwie Park credited the team's positive atmosphere to the collaborative spirit amongst the captains, saying, "They build off of each other's energy extremely well."

Another teammate, lower Catherine Fortin, expressed her appreciation for the captains' attentiveness to each individual player. "Although our team has many different levels of players, they make an effort to interact [with] and help each person on the team," Fortin said.

Sze described this recognition of the individual as well as the group to be one of her favorite parts about Exeter girls' squash.

"I love the fact that although we are a huge team, we do our best to integrate varsity, junior-varsity, and thirds together," Sze said. "I love teaching them and helping everyone improve."

Fortin added that the captains are effective motivators. "We never go on a warm up run without a speaker to pump us up," she said. Park similarly described bus rides to away games as filled with loud music, rousing excitement and positive energy for the upcoming match.

Senior Katie Yang, who has known the captains since prep year, noted that Jean-Jacques, Matule and Sze bring the same passion and dedication to their endeavors beyond the squash court. "[Their] work ethic outside of [squash] really works as

captains," Yang said.

Senior and player Francie Treadwell voiced similar sentiments. "On and off the squash court, Ursula, Caroline and Chandler are all hilarious, supportive and loyal friends," she said. "I think that our team as a whole is a lot closer this season, which can be credited to the environment the captains have fostered."

"This is definitely one of the best squash teams I've been on at Exeter," Jean-Jacques concluded. "We are going to be a very strong team this year, and I can't wait for our success!"

Shang agreed, expressing high expectations for the team in the remaining season. "This is the year! How they lead this team is how we will finish."

WEDNESDAY SCORE REPORT			
Boys' Swimming	92		
Milton	74		
Girl's Squash	1		
St. Paul's	6		
Girl's Swimming	104	Girl's Basketball	43
Milton	77	Cushing	22
		Boys' Hockey	5
		Governors	0
		Girl's Hockey	4
		Worcester	0
		Boys' Squash	0
		St. Paul's	7

What is Your Favorite Winter Sport?

By Sydney Kang
Staff Writer

Catherine Uwakwe '22: "My favorite winter sport would be basketball. It's kind of basic, but I feel like it's very exciting, because there's a lot of things happening all the time - a lot of back and forth."

Grace Letendre '22: "I think diving is cool to watch. You know what I mean? Like, you can watch swimming... I mean, I swim, but as a spectator, because I don't play a winter sport, diving."

Matthew Kang '19: "It's, um, Inter-Fit, you know? It's a great sport. I just like to keep active in the winter when I don't have a sport. It's better than opting."

Isadora Kron '19: "I like crew. Even though you wouldn't think it was a winter sport, it still is. And it's a really great time to get closer to your teammates and get stronger in the winter. My other favorite sport: black ice skating, in which you skate accidentally on the black ice

on the paths around school. Um, I fell into the sport, literally, and I really think it strengthens your mental strength a lot. Also, your pain tolerance. Would definitely recommend."

Andrew Sun '20: "Snow golf"

Anonymous '20 "I do the musical."

Issy Wise '19: "My favorite winter sport is boys' varsity wrestling, because they wear skin-tight overalls and I have always wanted to be a wrestler."

Jenna Brooks '20: "Snowshoeing. I love walking around in the woods with tennis rackets on my feet."

Eva Carchidi '20: "Ummmm... basketball, because that's what I play."

Kaleb Washington '20: "My favorite winter sport is squash, I really love the sound when the ball hits the wall."



Upper Sam Kim races around the track.

Courtesy of Helena Chen



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