

Dr. Anne Bruder Named New Head of School at Hotchkiss

NICHOLAS XU
Associate Editor

Anne Bruder, Deerfield Academy’s current Dean of Academics, has been appointed as the 16th and first female Head of School of The Hotchkiss School. She will succeed current Hotchkiss Head of School Craig Bradley in the 2026-2027 academic year.

As Deerfield’s Dean of Academics since 2022, Dr. Bruder has overseen the Academy’s academic life, from shaping its curriculum to developing faculty and refining pedagogical practices. “I have immensely enjoyed my time at Deerfield, and I was not looking to depart after my fourth year,” she said. “I could have imagined a very long career here. I’m super excited about the work I’ve done.”

The opening of the role didn’t come to Dr. Bruder’s attention until she was contacted in the Spring by educational search firm Isaacson, Miller, a professional organization that recruits candidates for executive positions. Hotchkiss had tasked the firm with identifying candidates who fit their needs, and the firm had solicited anonymous nominations

from the educational community; Dr. Bruder was one of the nominees.

Though initially hesitant, Dr. Bruder found herself convinced to continue with the selection process after she spoke with Tim Sullivan, President of Hotchkiss’ Board of Trustees. “We started a conversation that was really exciting, and it seemed as though my particular interests aligned nicely with what [Hotchkiss] was seeking,” she said.

In her first address to the Hotchkiss community, Dr. Bruder outlined her vision for secondary schools as “places of growth and transformation where young people prepare not merely for college or career but for lives of deep meaning. ... That kind of school revolves around a rigorous academic and co-curricular program that cultivates lifelong habits of curiosity, judgment, resilience, and joy,” she wrote. “It thrives when the community commits to this shared purpose while also celebrating the range of ideas and practices that make schools vibrant learning laboratories.”

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The Meadow: Eric Aho’s Landscapes in the Von Auersperg Gallery

AARON HAN
Associate Editor

On August 25th, the Von Auersperg Gallery opened its fall exhibition on the first floor of the Hess Center of the Arts, featuring *The Meadow* by Vermont-based artist Eric Aho. Known for his oil paintings of natural landscapes, Aho’s work has been featured in prominent venues, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art. At Deerfield, he presents a collection of works focused on meadows.

Aho described how his Finnish heritage guided his creation of the series. “I knew since I was very little that my last name [Aho] meant ‘meadow’—or actually—‘wild meadow’—in Finnish,” he said. “And it took some time before I realized how much I love to paint these; That by painting these meadows, I’m painting myself. So how can that meadow become a self-portrait? It certainly isn’t the face...”

Aho’s path to artmaking unfolded gradually across the years. Raised in a working-class family in New Hampshire, he did not visit his first art museum until he was in high school. Despite this, Aho recalls discovering his artistic tendencies at the age of ten, along with a shift in how he viewed the world. “When you were a child, you drew the sky at the very top of the page and you drew the tree at the bottom, but at around ten or so, the

world starts to come together. For me, I noticed it and I started [to draw]—I could draw a glass on the table,” Aho said.

Although Aho primarily trained in printmaking during art school, he eventually began painting while teaching at the Putney School in Vermont. “I never really painted—and then I took a job to teach painting. And I had three months to start painting,” he explained, “So that put me in an interesting position with my students, because I didn’t know any more than they did... That’s how the painting began.”

At first, Aho painted figures and portraits. He recalls that he began painting the players on the field while supervising student soccer games as part of his job, before gradually turning his attention towards nature. “Eventually, I just started painting the forests and the mountains and the clouds and the people sort of fell away,” Aho explained.

Today, Aho’s paintings see a balance between looseness and concreteness. Art critic Donald Kuspit had described his art as able to “regenerate abstraction by returning to its roots in the boundless generativity of nature.”

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Six-Thousand Miles: The Link Between Deerfield and King’s Academy

IRIS ZHU & NAOMI KIM
Staff Writers

In 2007, His Majesty King Abdullah II ’80 founded King’s Academy at Jordan, starting a partnership with Deerfield that continues to this day. His aim was to bring his “Deerfield Days of Glory” to fellow Jordanians and other international students, and, as Head of School John Austin put it, “[to] educate the next vanguard of young leaders for the Middle East.”

King’s held close ties with Deerfield since its inception. Before com-

ing to Deerfield, Dr. Austin served as the second Head of School of King’s Academy. He comments that the start of the relationship between the two schools was “natural, without a lot of formal planning.” The exchange of culture, connection, and spirit between the two academies not only influenced the founding of King’s Academy but also continues to inspire faculty and students at Deerfield today.

Many current Deerfield students and faculty members also began their academic journeys at King’s

Academy, one of them being Arabic Teacher Lina Samawi. After finishing her Master’s degree in English literature, Ms. Samawi started teaching Arabic to faculty members at King’s Academy. She taught many teachers who are now at Deerfield, including History and Social Science Teacher John Leistler, Director of Planned Giving Matthew Westman, English Department Chair Anna Steim-Miller, and even Dr. Austin—although Ms. Samawi claims he didn’t show up to classes very often. Later, she began teaching students Arabic too. “I started my career there, so it was a lot of trying different things and learning who I am as an educator,” she said. “There was a lot of trial and error trying to figure out my voice and my style.”

Before coming to Deerfield, Mr. Westman taught French and coached volleyball and basketball at King’s Academy for eight years, where he also met his spouse and English Teacher Ms. Hadley Westman. “One big thing I learned is [that], in [certain] academic environments, eloquence or language ability... is something we value and prize, particularly in education in the U.S.,” he said. “Working at King’s, I met thoughtful [and] creative people who contributed in so many ways, even if their English wasn’t very strong, and that pushed me to think further about prejudice around accent or language.”

After spending seven years at Deerfield, Dean of Ethical and Spiritual Life Jan Flaska taught at King’s Academy through an exchange program, where he taught King’s students about Islam. “I’m a white Christian, European, American person. And I’m teaching them about their religion,” he said. “They were very patient with me, and I learned so much.” He eventually returned to Deerfield, and the name he goes by today, “Mr. Jan,” is a tribute to his time at King’s Academy, where students refer to their teachers by their first names.

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REFERENCE: NEWYORKERS

JONATHAN XU/DEERFIELD SCROLL

Friday Theme Days Build Athletic Culture

CELINE CHANG
Associate Editor

Every Friday at Deerfield, it is hard to miss the sight of athletes dressed in everything from bikinis layered over soccer jerseys to Minions onesies. Throughout the year, these scenes are part of a long-standing Deerfield tradition: Friday theme days. The themes vary weekly, but athletes and coaches described how the tradition brings humor and creativity to practices and also plays a role in shaping team culture before weekend games.

Girls’ Varsity Volleyball coach and Assistant Dean of Faculty Mark Acton explained that the theme days are student-driven and help strengthen the team. “I think they’re really fan-

tastic,” he said. “It allows them to have shared experience and express some of their personality while still having a really great practice on a Friday.”

Theme days further encourage team bonding: they help younger players, especially new freshmen, feel included, and give everyone on the team something special to participate in. Dr. Acton added, “We’re a little sillier on Fridays, but we can still run strong practices and feel prepared for games.” He described spy day as one of his favorite themes, and also suggested dressing up as students from Choate as a potential theme that would bring humor.

Similarly, players described how the themes affect energy and motivation on the field. Girls’ Varsity Soc-

cer captain Eleanor DuPont ’26 explained that Friday themes shape the atmosphere of the week. “I think having themed Friday practices is a great way for everyone to bring something to the team, and it’s a reminder that practice should be fun,” she said.

Dupont pointed out that teams that participate in this tradition tend to become more connected than teams that don’t, highlighting how “finding things to wear, talking to other people, and seeing what they’re wearing is a good way to build team culture and get people talking to one another and building relationships.”

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Charlie Kirk Assassination Leads to Open Table About Free Speech

Chelsea Shen ’27 and Rachel Kim ’29 highlight the Open Table discussion held about free speech following Charlie Kirk’s assassination.

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Leistler Continues Proud Tradition of Greer Chair Award

Emily Xu ’28 and Krystal Zhang ’29 cover Mr. Leistler’s Greer Chair Award speech and share the history of the award.

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A Dive into the All Female A Capella Group: the Rhapsody-D’s

Zara Ali ’27 and Stella Hu ’28 uncover the behind-the-scenes of Rhapsody-Ds, Deerfield’s soprano and alto acappella group.

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Boys’ and Girls’ Soccer Travel to Spain for Pre-Season Trip

Lauren Galli ’26 features the experiences of athletes who participated in the Spain pre-season trip for the Varsity soccer teams.

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The Deerfield Scroll, established in 1925, is the official student newspaper of Deerfield Academy. The Scroll seeks to uphold the spirit and integrity of journalism, to serve as an accessible platform elevating student voices, and to show that every story and opinion, when written and rooted in compassion, is worth sharing with the Deerfield community. We strive to be a newspaper of the students, by the students and for the students. Signed letters to the editor that express legitimate opinions are welcomed. We hold the right to edit for brevity. Opinion articles with names attached represent only the views of the respective writers. Opinion articles without names represent the consensus views of the editorial board.

Academy Implements Firmer “Healthy Use Policy for Cellphones” on Campus

LUCAS TAYLOR
Staff Writer

Seeking to improve student mental health and in person interactions, the Student Life Office (SLO) is implementing a new cell phone policy that restricts phone usage during the day. On March 14, students received an email entitled “Deerfield’s Healthy Use Policy for cellphones - 2025-2026 school year.” The email outlined new rules for phone usage, including new phone confiscations for underclassmen during study hall, the extension of phone prohibition to 6:30 p.m. on weekdays, and confiscated phones returned by the end of the next academic day. Under the updated policy, students will only have full access to their phones on the weekends, starting Friday night except in the dining hall. The new rule also includes an addition to a night policy where sophomore students will have to put their phones into the lockboxes the school introduced last year for the freshmen class. The main purpose of the new cell phone policy was to encourage a “healthy use” of cellphones. The administration explained that “ongoing research continues to reveal a close relationship between excessive use of

phones, and particularly social media, poor sleep, and higher risks for anxiety and depression.” Head of School John Austin emphasized the importance of students putting down cellphones to get to know and interact with each other in his speeches. The revised policy continues Deerfield’s expansion of its core values while simultaneously attempting to address mental health and phones’ propensity to act as ‘experience blockers.’ The Student Handbook states that the cell phone policy is guided by the community priorities and two of Deerfield’s Core Values: “face-to-face interactions characterized by joy and generosity of spirit” and “shared experiences, large and small, as sources of relationships, identity, and community” Members of the Deerfield community expressed anger, disappointment, but also joy with the new phone policy’s implementation. Uyi Inowan ’28 believed that “there should have been an open line of communication about extending the policy...when asking students about the phone policy it should stop being a good or bad question and more of a conversation of pros and cons.” Furthermore, he thought that “one year [of the night time phone policy]

to me would’ve been enough.” Isaac Chen ’28 feels as though “the atmosphere of the campus as a whole feels more lively,” with the further implementation of the heads up ideology that Deerfield has adopted. He also talked about how much better it is to be at a school where everyone is not walking around on their phones. Many initial concerns about the new cellphone policy and its impacts were quickly put to rest. “I was concerned with what it might do to the dorm space, but I have been pleasantly surprised by how the students have handled it,” said French Teacher Brian Hunt, a former Doubleday 2 resident who now resides on Scaife 1. Students with concerns about the new policy are encouraged to contact Ms. Creagh. “[Ms.] Creagh cares first and foremost about your well-being and is somebody who is willing to listen to students,” Dr. Hunt added. While the new phone policy may have generated controversy and division among the community as of this moment, the administration explains that more time is needed in order to fully see the effects that the new phone policy has on the community.

English Department Introduces New Sophomore English Curriculum

HENRY FULLER
Staff Writer

Disclaimer: Scroll Faculty Advisor Justin Romick helped design and curate The Reading and Writing Workshop’s curriculum.

Amidst course selections last spring, students noticed a shift in the English curriculum: a new, sophomore English model, The Reading and Writing Workshop, had replaced the long-running Defining Literary Traditions course. Sophomore English Teacher Christian Austin, who was a primary driver of this change, explained that the new course moves away from largely British texts towards an amalgamation of colonial, British, and other literary pieces that define modern-day society. A major part of the new course was the sophomore declamation, which English teachers had revised to encourage more creative expression. The department shifted the sophomore declamation—which had traditionally required students to memorize and perform another author’s poem of their choice—to align more with freshman and junior declamations. Students now have to write, declaim, but not necessarily memorize, a piece about an obsession they cannot stop thinking about. Mr. Austin believes the new declamation will prepare students for the junior-year declamation, college applications, and what he calls “personal writing.” Additionally, he hopes that the new declamation will “produce genuinely entertaining pieces for students to listen to...that end up being fun for students to write.” Students have reacted to this declamation change with a mix of

positivity and skepticism. Some returning juniors held positive but nostalgic views. Skylar Ricketts ’27 favored the old declamation, sharing, “I enjoyed it [the old sophomore declamation] because it was different... Memorization allowed me to appreciate another author’s work more because I had to learn it, recite it, and say it with inflection.” They continued, “You have to use a different part of your brain...to enter yourself into another author’s shoes. I don’t think that you can really get that with your own writing.” Current sophomores have responded to the change with ambivalence. Associate Editor of the Scroll Celine Chang ’28 felt the

new declaration missed the interpretative aspect in its recital: “I really like public speaking, and I’ve done interpretative reading. And so I was really looking forward to the declamation, because it’s not only about memorization, but also being able to express text really clearly...But I’m pretty open to change, honestly.” Moreover, English department teachers designed The Workshop to feature mainly in-class writing and naturally discourage the use of artificial intelligence. Both Mr. Austin and Dean of Teaching & Learning and English Teacher Hadley Westman believe students would not be able to benefit from using AI. As Mr. Austin

puts it, “the muscle of writing is strengthened” through The Workshop’s in-class writing exercises. Ms. Westman cited artificial intelligence as a contributing factor in creating The Workshop, saying, “The arrival of AI technology was part of the picture as we designed the course. It was not the sole motivating factor... but it was a shared understanding that in this landscape...we need to be providing more explicit opportunities for them [sophomores] to both practice, receive feedback on, and learn from the experience of writing...and to be able to help you do that in a space that does not involve AI.” Additionally, by employing

shared rubrics and major assessments, the new sophomore English course aims to reduce discrepancies in grades between classes. Teachers of The Workshop contend that creating a shared set of assessments makes it easier to assess the entire 10th-grade class’s strengths and weaknesses, empowering 10th-grade and 11th-grade teachers to better understand how to teach and address their students’ needs with a baseline that they are familiar with. Despite mixed opinions regarding different aspects of its creation, The Workshop is positioning Deerfield students and faculty to take new steps in today’s changing classroom environments.



COURTESY OF ALBERT YUK/DEERFIELD SCROLL

Harvard Professor and Author Allison Wood Brooks Visits Campus

**KATIE KIM & CAMPBELL
ANYANWU**
Associate Editor & Staff Writer

During all-school meeting on September 24, O’Brien Associate Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School Alison Wood Brooks introduced her book *Talk: The Science of Conversation and The Art of Being Ourselves*, where she covered the hidden architecture of conversation and the tips for improving conversation. Brooks argued the structure of everyday conversations and how even the smallest improvements in interaction can impact relationships between individuals. She encourages the act of conversation despite it being both difficult, enjoyable, and complex due to the opportunities offered to feel connected, loved, and heard.

Brooks provided a clip of *The Bachelor*—an Australian reality dating competition series—as an example of an unsuccessful conversation. Although the man was trying to maintain the conversation by asking questions constantly, the woman solely responded to those questions without asking follow-up questions, focusing on her own goals of the conversation. Brooks specified that one should consider what the other person is trying to accomplish in a conversation, not their own goals, alluding to the significance of selflessness. Most importantly, she stressed the importance of constantly practicing conversation skills in any environment.

English Teacher Andy Stallings talked about his experience eating breakfast with Brooks and his senior English class, *Think Slow: Contemporary Reading*. In the dining hall, Mr. Stallings said

that Brooks taught the students how to effectively “negotiate, ask questions, and share information,” as she learned more about the students in general. At one point, she gave them an exercise of asking endless follow-up questions.

Mr. Stallings also saw the points in Brooks’s presentation being brought up across campus. “At lunch, the table I went to almost immediately jumped into the points [Brooks] had been talking about, and how they will be enacting them in classrooms and anywhere else,” he said.

Outside the classroom and without faculty guidance, students were implementing her teachings right after School Meeting. Although students expressed frustration towards the cell phone policy in the beginning weeks, Brooks emphasized the importance of face-to-face interactions, advocating for these types of exchanges over virtual conversations.

The Freshmen and Sophomore class, who are the primary groups the cell-phone policy is applied to, expressed gratitude towards their phone-free hours after Brooks’s presentation. Henry Fuller ’28 stated, “Alison Wood Brooks effectively told [students] how to communicate, and communication is one of the most fundamental aspects of life.”

Fuller further added that the art of conversation is applicable to most life experiences. “Communication builds a true life skill that the cell phone policy fosters, and Brooks highlighted the fact that communication helps us become more socially developed and prepared for the outside world. You need it when applying to jobs; you need it when making friends; you need it in every sort of situation,” he said.

Alison Wood Brooks’ emphasis on the art of conversation and the importance of face-to-face communication decreased technology usage across the student body as well. “She’s encouraging us to limit the use of technology because she’s saying that there’s more value in face-to face communication than behind a screen,” Charmaine Ma ’29 commented. “I think that I’ve been using my phone less because of the phone ban, but also because of what Alison Wood Brooks said about communication.”

In addition to the connection between the cell-phone policy and the student body’s experiences after Brooks’s presentation, Deerfield faculty were also informed of the significance of face-to-face conversation. From the Student Life Office, Associate Head of School Life Amie Creagh stated, “The world underwent a time of disconnectedness over the pandemic, where we might have turned to a reliance on virtual communication. There is probably a deficiency to account in all of us because there were years that we were simply not practicing to communicate with others.”

Ms. Creagh argued that the pandemic halted the social growth in the majority of students, forcing them to rely on social media to communicate. The cell-phony policy is the immediate response to combatting reliance on social media—a problem that remains prevalent to this day. “The pandemic pulled us away from conversation, making social media the great connector, but this cannot be a substitute for in-person conversation. And I think Alison Brooks showed us how to do that.”

Ms. Creagh added, “When I was in high school, not being good at something made me

avoid it. So, if there’s anyone else whose high school experience might be characterized by that, I hope they can reach out to me for a conversation.” This way, Ms. Creagh can guide the student to a possible plan, as she “[has] information that makes [her] feel confident that [she] can be a good conversationalist.”

Ultimately, Brooks instructed

that the goal of conversation is to construct a “culture of connection,” whether with or without cell phones. She taught students how to form relationships, answer tough questions, and talk to one another. The new cell-phone policy has been a big adjustment for many, but gave students more opportunities to connect, share, and Talk.



COURTESY OF DEERFIELD COMMUNICATIONS

Faculty Experiment with “AI Playground” at Summer Workshop

TIM WANG
Associate Editor

After the 2024-2025 school year concluded, faculty gathered in June for a 3-day workshop on the usage and integration of artificial intelligence in a classroom setting. The program, led by external strategic advisor Eric Hudson, focused on developing AI literacy among educators. On his website, Hudson describes the process as an “AI playground”, where discussions and “guided activities” are held to help participants “recognize AI’s power and its pitfalls and to understand how their own work and learning will (and will not) change in response to an AI world.”

Dean of Studies Lydia Hemphill found it helpful to “have time to play around with AI and be shown what different AI...resources there are.” She mentioned how teachers tinkered with generative AI by creating worksheets for class and cooking recipes for personal use. When asked about its effects, she said, “People really appreciated the time...to be able to marvel at what AI can do, and also be wary of what it can do.” History and Social Science De-

partment Chair Brian Hamilton mentioned how, even though the workshop was optional, “faculty attendance approached 100%.”

As the Academy continues to address widespread AI use, some faculty members have already introduced AI resources into their courses and classwork. Last year, Science Teacher Aidan Carroll allowed students in his Intro to Computer Science class to use generative AI when completing certain assignments. He implemented a two-part system in which students would submit their project and then take a test about their own code, explaining, “Students could use AI to create a product...they [are] proud of. But anything they turned into me, they were responsible...for looking at every line of code and understanding how it works.”

Mr. Carroll emphasized that this idea stemmed from the consideration of a future world where “AI is going to be around, and it’s not about being scared of it. It’s about knowing how to use it and how not to use it.” Max Ng ’27 reflected on his experience in the class last year, saying, “AI was really beneficial for beginners like

myself, especially in computer science, to learn in more personalized ways and help me with projects.”

Science Teacher Ben Bakker also introduced AI into his Honors Physics 2 and Digital Logic classes last year. In his Digital Logic class, he provided an example of using AI to design new circuits, but only after students had developed a firm grasp of fundamental skills. Associate Editor of the *Scroll* Katherine Ni ’26 shared her experience in Honors Physics 2, saying, “AI helped to compile data and complete tedious calculations...and thorough conversations with it also helped me a lot.” However, she explained that the work could be inaccurate at times, and plenty of revisions needed to be made afterwards.

Mr. Bakker stated that students shouldn’t use the tool as a “lookup engine” and instead “be curious and creative and reflect on [their] own learning and have deep conversations with it.” He called AI a disruptive technology, clarifying, “I think any disruptive technology is good in the sense that it calls you back to your root purpose...[and helps us understand] how we can use this tech-

nology to help us do things better.”

Instead of focusing on the finished product, Mr. Bakker urged everyone to consider the learning process and how AI can benefit that: “The world doesn’t need more high school history papers, and the world doesn’t need more solved high school physics problems, but it does need better thinkers who have learned how to learn.” This year, he plans to direct students toward a deeper and more thorough use of AI that assists their learning process.

As the department chair of the History and Social Science Department, Mr. Hamilton discussed the use of AI in research-oriented history courses, offering an example of using AI to scan and transcribe 300-year-old manuscripts of Deerfield Pastor John Williams for better recognition. He mentioned that the AI’s recognition was not “error-free... but it was easier to start with than just squiggles on the page.”

Dean of Teaching and Learning and English Teacher Hadley Westman also mentioned that an AI Task Force has been created, composed of faculty from various sectors of school life, and has set

up an “AI lab” in the library. She explained that the space offers ten designated laptops with AI-infused tools like Google Gemini and NotebookLM, which teachers can request “if they’ve identified an area where the use of AI might augment a particular lesson or portion of an assessment.”

Despite examples of prior use, the Academy has implemented restrictions against AI use. The newly installed firewall this year prohibits students from accessing AI resources when connected to school Wi-Fi. Mr. Carroll cited how, as a result of the firewall, concerns about equity influenced his decision to “take a step back from using AI this year.” Mr. Hamilton echoed similar ideas, stating that the department will adhere to a “precautionary principle” as they tackle “AI slop” and “hallucinations.”

Even though there is no mandate for widespread AI use, Ms. Hemphill explained how the Academy still encourages teachers to “be imaginative, try different things... elicit curiosity in our students, and not pretend that AI isn’t there.”

Dr. Anne Bruder Named New Head of School for The Hotchkiss School

NICHOLAS XU
Associate Editor

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Dr. Bruder also recognized how rare such an opportunity was. “These jobs turn over infrequently. If I wanted to lead a school, this was likely the optimal school for me,” she said. “I had spent time in my early twenties there as a teacher, so I knew the school and was really excited to return.” Dr. Bruder’s enthusiasm is rooted in familiarity—her career began with two formative years at Hotchkiss, where she taught English, coached, and served as a dorm resident. “Hotchkiss schooled me: when to listen and when to lead, how to build an ed-

ucational culture elevated by curiosity while grounded in diligence, and why living in a community that collectively teaches the whole student is so deeply rewarding,” Dr. Bruder wrote in the same address. Dr. Bruder will also be Hotchkiss’ first female Head of School. “The title role being female is meaningful to me. I spent much of my career studying unusual forms of women’s education and women educators. It’s particularly satisfying to join that crew,” she explained. “When I visited last week, young women—especially ninth and tenth graders—came up and said, ‘We’re so excited to have a woman lead our school.’ That was gratifying.” However, she recognizes the role that women have played

throughout Hotchkiss’ history. “It’s important to remember that there have been women leaders throughout the school’s history—the founder [Maria Hotchkiss] was a woman, and even as a [previously] all-boys school, there were women in leadership roles,” she said. Still, Dr. Bruder’s experiences at the Academy will accompany and aid her in her new role. “One of the things I’ve most loved about Deerfield is living, learning, and working in a tight-knit community, which takes incredible intentionality and care,” she said. “I hope to bring that same intentionality to all aspects of campus life—academics, residential life, advising, athletics, and the arts. I’m also interested in coherence across these areas, so the school feels unified.”



COURTESY OF DEERFIELD COMMUNICATIONS

Charlie Kirk Assassination Leads to Open Table About Free Speech

CHELSEA SHEN & RACHEL KIM
Associate Editor & Staff Writer

On September 10, media personality Charlie Kirk, 31, was assassinated while speaking at an event at Utah Valley University. Following his assassination, Deerfield students met with one another in an Open Table discussion in order to understand and examine Kirk’s death. Kirk began his involvement in the Republican party at 18, and his career included co-founding Turning Point USA, an organization advocating for conservative ideals. News of Kirk’s death sparked discussion at Deerfield. Dean of Ethical and Spiritual Life Jan Flaska said, “Following the assassination, conversations came up to me through Alasdair McDonough. I would even say that [the event] was already part of the dialogue at sit down tables.” He added, “Knowing students were talking

about it, we had this gathering.” Alasdair McDonough ’27 helped organize this Open Table discussion with Mr. Jan. McDonough stated that “dialogue was really important and I also think it was really unique that at Deerfield, you could have people who you eat meals with and be able to converse about broader topics and respect their opinions.” Around thirty students attended the Open Table about Kirk’s assassination. Haley Hickman ’26 shared her experience at the Open Table: “it was really cool to see people from all parts of campus come together. At least thirty people were there and everyone was super respectful.” Tyler Long ’26 attended the event for a similar reason as Hickman. Long said that he “knew who Charlie Kirk was, but [he] didn’t really understand too much about their influence, so when [he] heard about their Kirk’s as-

sassination, it struck [his] attention, wanting to gain more perspective from other students.” Though Mr. Jan and McDonough faced challenges facilitating a safe space for a discussion about political and polarized topics, Mr. Jan emphasized how classes at Deerfield enabled an open-minded community, embracing different perspectives and productive dialogue. “We do a lot of work to invite the right kind of conversation between [members of Deerfield]. We have a lot of ways for students to practice engaging in good conversations, so it went in a positive direction although there were strong, raw, and emotional claims,” he said. McDonough added to Mr. Jan’s points, explaining that “questions that were open ended and invited both sides.” Long described the discussion as “very successful in the sense that we were able to come together as a collective

and see different people’s understandings about Charlie Kirk.” The discussion itself ranged from topics such as social media algorithms, why the media publicized Kirk’s death, and free speech. On the latter topic, Mr. Jan shared, “we really shouldn’t fear having a conversation. I believe we are very careful about politics in a way we aren’t about other values. We aren’t a perfect school, but always aspiring to be better, and politics are fair game in these conversations.” Adding onto Mr. Jan’s comments, McDonough highlighted the importance of having healthy conversations across campus. He believes that “it’s healthy to have an outlet in which to express [ideas] that’s not judgemental and creates a collective understanding of your peers.” McDonough emphasized the importance of facilitating peaceful and productive dialogue both in larger political spheres and within the Deerfield

community. Hickman echoed McDonough, saying that the Open Table was “definitely successful.” Sensitive topics that are often overlooked due to their controversy are addressed through Open Tables, something that is important in a diverse community such as Deerfield. To meet the need for healthy discourse, he hopes that Open Tables could become a “more ritualized thing – maybe every Sunday after Sitdown.” Frequent opportunities for conversation helps us “understand what’s happening outside the [Deerfield] bubble,” McDonough explained. Ultimately, the Open Table acted as a leeway for many students to engage in respectful, productive, and politically controversial topics in the wake of Charlie Kirk’s assassination. Many left with a broader understanding of the event, and beyond that, a more comprehensive outlook on their peers and the environment that surrounds them.

On Being an Artist: Author Sarah Manguso Comes to Deerfield

LUCIA KINDER
Features Page Editor

The Academy welcomed author, poet, and essayist Sarah Manguso on October 8 in an all-school meeting and in two Q&A sessions: the first open to all students and the second reserved for sophomore declamation winners. Student responses varied deeply—some walked away from her all-school presentation and Q&A sessions with respect and inspiration, while other students admitted to being bored and uncomfortable listening to Ms. Manguso speak. Maura Glynn ’28 believed she was “oversharing,” both in her work and when she spoke. At many points in Ms. Manguso’s all-school meeting presentation, students burst into laughter, sounds of disbelief, and heavy whispers. A recent article for the *New York Times* titled “The Intimacy of Anonymity” calls out a 21st century increase in oversharing, articulating a false sense of authenticity with the exposure of personal information and experience online. However, in contrast to the comfort with oversharing through social media, students are often uncomfortable with

in-person authenticity—English Teacher Stu Wilson credited student outburst during Ms. Manguso’s school meeting presentation to nervous laughter, rather than high school immaturity. “It is an act of respect ... to be like, I’m going to tell you something that is very personal, but I think you can handle it,” he added. Head of Graphics of the *Scroll* Ryan Bai ’26, one of the Co-Editor in Chief of Albany Road, Deerfield’s literary magazine, explained a theory he’d talked about last year in his Philosophy of Art class: artists expose themselves, and to someone who isn’t an artist, that can feel embarrassing. “It’s really brave for ... Ms. Manguso not only to say these [statements] but also to publish them,” he said. In Ms. Manguso’s Thursday morning Q&A session, a student asked her why she chose to skip over certain sections of her prepared reading in her all-school meeting presentation, something she acknowledged at the time. It’s about the “emotional tenor,” she answered—when she reads, she’s aware of her audience’s engagement and energy. As Ms. Manguso admitted, she’s not used to speaking with high school students; her audience,

she described, is often adults—in her writing—or college students, when she teaches creative writing classes. “She’s speaking more to my demographic,” Dean of Studies Lydia Hemphill said. Dean of Teaching & Learning and English Teacher Hadley Westman expressed a similar sentiment: “I think I’m more the target audience of Ongoingness than any of our students. I’m a parent of young children [and] a middle aged woman, so I found myself really enjoying reading her as somebody that I likely identify with more than tenth graders do,” she said. However, both Ms. Westman and Mr. Wilson touched on the larger meaning and impact Ms. Manguso’s writing can have on students. “A lot of [*Ongoingness*] is about the feeling of becoming a parent ... so there was a part of me that was like, will this resonate with a sophomore class?” Mr. Wilson said. He added that his own experience influenced the impact Ms. Manguso’s memoir, *The Two Kinds of Decay*, had on him: his grandmother went through a similar neurological disease as Ms. Manguso, something he’s slowly learning about as an adult. “Hearing her be so raw and vulnerable about that experience ...

that definitely resonated,” he said. At the same time, he felt that the message students take away doesn’t necessarily need to be specific to the content, but he found instead that Ms. Manguso’s simple articulation of “something happening in your life that changes you” resonated with his students. English Teacher and Interim English Department Chair Christian Austin said, from his view, “The response [to her work] has been more ... curious and surprised, because her form is so unique,” adding, “I think students are probably surprised and taken aback at how authentic and forthcoming she is in her writing.” In part, the English department’s decision to invite Ms. Manguso to Deerfield was grounded in a hope for a lesson in form, rather than content. “Art is great from an instructive standpoint,” Mr. Austin said—he hopes that students will learn from her unique brief but deeply impactful style, and, as he described, the way she is able to trace ideas and play with a sense of time while coming back to a central narrative and theme. “Exposure is really important,” Ms. Hemphill said. In Mr. Wilson’s experience, he often finds that a lesson may not land

in the immediate moment, but it sticks with students going forward—as he put it, there’s often a “lightbulb down the road.” Ms. Westman articulated an idea of “multiple selves.” As a teacher, part of her philosophy is to encourage students to explore aspects of themselves they might not have been aware of—Ms. Manguso’s visit is another moment to find a new self, she explained. A student may find that her specific content emotionally resonates, but they may also find an interest in her profession and the type of writer she chose to become. “You kind of never know what text or writer will inspire a possible self in a student or a group of students,” she said, adding, “[Manguso] certainly was a really different representative of the writer.” In art, Ms. Manguso said, honesty isn’t inherently necessary—she believes it’s simply more interesting. “It feels more powerful if you make a piece of art and you witness people having feelings,” she said. Her work, as Bai said, is authentic and raw. “Think about the things you know to be true that no one’s saying,” Sarah Manguso told her audience.

Special C Edition: Past Member Reflections

Why do we matter? The real-world practice of traditional journalism continues to falter, and common newsrooms are slowly losing significance. To many, it seems futile to chase this falling practice. To us, it's not. For the past century, the *Scroll* has built generations of communicators, listeners, writers, questioners, and leaders. We learn, we laugh, we experiment, we mess up, and we find purpose in language, in community, and in remembering. We see value in learning to challenge each other, ask deeper questions, explore our community, and write thoughtfully. Most of all, we see value in understanding ourselves, understanding Deerfield, and understanding what it means to communicate well. To celebrate 100 years of legacy and laughter, we're featuring a series of reflections from past Editors-in-Chief. We hope you find joy alongside us as you read and learn what the *Scroll* means to us, and what it has meant to generations of writers before.

ROBERT MCCARTHY '90



I loved my time working at the *Scroll*. It was great to work with a lot of friends and classmates, and progress as writers and stringers to Editors. There was a great sense of purpose and community. I also remember how wonderful it was to write editorials on the issues of the day, and I somewhat ineptly tried to compare the end of single sex education at Deerfield to the end of the Cold war with the Fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. ' Over-all, it was a wonderful, foundational experience that allowed me to find my voice as a writer and communicator.

SUNSHINE CHEN '23



The first thing you see when you step into my college dorm is a copy of The *Scroll* hanging on the wall — specifically, the “Sunshine 19th Birthday Edition.” The print, a surprise birthday gift from my managing editors and close friends Jerry Huang '23 and Clara Chae '23, contains my articles and their birthday wishes. In our three-person group chat, one of our recent messages is a photo of past *Scroll* execs — Anna Guer-rini '25, Chloe Xue '25, Nico Pfeifler '25, Theo Schulhof '25— and me standing next to The Crimson's printing press. We all ended up at the same school, and every Monday this semester, I lead comp (training sessions) for Chloe and Nico, who are now joining The Crimson's Magazine. It's disorienting to put into words the effect The *Scroll* has had on me. When I first received John Liu's text asking for a reflection, my instinct was to message Jerry and Clara, and then Tony He '22, Harry Niles '21, Orlee Marini-Rapoport '19, and Josh Fang '19. A long line of *Scroll* Board have come before me and led the way. To our readers, I hope that perhaps one day, our paths will cross as part of the same tradition.

KAITLYN XIA '24



The *Scroll* has shaped my experience by fostering stronger connections within the Deerfield community and teaching me lasting lessons about communication, collaboration, and storytelling. By featuring the voices of students, faculty, and administrators alike, the *Scroll* bridges the gap between different parts of campus life. Each article offers a glimpse into the perspectives and experiences of others, allowing readers to see beyond daily interactions and understand the people who make up Deerfield on a more personal level. Through its coverage of individual stories, achievements, and campus events, the *Scroll* cultivates a sense of appreciation for the diverse contributions that enrich our shared environment.

Beyond the Valley, the *Scroll* extends the Deerfield experience to prospective students and alumni. For those considering Deerfield, reading current students' reflections offers an authentic insight into the community. For alumni, the *Scroll* serves as a thread that keeps us connected to the place and people who shaped our formative years, allowing the spirit of Deerfield to transcend time and distance.

ANNA GUERRINI '25



In freshman year for my first *Scroll* assignment, I had to do something so dreaded, so completely terrifying that I almost quit that instant: I had to interview a stranger. I had to reach out to a person I had never met, arrange a time to meet in person, and ask them questions. For 14 year old me, this was the most mortifying, anxiety-inducing task imaginable. Yet, I did it. When talking about my *Scroll* experience, I must often mention the constant battles against exhaustion copy editing papers, the blissful Saturday evenings spent laughing with my friends, and the reflective walks across campus distributing the latest issue with a mix of fear and joy: proud at what I had written and hoping the campus would regard my work with at least some modicum of approval. But in college, what I have found most helpful about my *Scroll* experience is all of the times it forced me to talk to strangers. Unlike at Deerfield, if you don't make an effort to meet people at college, you simply won't. After a month of hoping my new best friend would just come up and start a conversation with me, I decided it was time to take matters into my own hands, *Scroll* style. “Hi, what's your name?” I asked a complete stranger on a Friday night. “What did you do over the summer?” I asked someone in my Physics lab. “What are your thoughts on AI?” I asked someone in my math section. The *Scroll* taught me the art of the cold open, the careful theater act of being fearless in the face of a 50-50 chance of rejection. In college, that translates into the art of making.

The Deerfield Scroll Throughout the Years



THE DEERFIELD SCROLL, 1970

THE DEERFIELD SCROLL, 1995

Leistler Continues Proud Tradition of Greer Chair Award

**KRYSTAL ZHANG
& EMILY XU**
Staff Writers

“The way life goes is not always in a straight line,” History & Social Science Teacher John Leistler said during his Convocation speech on September 1. As the 2024 recipient of the Greer Chair Award, Mr. Leistler had to deliver a speech at Deerfield’s Convocation ceremony. Ringing the whole auditorium with stories of his voice and experience, he hoped to provide a unique message that would stick with students, faculty, and staff.

For Mr. Leistler, the auditorium was his classroom, and he viewed the “speech” as another meaningful lesson for the whole Deerfield body. “It felt to me like a class of mine, so it should mirror the way a classroom might be,” he said. In his “class,” Mr. Leistler brought in an artwork of the French Romantic painter Théodore Géricault. In the painting, the majority plummeted into an abyss of cannibalism, while a few overlooked ships of potential rescue on the opposite side of the horizon.

Through his presentation of the painting, Mr. Leistler hoped to underscore how these ships are always present at Deerfield and beyond, and the people—peers and adults—are there to help and look after one another. In an interview afterwards, he said, “It’s a legitimate thing to feel distress, but when you are feeling distress, I encourage you to always look for hope.”

The Greer Chair award brought forth another “class,” but also an acknowledgment to the recipient’s commitment in teach-

ing. Language Teacher John Taylor, the 2025 Greer Chair award recipient, felt the recognition and gratitude people have in him. “This award really brought me confidence, especially when seeing the comments from the students. The moment of announcing the recipient was a very special moment for me, and I received congratulations from the entire community afterwards,” he said.

Mr. Taylor’s sense of gratitude was drawn full circle by cycles and relationships between students and teachers, he described. “I am very grateful and it confirmed that I’ve never lost my love to teach,” he added. For Mr. Leistler, he felt a similar emotion in finding gratitude for continuing the passion in himself.

The Greer Chair award was established in 1998 by the Greer family awarded to a faculty member who has had a significant impact on students—not only by exhibiting enthusiasm and understanding in his interactions with students in the classroom, but also by serving as a role model for students in their daily lives. Chief Advancement Officer Chuck Ramsay said, “I think they [the administration] wanted a way to recognize excellence among the faculty and to reward them.”

In 2023, the award was “[expanded to] also honor staff members on campus because they recognize that they’re a couple hundred people in this community who were not faculty, and that they make an impact on the lives of students,” explained Mr. Ramsay.

Through this award, Mr. Ramsey hopes that the Greer

family’s perpetual influence and effort will leave behind a lasting legacy and community.

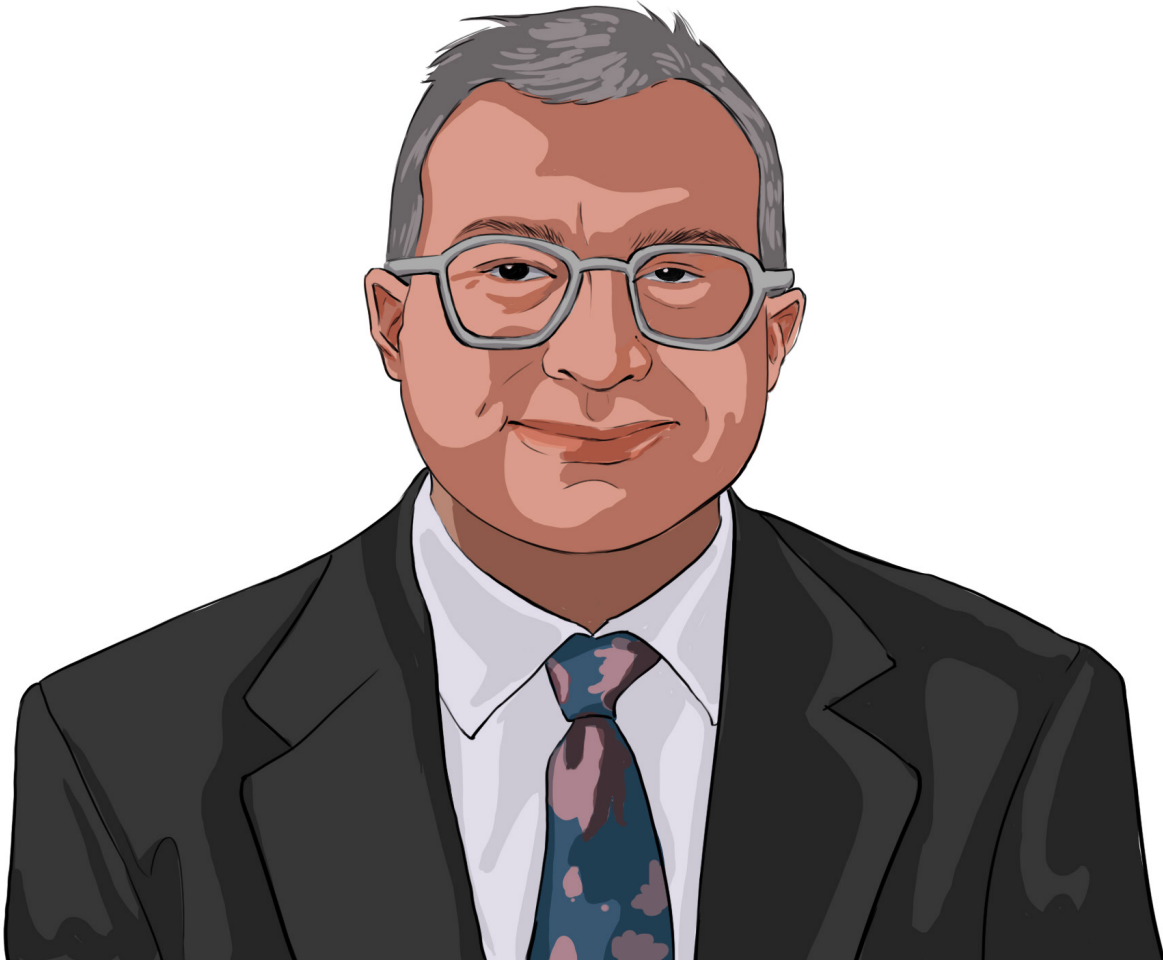
The history of this award inherited and continued its traces to contemporary classrooms—the impact of teachers is significant in a class’s success, Mr. Taylor described. He pointed out the crucial stand of care as the ultimate purpose he wanted students to feel. “I tried to make my class a balance of challenges and fun,

and I genuinely cared for all my students,” he said. Mr. Leistler viewed his classes in the same way: “I would like people to say that when they’re in class with me, that they feel seen,” he said.

A teacher’s impact on students often lasts for decades, Mr. Leistler added. He remembered attending the wedding of one of his former students and said, “The groom whom I taught introduced me to his new wife and said, “I’d like

you to meet the man who taught me how to think.’ I would like that to have an impact. Not that I have to be the one who taught you better thought, but just that I helped you in that process.”

The Greer Chair brings to light teachers who go above and beyond in and outside the classrooms—as Mr. Ramsay put it, “I see a lot of legends on that list—people whose names I hear over and over again.”



YONG DING/DEERFIELD SCROLL

The Legacy of Lynn Gordan (Gordie) Bailey ’04

JULIET LOPEZ
Staff Writer

In the spring of 2024, Deerfield’s Class of 2004 started a memorial fund in memory of their classmate Lynn Gordon (Gordie) Bailey, who was hazed to death by his college fraternity on September 17th, 2004. Gordie’s Bench and Overlook memorialize the victims of hazing incidents on campuses across the United States.

According to Hazing Info, a database made through a partnership between the University of Maine and the University of Washington Information School, there have been at least five reported college hazing deaths since 2000. Gordie’s death was one of them.

At Deerfield, Bailey was active on the varsity football and lacrosse teams and a regular actor in theatre productions; he received the “Class of 2004 Award for Excellence in Drama” and won the New England Championship with the football team. In a Scroll Article from 2020, Bailey’s former advisor said of him, “I don’t believe I have ever known a student in my thirty-six years of teaching that had a sunnier disposition.”

However, three weeks into college at University of Colorado Boulder, Bailey passed away from alcohol poisoning while pledging a fraternity. According to the Gordie Center’s website, Bailey and his fellow pledges, following a fraternity tradition of initiation, were forced to drink four hand-

les of whiskey and six bottles of wine. After spending the night passed out on a couch, his fraternity brothers found him dead at 9 a.m. the next morning. Student Life Office Senior Associate Mr. Kelly described how “there was a moment there where he had died while everybody was still around, and they wouldn’t know it.”

Dean of Ethical and Spiritual Life Jan Flaska remembered first hearing about Gordie’s death when he taught at King’s Academy, the Deerfield’s partner school in Jordan. “My very good friend at college died at age 20, and I remember his mother saying to me, ‘parents are never supposed to outlive their kids.’ That was the first thing I thought about,” he said.

Gordie’s Bench sits on an overlook that faces towards the Lower Fields, near a plaque that lists his date of birth and death along with lyrics from the Deerfield Even-song: “Deerfield Days are Days of Glory.” The sun radiating on the bench is a reminder of “his sunny personality,” Dean of Student Life Sam Bicknell said. “When you look over the fields, it’s a wonderful spot where students can soak in that sun and enjoy a peaceful setting.”

Vivian Monopoli ’26 noted Gordie’s Overlook has personal significance. She calls it a “special space on campus that is very reflective... I have good memories there.” She also said that the bench “exemplifies what we value as a community.”

In an address during the reunion of the class of 2004, Bailey’s best friend at Deerfield re-

marked upon his death. “In his short 18 years, Gordie lived a full lifetime.” Alex Kleiner ’04, said.

Deerfield follows Massachusetts state law guidelines regarding how to approach teaching about hazing, and the Academy also uses Bailey’s story to personalize its approach to teaching. In tenth grade health class, students watch Haze, a documentary made by Bailey’s family that explores his story. In May, the seniors re-watch this documentary. As Dr. Melvion put it, “One student

said it hits differently when you know where the story is going.”

After the seniors rewatch the documentary, Dr. Melvion and Mr. Kelly speak with the graduating class about the takeaway from the documentary. “The message we want to deliver to the senior class when they go to college is to have some lines in the sand that you will not cross,” Mr. Kelly said, adding, “We want our students to graduate with a sense of pride and self-esteem and be able to be

independent men and women.”

The class of 2004’s memorial fund is in memory of Bailey and three other classmates that passed away: Charles Denihan ’04, Christopher Diggs ’04, and Micheal Walsh ’04. Their goal is to raise \$1.8m by their next reunion in 2029 to establish a permanent endowed fund, which would pay for the tuition for one Deerfield student.

As Mr. Kelly said, “The highest honor we could give him is knowing that his death is not in vain.”



COURTESY OF THE GORDIE CENTER

Camp Greylock Tradition Offers Freshmen Shared Experience

MAURA GLYNN & IRIS ZHU
Staff Writers

Any Deerfield student who came during their freshman year can share their experience at Camp Greylock during their orientation day. Camp Greylock is a long-held Deerfield tradition, where new freshmen are kept from unpacking in the Village and instead, ushered off on buses for an overnight stay in Becket, Massachusetts in matching class t-shirts. Camp Becket was the original camp where Deerfield held freshmen orientation, but after the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Becket stopped accepting schools and Deerfield turned to Camp Greylock. Describing the origin of this tradition, Dean of Residential Life Dr. Becca Melvoin said, “We wanted to level the playing field. We want students,

no matter their background, to start with a shared experience.” Students engaged in many activities together away from campus, whether those were playing icebreaker games in the camp gymnasium, sharing first meals together in the cafeteria, or making smores by the campfire. In small cabins, students experienced their first Deerfield boarding night in sleeping bags. The next morning, many students also took the swim test before being granted time out in the water. “It was a really nice way to make friends on the first day and it kept me from not being homesick,” said Liesel Stitch ’28. Many upperclassmen look back on Camp Greylock fondly. “It was fun to be in an environment that forced me to get to know all the new faces around me,” said Grace Lodge ’27, adding, “I think it’s great we all have something to bond over.”

On the other hand, some students found that Greylock prevented them from making meaningful connections. “I thought it was too short of an experience for me to get close to anyone. Because the cabins were chosen, I didn’t get to pick who I wanted to spend time with,” said Olivia Minn ’28. Some students felt that Greylock only made surface level friendships, rather than ones that lasted through the year. In their minds, the purpose of the trip was to make meaningful connections with their classmates but failed as it only prolonged the time it took them to make lasting friendships. Aelahni Valdez ’28 explained, “I think I was able to get closer through sports teams and classes. I don’t think Grelock helped a whole lot.” Many students, like Aelahni, felt they made more sustaining memories outside of Greylock and

didn’t see Greylock as an opportunity to make meaningful connections but to merely get to know the people who were going to surround them for the next four years. One of Dr. Melvoin’s favorite parts from her trips to Camp Greylock are the Deerfield stories that the freshman proctors share by the camp fire. This is a tradition where seniors meet with the new class, tell them about their experiences at Deerfield, and pass along pieces of wisdom or simply humorous anecdotes. “They can be very powerful to hear,” she said. “I remember that some of [the stories] were really funny and embarrassing,” said Gabby Aguilar ’28, adding, “That was really nice, to have someone go up and be vulnerable in front of people they didn’t know yet.” Students like Stitch have had a positive experience overall at

Greylock which kept them busy, avoided homesickness, and an opportunity to get to know the faces of their freshman class. Even though some students disliked the forced connection at Greylock, most of them agree to the fact that Greylock was a necessary experience to get closer with their class. “I think it’s fun, and something you can reflect on back to your freshman year,” said Stitch. No matter if Grelock was a positive or negative experience, it’s still one thing that that freshman class will have in common for the rest of their Deerfield careers. According to Dr. Melvoin, the school isn’t planning on changing the Greylock freshman trip in the near future but the SLO is always open to suggestions for new ideas.

Six Thousand Miles: The Link Between Deerfield and King’s Academy

NAOMI KIM & IRIS ZHU
Staff Writers
Continued from Front

Jean Meza ’26 was also a part of an exchange program between the two schools. In 2023, he went on the spring CSGC trip to Jordan and was able to visit King’s Academy for a few days during the trip. What Meza said impressed him during his stay was the incredible pride the students had in their

school. “It was a great experience for me to get out of my comfort zone and get to know new people. I think that’s really the point of the trips, for whatever contexts that they’re in,” he said. “You branch out in a way that you didn’t expect to before you went on the trip.” Before coming to Deerfield as a sophomore, Cosi Whitely ’26 went to King’s for her ninth grade year in 2023. “I wanted to do something different and I wanted to go away from Connecticut,” she said. King’s

Academy differs both in culture and religion from Deerfield; over half of Whitely’s classmates were from the Middle East and practiced Islam. “I would celebrate Ramadan with them; I would pray and fast with them,” she added. At King’s, Mr. Leistler said that the King of Jordan would often pay visits to the school. Not only did His Majesty often speak about why he created the school, but he would also Q&As where students could ask direct, un-

censored questions. Mr. Leistler offered a few thoughts: “I would hope that they [Deerfield students] would go to Jordan some day and see what the land is like, and know that there is an oasis of calm there and that they’re trying to become Deerfield-like.” He added that students and faculty at King’s Academy didn’t define what being “Deerfield-like” meant but left it up to the individual to decide. In his mind, it was about the ways adults connect with stu-

dents and the knowledge that being challenged is a good thing. Going forward, Dr. Austin hopes to maintain a strong tie between the two academies. “We’re always going to be close,” he said, and he looks forward to “maintain[ing] these exchange programs as we move into the future.” Through these students and faculty members who have sat at sit-down tables on two sides of the world, Deerfield and King’s connection continues to foster.

Dining Hall Construction Nears Winter Break Completion

CLAIRE XIA
Associate Editor

After over a year of construction, Deerfield Academy’s new dining hall is finally nearing completion. Director of Food Services Michael McCarthy says that the space is designed to honor tradition while bringing the campus dining experience into the modern era. The new building is scheduled to open its doors over winter break. The Academy’s construction leaders designed the new dining hall with student and faculty experience in mind. The redesign specifically focused on acoustics. In the old space, high ceilings created an overwhelming noise level that made conversation difficult. Project Manager Andrew DeMado noted that they prioritized this issue from the very beginning. By the time the dining hall opens, Mr. DeMado hopes “that people can sit at a table and actually hear each other – to build community. So we’ve added acoustic treatments through the ceiling in both the main dining area and surrounding spaces.” In addition to improved sound quality, the new space features a layout intended to foster togetherness. Previously, some students would sit in raised “bubble” areas on either side of the central dining hall area during meals, separating themselves from the rest of their classmates. The expanded and leveled dining area can now allow the entire student body to eat together on the same floor. Mr. DeMado noted that “Dr. Austin really wanted it so that everyone was

on the same level,” emphasizing Deerfield’s goal to strive for more unity within the student body. The Academy’s emphasis on shared experiences also affected the decision that Mr. DeMado and Mr. McCarthy made to keep the entire school in one communal dining room. Sophie Simonds ’26 has experienced both the original dining hall and the temporary dining hall. Soon, she will attend the opening of the new dining hall along with everyone else on campus. She agrees with the choice to have one communal dining hall, stating “I really like the fact that they expanded it so that they could fit the whole student body during sit down meals.” Additionally, Simonds commends the planning and consideration for students and faculty while construction was happening, saying, “I do think it was the most thoughtful situation instead of just removing sit down meals for multiple years like I know other boarding schools have done.” Mr. McCarthy added: “Sit-down meals are our thing, and a lot of the design was built around accommodating them, the equipment that’s in the kitchen and the layout of the dining room.” Among the most visible changes are updates to the serving model itself. The new building includes a true servery, which will allow the kitchen to present food through dedicated stations. “From an operational standpoint, it’s going to be much more efficient,” McCarthy said. Another unique addition to

the dining hall experience is the introduction of service carts for both first and second waiters. The three-tiered carts will help students deliver food more efficiently by carrying trays, glassware, and even bus buckets, which hold dirty dishes, all at once. “Instead of having to carry a tray, you’ll be able to place your tray on top of the cart and be able to load your food up in the kitchen and then roll it out,” explained Mr. McCarthy. Inside, the dining hall balances modern functionality with traditional aesthetics. Much of the wood trim was custom made to reflect the style of the original building. DeMado noted that “students said...we want to come into this place and feel like we should be in class dress,” explaining the decision for some of the architectural design aspects of the new

dining hall. The renovated building now features ornate columns, fluted trim, and high ceilings. Even with the challenges the construction team faced such as unexpected obstacles when doing demolition on an old building, the entire crew found the project rewarding. According to Mr. DeMado, not only was the process incredibly collaborative, but the dining hall has also, in effect, been modernized. He explains that the dining hall “really hadn’t been upgraded since the late 1940s. So we had a separate food service designer that worked with us and then worked with the directors, so that it really brings their operation into the 21st century.” The new dining hall is set to host its first meal in early January, just after students return from winter break. According to Direc-

tor of Food Services Michael McCarthy, they plan to transition just after students leave campus for the holidays. “Our first meal that we serve will be that Monday sit-down lunch.” McCarthy explained that Monday’s lunch will mark the beginning of a new chapter in campus life, one that many faculty and students have been eagerly anticipating. In addition to regular meals, the new dining hall is also expected to host major campus events, including Commencement for this year’s graduating class. The dining hall, used by both faculty and students alike, is a shared space where the community comes together. DeMado described it as “the heart of campus.” While Simonds hopes for the preservation of some previous features such as the senior bubble, and she is “excited for the opening.”



COURTESY OF DEERFIELD COMMUNICATIONS

Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

Merriam-Webster defines the slang term “crash out” as “to become suddenly, uncontrollably angry or distressed.” During the first month of Senior Fall, I’ll admit, I’ve crashed out more than a couple of times. My friends will second this, yet they’ll be surprised to learn that most of my crash outs in front of them are purely for laughs—believe it or not, I don’t really crash out that much.

Growing up, I’d always—at least subconsciously—think that I shouldn’t display my extreme emotions. Always bottling up my emotions however, has had terrible ramifications when I finally do need to vent. In those moments, I feel utterly stripped of self-autonomy, acting in a regrettable fashion to everyone close to me and then feeling terrible about it afterwards.

After experiencing many of these intense emotional moments this year, I found the silver lining to be this: self-censoring my emotions is dangerous. And during my moment of reflection that came upon this revelation on the importance of self-expression, it reminded me of another pertinent issue plaguing American life today: the sanctity and security of free speech.

Charlie Kirk’s assassination on September 10, 2025, was one such case. Disney’s temporary cancellation of the Jimmy Kimmel Show after being strong-armed by the Federal Communications Committee Chair Brendan Carr marked another case.

Whether you’re a Republican or a Democrat, freedom of speech is a nonpartisan issue. And right now, more and more people on both sides of the political spectrum are being silenced for exercising their inalienable right to free speech.

I understand that in uncertain times we tend to stay quiet to avoid conflict. However, it’s especially in times like these that we can’t afford to—we mustn’t let our fear be the driver behind our self-censorship. If we do, we are surrendering to those who wish to strip us of our rights.

Furthermore, you are depriving society of possible benefits that’ll arise from your input.

For a recent writing assignment in Mr. Romick’s Creative Nonfiction English class, we’re writing profiles on a classmate, interviewing the person’s friends, parents, coaches, advisors, etc. to craft a holistic image. Haley Hickman, who’s writing the profile on me, interviewed Chloe Xue last week and invited me to listen along.

I had fully expected Chloe to make good-natured fun of my crash outs (which I often did in front of her last year), so I was in shock when her response was entirely opposite, instead framing my release of emotions in public as “a healthy expression of [my] emotions,” which encouraged her to also feel free to vent whenever she needed to, in public or not.

Because Chloe thought that my crash outs were real, and because I frequently crashed out, Chloe got the confidence and freedom she needed to let out her own feelings in public. In a call with her later that week, she told me that regularly crashing out now has helped her manage anxiety at college.

I’d like to emphasize that I’m not condoning crash outs. However, there is a common thread between suppressing your emotions in public and not speaking up: self-censorship is dangerous.

Speaking up isn’t an act of resistance or defiance, and it’s not a tool to purposefully incite conflict. Rather, it’s a simple expression of our fundamental freedoms, guaranteed by the Constitution.

So Deerfield, I encourage you to speak up and share your ideas. Do not allow those who wish to silence you succeed at taking away your rights by staying silent. Because you never know: something you say or do can benefit others in a much more significant way than you can ever imagine.

Yours in Service,
John Qi Liu

Board Editorial: Why the Scroll?

If you’ve ever tried to keep a journal, you would know that it isn’t the most rewarding activity at the moment. It might even feel like a chore at times, especially if you’re trying to form a habit of journaling regularly. But the reason you journal isn’t to feel satisfied immediately. You journal because when you look back months and years later, you’ll be overwhelmed with satisfaction and nostalgia that comes from reminiscing about the past.

In a way, the *Scroll* is just like that—a chore at times, but an extremely rewarding one. Although we’re a student-run newspaper, we don’t function like a traditional newspaper that vies for readership. Instead of operating like *The New York Times*, whose immediate goal is to capture audience attention and bring up-to-date news, the *Scroll* solidifies moments that happen on campus and around the world into written history—both for ourselves, of course, but also for the generations to come. In a sense, the *Scroll* is a glorified version of a journaling club, detailing the events that happen to the group of people that we call our schoolmates. Even if we have a test, essay, or just a homework assignment due the next day, we find ourselves in the basement of the Kendall, writing and editing away all in service to the next edition of the *Scroll*.

As a board, we don’t think this belittles the *Scroll*’s worth as a student-run newspaper. Indeed, even before the *Scroll* publishes an article about an event, news of it has most likely already been disseminated across the student body through announcements or school meetings. Instead, we think that our mission as a news-journaling club only bolsters our purpose on campus. Unlike the many clubs on campus that come and go—each allowing the transient passions of students to flourish—*Scroll* writers document student life at Deerfield onto a 12 to 16 page paper published nearly every month of the school year. Instead of striving to create the most eye-catching or dazzling issue, we pride ourselves in consistency, en-

suring that all noteworthy events and achievements will not be forgotten once we graduate.

Our history is a testament to that. This year marks the 100th volume of the *Scroll*, a century since the first issue was published in 1925. Since then, one hundred classes of writers have written for the *Scroll*, each writer dutifully recording their days of glory in the lines of each monthly issue. From the detailed football reports of the early days to the discussion of a return to co-education in the later years, all articles constitute a part of our heritage—the heritage we vowed to live up to when we bought into the mantra of “be worthy of your heritage.” To protect and continue this priceless legacy passed down onto our hands, the best way is to write on, recording each event in the journal of Deerfield.

But the *Scroll* doesn’t just serve future generations of students. It also serves as a crucial block of communication between the Deerfield bubble and the external world—parents, alumni, prospective students, and many more. People who want to know Deerfield want to hear it from the voices of students. The influence of your writing in the *Scroll* extends well beyond campus, and each *Scroll* writer—or journaler—carries the responsibility of the way you want the Academy to be perceived. Each writer’s role is just as important as any other leadership position on campus as you work to complete the image of Deerfield, of the community that we take so much pride in being part of. It is a privilege to represent Deerfield.

Even if the *Scroll* isn’t a fully fledged newspaper, there is another appeal to the *Scroll*: the dedication to the practice of journalism. Although we don’t produce timely news, we do still commit to publishing informative articles written and edited with high journalistic standards. This means that we seek to expose all aspects of campus life, including ones that are more serious and controversial. For example, in the November issue of 2018,

ex-Editor-In-Chief Joshua Fang ’19 reported on a lawsuit by former English teacher Sonja O’Donnel, who sued the Academy of gender discrimination responding to reports of sexual harassment. Handling such a challenging and provocative topic, Fang published a highly professional news report that won him the 2019 Ancil Payne Award for Ethics in Journalism. The other recipients of the award were professional journalists from the *Associated Press* and *ProPublica*. Fang’s accomplishment shows the power of the *Scroll* as an outlet for campus news that accurately reflects the state of the Academy.

But aside from the shiny accolades and our names on the mantelpiece of the Scroll—tiny engravings of our names on the masthead—why do we, and why should you, write for the *Scroll*? What justifies the time and effort that goes into publishing a 16-page issue even if we see copies of the *Scroll* lying in our common rooms going unread? Although the *Scroll* advertises itself as a “student-run newspaper,” and it indeed does provide valuable experience in writing and journalism, helping students become better newspaper writers isn’t the only function of the *Scroll*. Instead, we point to a hypothetical: let’s say a student thirty years later—in the class of 2066—wanted to know what student life was like three decades ago. We hope foremost, that the *Scroll* still exists, but also that the student would turn to our publication as a written record of days at Deerfield. If we’re fortunate enough, that student could pick up this month’s edition of the *Scroll*, and use it as a gateway back in time to our era.

As a board and as a community, we write for the *Scroll* as a way to be worthy of our heritage, not for ourselves, but for the future Deerfield community to come.

Opinion: We're not Upholding the Deerfield Pledge

ALICE CHEN
Associate Editor

“I will act with respect, integrity, and care for others, and I will seek to inspire the same values in our community and beyond.” That’s the community pledge that we’ve all heard. It’s plastered on our classroom walls, posted on bulletin boards across dorms, and the Student Life Office’s emphasis on it is tangible across campus. The Deerfield community does many things that embody this mission: we hold doors for the people walking behind us, say “hello” to those we encounter on the way to class, and embody a sense of unity that permeates throughout bleacher stands, pep rallies, and agachi chants. However, below the surface, the student body does not embody this mission so well.

At the first all school meeting every year, the sixteen peer counselors stand on the Large Auditorium stage and each share one of their vulnerabilities with the entire school in hopes of making someone in the audience feel less alone in their struggles. As he shared with the Deerfield community in his Convocation Address, I agree with

Mr. John Leistler that this is a “brave thing.” Yet apparently, significant portions of the student body don’t agree with this assessment. While those peer counselors were onstage, I heard giggling coming from various parts of the sophomore section. While I hoped this experience was exclusive to the sophomore section, I quickly found that this was not the case. Through conversation with many friends and classmates, it became apparent that this case of “the giggles” permeated through every portion of the student body.

During the 2023 Deerfield Forum, Yale University professor Akhil Reed Amar spoke about constitutional law and recommended that Deerfield students read his book, *The Words That Made Us*. Instead of listening respectfully, the student body loudly burst into laughter. On September 24, 2025, Harvard professor Dr. Allison Wood Brooks gave a talk on the behavioral science of conversation. Throughout her presentation, she needed to repeatedly quiet the student body before continuing. As these examples show, the student body often violates the community pledge and the values it stands for. Yet despite their emphasis on respect, the SLO

and faculty body in general rarely respond to these infractions.

Before moving on, it’s important to recognize the difference between explicit and implicit violations of the pledge. Violations are explicit when the SLO can quantify the physical or monetary damage inflicted by the infraction. They’re implicit when they can’t—such as when unidentifiable individuals act disrespectfully during school meetings. In my observation, the SLO in particular has responded quite directly to explicit breaches of the community values.

Last year’s April Fools pranks serve as a primary example. The SLO provided no formal response to a group of freshman girls printing out hundreds of pictures of a fellow male classmate and hanging them around Johnson, or a group of sophomore boys deconstructing furniture in LM. It was only when people’s computers malfunctioned, or an international student couldn’t return home for break, that the SLO intervened with a formal response through early curfew or mandatory cleanups.

I believe the main reason the SLO intervened in these cases was not only because it violated com-

munity values, but resulted in clear, monetary damages.

Instead of their current response, I believe SLO needs to find a middle-ground between formally responding to both explicit and implicit infractions of the community pledge. Instead of universal mandatory cleanups or early curfews, which sparked discontent amongst students and fomented, what I believe to be, a culture of distrust between the student body and the SLO, faculty and members of the SLO should push students to reflect on how much they can personally live up to the pledge. This isn’t to say that the SLO can go completely hands off. When a significant portion of the student body acts in a manner that directly contradicts the values of the pledge in a rude and unacceptable way, the SLO and individual faculty—including Dr. Austin—should provide a formal reminder or response to the student body, rather than responding with silence.

I believe that every member of the Deerfield community agrees, at least in principle, with the values staked in the student pledge. However, the student body requires reminders for when they stray too far

from it. These reminders shouldn’t be just limited to the general “remember to be kind” presentations that the SLO periodically gives during school meetings. Instead, they need to be intentional and direct, pointing out precisely which parts of student behavior were unacceptable. Then, the SLO and faculty should give students space and freedom to grow.

I believe that the SLO’s lack of formal response to implicit infractions of the community pledge shows that they don’t actually prioritize the pledge in practice. When the majority of the student body is aware of widespread violation of Deerfield community values and sees the SLO displaying no opposition to it, I believe it propagates the idea that unacceptable behavior is okay.

Currently, I believe the SLO is not holding up its community values enough. It doesn’t do enough to ingrain them into the Deerfield community, and it does nothing when they are violated. To claim they stand for the values in the community pledge, the SLO must take a more proactive role in addressing community action.

Reconsidering Study Hall: Underclassmen Need Flexibility

ISABEL SANDS
Staff Writer

At Deerfield, underclassmen can't follow the age-old rule that advises people to separate their place of work and rest. I attribute this unfortunate reality to the dorm study hall which all underclassmen are required to attend.

My dorm room is usually last on the list of places I choose to spend my time outside of class, particularly study time. Deerfield's campus is a greater view to enjoy than the four walls of my dorm room. My desk's green plastic chair pales in comparison to the picturesque scenes from the patio chairs on the lawn. Deerfield's library offers access to a breadth of knowledge incomparable to that of my dorm room. I have found that Deerfield's campus is a great place to focus and do work.

The last hours of the day are an exception to productive work: study hall. For underclassmen, it takes place in dorm rooms from 7:45pm to 9:45pm.

Study hall disallows the opportunities of failure and overcoming challenges because everyone is forced to work under the scrutinizing watch of teachers. Structure that is not offered by choice but force-fed to underclassmen does not help me learn to manage my time efficiently.

It is no secret that Deerfield asks its students to exceed many expectations: social, athletic, academic, and many more. The common theme at Deerfield is that students are capable of success. In order to expand our abilities, we require time management skills, dedication, and mental fortitudes. I believe that study hall acts as a hindrance to the development of all of

these healthy study habits. The two hours I spend in my dorm room are not unproductive, but they don't make me practice my ability to decide my own study habits. I believe that study hall is a handicap for underclassmen developing independence as we adapt to Deerfield's rigorous academic environment.

I believe that challenges are what inspire growth. Removing the challenge of managing time delays the process by which we learn to work productively despite the distractions around us. What is universal in this process, however, is failure.

Failure begins in the first years of our lives. We fall for the first time, landing flat on our faces, and learn we must extend our arms. The next time we fall, we land on our hands. The pain of the fall prevents us from making the same mistake twice. Having a choice of where and how to undertake study hall gives students the choice of how to spend their time, which is crucial to the maturation of independence. This choice includes the freedom to fail with limited consequences, the chance to collaborate with peers, and the opportunity to adapt to the patterns of upperclassmen life before the stakes become too high.

I also believe that a mandatory study hall is unproductive since we have to work in the space which we rest in. There is much scientific research that backs this concern. Each moment, an astounding amount of stimuli is being perceived by our brains. Some are more useful (like what's on my French test tomorrow) and some are less so (like how I should make my bed). Yet all of this information is not simply stored into our long-term memory.

The Cognitive Load Theory, proposed by John Sweller at the

University of New South Wales, suggests that working memory has a limited capacity. In order for learning to be efficient, intrinsic load must be optimized while extraneous load is reduced. Intrinsic load is the active effort of working on the learning task, and extrinsic load is the distractions perceived. During study hall, I experience an intense extraneous cognitive load that is generated by the distractions from being in my room. I am not only thinking of my work, but whether my laundry has finished, when I will fold it, and if I should eat some of the snacks I have in my drawer.

When outside, distractions of scenery and the environment are tools, rather than hindrances, for rigorous study sessions. The library is an even more tranquil resource, in which all outside distractions can be brought to a minimum. Extraneous load, conjured up by our wandering minds, can be minimized.

The rigidity of the dorm study hall is not conducive to the development and synthesis of ideas. I believe that the freedom during study hall for underclassmen could easily be expanded to give everyone more room to practice their time management skills and less distractions from work. So why don't we let underclassmen have the choice of where and how their study hall takes place? I think that it will do us a whole lot more benefit than harm.

Not Just Freshmen: All New Students Need Care

ANTHONY ORTEGA
Staff Writer

Every fall, Deerfield welcomes hundreds of new sophomores, juniors, and seniors/post-graduate students aside from just freshmen. However, these new students, me included, are likely to face loneliness, anxiety, and a lack of support. I believe that the SLO's role, in this case, is to bring support and care to the students and help them embrace a Deerfield life embodying our community pledge, "I will act with respect, integrity, and care for others." I have found trouble adapting to Deerfield this fall.

I expected integrating to be challenging but possible and eventual. I felt awkward when I saw a bunch of friends swarming about campus that I couldn't say I've had so far at Deerfield. I've gotten a few opportunities to make friends like the new junior panel and various orientations, but it's never enough to form deep connections. I had thought to myself in the first couple of days: "Why am I here?" This seems to be a common sentiment amongst the new students. Being a new student in Deerfield's overwhelming culture that stresses excellence is hard; for me, being a new junior is full of confusion. I began classes, and the academic and athletic pressure started to accumulate, leaving me no time to socialize. After some weeks, I still felt alone. Anxiety that I'll never belong to Deerfield and an unhealthy amount of focus on academics and athletics become too much sometimes. There's no simple solution, but I think the SLO is meant to be there to help.

I could have gone about never saying anything, and no one would have ever noticed. I think the ad-

visor role that the SLO attempts to curate doesn't work as well as expected. For example, if you don't feel comfortable with your advisor, there's practically no support. But I think that Deerfield is supposed to help students navigate these challenges. In my experience, I often had to find other ways of supporting myself than the ways the school offers. I feel that a lot of the new juniors I connected with would agree.

I believe the problem is not that the SLO doesn't know how to help new students to integrate into the Deerfield community. It seems to me that adapting to Deerfield as a freshman is so much easier than adapting to Deerfield as a new student of any other grade. Freshmen gets their village, a trip to Camp Greylock, and four years to form their own communities. The SLO should emulate these activities when helping other new students to bond and fit in.

I hope these instances where new students feel ignored are merely out of a misunderstanding of the dynamics of integrating into a new environment. I simply wish for the SLO to be more intentional with their purpose of providing a true Deerfield experience that applies to everyone, not just the new freshmen class. I believe there should be more attention devoted to the struggles of students entering Deerfield after 9th grade. Actions like checking in with new students, making sure advisors are supporting them, and curating more opportunities where new students can connect with the whole class are some suggestions.

A Case Against Grade Curving

HEIDI LIANG
Staff Writer

At Deerfield Academy, the phrase "the test will be curved" spreads through the halls like a quiet sigh of relief. It means that even if the exam felt impossibly hard, a few missed points might not matter after all. To many students, curving a test may seem like an act of generosity. If the class average was low, everyone benefits from a boost, and the pressure of a poor score is somewhat softened. The practice of curving grades may look fair, yet when we examine closely, it disguises what fairness truly means. Fairness, in education, should mean that every student is evaluated by the same transparent standards and has a clear chance to succeed based on effort and understanding. When curving enters the picture, however, that definition starts to blur. What feels like kindness at the moment carries long term costs for students and teachers alike. Curving distorts the meaning of fairness, weakens the quality of assessment, and replaces self reflection.

The most immediate problem with curving is that it distorts the accuracy of feedback. Students at the top and bottom both lose clarity. At Deerfield, curves simply raise everyone's grades by varying amounts. While this may seem equitable, it erases the distinctions that honest feedback depends on. When everyone's score is lifted, the difference

between excellence and adequate begins to blur. A "good grade" stops feeling earned, it becomes a collective comfort for a group of students rather than an individual achievement. Without the tension of honest results, students lose not only clarity about their performance, but also the motivation to learn and strive for better.

Curving also masks weaknesses in teaching and assessment. When an exam proves unexpectedly difficult or misaligned, a curve becomes a convenient fix. But this band-aid solution conceals the deeper problem; students are being evaluated unfairly. Instead of rethinking the exam design, clarifying expectations, or adjusting the teaching approach, teachers can rely on a curve to smooth over flaws. In doing so, students lose the chance to engage with well-constructed, meaningful assessments that accurately reflect their understanding. Education deserves clear expectations and fair assessments, not some sort of temporary fix.

Defenders of curving may argue that it cushions students against unfair assessments, and occasionally, that defense holds. A curved test offers some temporary relief without addressing the actual issue of whether the exam measured what it was intended to measure. True fairness isn't achieved from numerical manipulation; it comes from transparency and communication. Teachers could revise ambiguous

questions, award partial credit where confusion was justified, or invite reflection and revision. Such methods preserve integrity because they actually address the cause rather than the consequence of unfair difficulty.

This issue extends beyond the Deerfield classroom. Many Deerfield courses are designed to prepare students for AP exams, which themselves are graded on a national "curve," where a raw score near 70% can earn a top score of 5. This external system trains both students and teachers to normalize the curve, accepting it as part of their academic journey. In that sense, curving inside the classroom may be less a reflection of a single teacher and more a symptom of a broader educational structure built on norm referenced evaluation.

But perhaps the clearest way to see the psychological cost of curving is through the mindset it encourages. After a difficult exam, many students cling to a single hope, a possibility of a curve. The curve becomes some sort of a safety net, a whispered promise saying that their mistakes won't matter. It also feels comforting, while allowing for avoidance. Instead of reviewing errors, instead of seeking help or changing study habits, the student hopes passively for leniency rather than improvement. In this moment, the curve shifts responsibility away from the learner and onto chance, training students to

depend on generosity rather than growth.

When we start wishing for a curve instead of striving to do better, we give up on our own learning. This inner reliance is what makes curving so dangerous. Over time, it conditions students to equate progress with luck, not effort. The thought process becomes, "I do not need to master this now, for the curve will save me," breeding a kind of resignation and a sense of complacency. While not every student adopts this mindset, the system as a whole encourages passivity; students who are trapped in this mindset are robbed of the satisfaction

that comes from real improvement and mastery of the material.

In the end, curving may appear generous, but in the long term, it reshapes education into a system offering comfort over clarity, making it a disservice to students. A fair test should reveal what a student knows, not conceal what they do not. If schools truly wish to support growth, they should cultivate transparency, design thoughtful assessments, and engage in open dialogue about difficulty. If we truly value fairness, we must define it not as equal results, but as the equal opportunity to see the truth and improve upon our current.



The Meadow: Eric Aho’s Landscapes in the Von Auersperg Gallery

AARON HAN
Associate Editor

Continued from Front

The interplay between the real and abstract also resonated with viewers. “I remember looking at the paintings and thinking they were a collection of free brushstrokes and abstract portrayals,” said Jonathan Xu ’28. “But when I looked closer, there were these realistic and delicate details of the flowers and leaves. I felt like I was inspired by the many layers of complexity in his work, and I think I might be trying to explore this balance in my own art.”

Aho added that the Deerfield area was a fitting place to showcase his series of work. “Long before my son attended Deerfield, I spent time in that valley painting. 20 years ago, I painted the onion fields just down below, and at various turns in the river.” He then reflected on the openness of the area, noting how “the campus is broad, beautifully lit, and exposed in a way.” He added, “Considering the richness of the intellectual activity and the creativity that happens at Deerfield, I thought the meadow—the broadness of that open space—would make perfect sense to my audience.”

Aho also mentioned his hope to capture an element of Deerfield that is often overlooked by students: “The area along the riv-

er is where fireflies occur during the summer, sadly, when all the students are gone. They last about a month, maybe six weeks, so the Deerfield students miss them. So I thought, in my paintings, to bring that magical experience of the fireflies to the community.”

The artworks were left open to viewers to freely form their own interpretations and meanings. “Fundamentally, one of the first things that a painting does is it places us somewhere, and you come to stand before something and place yourself in front of another place,” he explained. “The other thing the painter does is they give you enough information to have an experience you’ve never experienced before. I’m not in the room, but I’m there connecting with you to say, ‘Here’s how I saw this, how do you see it?’”

As a word of advice for young artists, Aho emphasized the importance of observation. “Look closely at the world around you—slow down, pay attention, and try to draw it or paint it,” he said. “And when you draw it or paint it, also realize that we don’t know what we’re doing. I’ve been painting for almost forty years, and I don’t know what I’m doing. That’s okay. Embrace the curiosity and ask yourself, ‘What is that out there?’ and then you have an experience that is truly, truly, your own.”

A Dive into the All Female A Capella Group: the Rhapso-Ds

ZARA ALI & STELLA HU
Associate Editor & Staff Writer

The Rhapso-Ds, Deerfield Academy’s Soprano and Alto a cappella group, have finished auditions and are now preparing for their upcoming Fall Koch Friday Concert performance. Every year, many singers across the student body audition for Rhapso-Ds, but that comes with a complex cutting process.

Co-leader of Rhapso-Ds Clementine Beanland ’26 explained the difficulties of the audition process, and how her and co-leader Ilsa Borgen ’26 combated these challenges. “If you are a Soprano, and you don’t sing a Soprano song, it is hard to know if you are going to hold your weight as a Soprano,” she said. In these cases, the leaders would give the singer a callback, to “get more of a feel for their voice,” Beanland continued.

In the audition process, Beanland and Borgen looked for those who could fill the positions as Altos and Sopranos. Beanland emphasized how important commitment is to being a part of Rhapso-Ds: “We had so many girls audition, and it came down to who would be able to put in full-time. If you are not going to pull your weight, there are other people that will.”

Returning members of Rhapso-Ds are still required to audition. Nevertheless, Beanland men-

tioned that prior experience in the group guarantees a spot: “If you’ve been in Rhapso-Ds for three years, you deserve to be in the group,” she said. Bealand explained that returning members have demonstrated commitment to Rhapso-Ds over the years and have put in a lot of effort to remain in the group.

During rehearsals after every Tuesday and Thursday night, members work to perfect their harmonies. Each rehearsal starts with a vocal warmup and then singers are broken off into groups so everyone can practice their piece in sections. After reviewing their individual parts, they come back together to rehearse in unison. When listening back to their singing, the singers “work on their blend and do finishing touches,” Beanland said.

Beanland also commented on the environment she hopes to cultivate within the Rhapso-Ds. As a leader, Beanland stressed the importance of fostering an authentic and loving bond within the group. She mentioned that “in past years, there has been, sort of like, a toxic environment within the Rhapso-Ds,” adding that she feels like “not everyone has come to the table and been willing to come throughout the season ready to learn and sing.”

However, Beanland and Borgen both emphasized the importance of being your authentic self

while always having fun. This year’s environment and dynamic, specifically, has changed for the better. “I think this year, especially, people are really excited... [It feels] less like me being your leader and more like your peers that are here to help,” she said.

This positive environment within the group has helped combat the negativity of competitiveness. The inclusive nature of the group allows the members to truly bond with each other and influence their performances. “We really do try to make Rhapso-Ds a democracy,” Beanland explained.

Beanland and the members have many goals for the future of the Rhapso-Ds and future performances. One important one, Beanland said, is “trying to get a lot of songs done this year and really put in the work and effort.”

As the Rhapso-Ds is a small sized group, singing and learning new songs as an a cappella presents challenges. Each singer must understand their part clearly to allow efficient rehearsals. One of the main focuses is to “learn how to transition from one song to another,” Beanland said. “When you start bare and start new, it is challenging to see if you have a really hard song.” Looking to the year ahead, Rhapso-Ds will be performing their songs during All School Meetings, a capella fest, and school events.

Artist of the Issue: Kwasi Oteng Adu-Gyamfi

TESS HO & IVAN ABREU
Associate Editor & Staff Writer

Beginning his musical journey at the age of two on the piano, Kwasi Oteng Adu-Gyamfi ’26 showcases versatility in his artistic abilities through playing multiple instruments, adapting to various dance styles, and engaging in music composition.

When Adu-Gyamfi first started playing the piano, he believed it “got [his] ear trained at a young age” in order to adjust to learning other instruments, such as the guitar and saxophone. In middle school, Adu-Gyamfi also played the viola, and when he picked it up again during orchestra practice, Adu-Gyamfi described the process as “a matter of muscle memory, and [having] to remember how to hold the bow and where [his] fingers were placed on each string.”

Adu-Gyamfi’s musical range spans from woodwind to brass instruments, such as the clarinet and saxophone, to the strings family, which includes the viola, bass guitar, and ukulele. He is particularly passionate about jazz piano and saxophone, with his saxophone teacher, Bruce Krasin, comparing his “warm tenor sound to jazz performers like Coltrane and Sonny Stitt.”

Currently, Adu-Gyamfi is actively involved in multiple musical ensembles at Deerfield, including Concert band, Jazz band, Orchestra, and two a cappella groups

(Reme-Ds and Mellow-Ds). Director of Deerfield’s Music program Tom Bergeron states that Adu-Gyamfi is “a daily motivation that is driven by curiosity to harness music’s transformative power, and never driven by his own ego or the pursuit of recognition.”

As one of the three leaders in CoDA, Deerfield’s student-led pop jazz and rock band, Adu-Gyamfi serves as the group organizer, writing full scores and separating them into their individual parts for students to learn. As for now, Adu-Gyamfi is working on the arrangements from La La Land, which he hopes to be performed during the fall term Koch Friday Concert.

Adu-Gyamfi’s talent and musical capabilities have also been recognized by his peers. Associate Editor of *Deerfield Scroll* and one of CoDA’s leaders Tim Wang ’27 described his experience working with him: “I started working with [Adu-Gyamfi] in my freshman year in band class and was impressed by his improvisation skills on the sax.” He added that Adu-Gyamfi is “an extremely talented musician, composing great arrangements and playing every instrument you can imagine.”

Aside from composing different parts for CoDA, Adu-Gyamfi plans to compose a piece for the Jazz band in the spring as part of his Honors Jazz project.

In addition to music, Adu-Gyamfi is a part of Deerfield’s dance program. He began

dancing at the age of eight and claims “to never feel nervous before performing on stage.” Adu-Gyamfi has choreographed pieces, including a trio with Yewon Kim ’28 and Features Page Editor for the *Scroll* Lucia Kinder ’28 last spring, and is currently co-choreographing a hip-hop piece, set to the song “Taste” by Tyga, for the fall dance showcase with Joshua-Michael Graham ’26. Adu-Gyamfi believes what sets him apart from other performers is his own approach to dance performances: “I just work my way through it,” reflecting an improvi-

sational style that also mirrors his musical style on the saxophone.

Hip-hop is a dance genre Adu-Gyamfi has a special passion for, drawing inspiration from dance crews and groups. “Jabberwocky’s iconic looks with the white masks and bucket hats,” he explained, sparked his interest in breakdancing.

During a Center for Service and Global Citizenship trip to Tanzania, Adu-Gyamfi performed in an impromptu dance competition in front of 600 people. History and Social Science Teacher Conrad Pitcher described a mem-

orable highlight: “Kwasi played to the cheers and laughs of the crowd, riffing off the movements of his foe/partner. He and this student he had just met moments ago put on a show that looked like it had been choreographed for months. The whole school was abuzz with excitement.”

Whether he is perfecting the drum parts on the wide variety of songs and styles for School Meetings or showcasing his dance moves on stage, Adu-Gyamfi exhibits his musicianship and diversification through various interests.



ALBERT YUK/DEERFIELD SCROLL

New Varsity Field Hockey Coach: Ms. Goodrick-Armstrong

CECE SALYER & SOFIA GOVI
Staff Writers

Deerfield Varsity Field Hockey (DAVFH) joins their new head Coach Hannah Goodrick-Armstrong this year. Coming from the Loomis Chaffee School as a coach for Varsity Water Polo and Varsity Field Hockey, Coach Goodrick-Armstrong brings over a decade of coaching experience across a variety of levels and sports to Deerfield. She played field hockey for Williams College, coached field hockey at Loomis Chaffe, and served as a head coach for both youth and collegiate club water polo.

Coach Goodrick-Armstrong’s excitement for coaching at Deerfield is rooted not only in her own passion for field hockey, but also in the strength and dedication of a team filled with talented and hardworking players: individuals who push each other both on and off the field. “I absolutely love it. It has been an incredible beginning to the year and the fall season ... I feel really lucky to be a part of [the team], and it all stems from the players that are on the team,” she explained.

Although Coach Go-

odrick-Armstrong has been part of various sports in her coaching history, field hockey has always been special to her. Her desire to lead a program herself stemmed from how much the sport added to her life, inspiring her to give back to young women through the sport.

Due to the similar size and nature of the student bodies at both schools, the transition from Loomis to Deerfield has been smooth for Goodrick-Armstrong. “It[Loomis] is a place like Deerfield,” she said, “[Deerfield] has such school spirit, so much support for these programs, and just really incredible student-athletes. It seemed like a great fit.”

The support of the team extends beyond just the players; it includes the help from the assistant coaches Ellie Bicknell and Muffie Masambani ’20. Coach Goodrick-Armstrong mentioned that they both have been a vital part of the team’s success this season, saying, “Coach Bicknell has been with the program for many years and has really just taught me so much about where the program has been and where we’re hoping to bring the program.” Coach Masambani, a Deerfield alum and former member of Varsity Field Hockey, went on to play

at Amherst College and helped Coach Goodrick-Armstrong understand the program’s culture.

Players have also noticed the growing relationships Coach Goodrick-Armstrong has built with her assistant coaches. “I’ve definitely seen her relationships with Coach Masambani and Coach Bicknell grow so much, and she has been building trust with us the same way she builds trust with them, and it’s really cool to see them get so close and work off of each other really well,” said lead captain Peyton Wierl ’26, and a four-year member of Varsity Field Hockey.

Coach Goodrick-Armstrong also mentions that it is not just the coaches that lead the team, the captains are a foundation for this year’s success as well. She said the 2025-2026 captains, Peyton Wierl, Ilsa Borgen ’26, Chloe Cleaves ’26, and Lilly Oliver ’26, “work together seamlessly.” “They each fill slightly different roles, their leadership styles are slightly different, they connect really well with the other players on the team, and I think a lot of our early-season success contributed to their leadership,” Coach Goodrick-Armstrong added.

The captains have been an essential part of helping the team

stay focused and build the team’s bond. Together, they have set goals for the season: to make the New England Preparatory School Athletic Council tournament and contend for the championship.

Beyond tactics and technique, Coach Goodrick-Armstrong emphasizes a positive team culture rooted in gratitude, reflection, and collaboration. One of the most unique traditions she introduced is the use of green notebooks labeled “DAVFH.” These serve as journals where players are encouraged to reflect, set goals, and express gratitude daily. Inspired by a college coach who once told her to “take the time to be grateful for what you have each day.”

Coach Goodrick-Armstrong uses these notebooks as a way to help athletes stay grounded and present. Before every practice, players are given time to journal quietly, a brief pause in the day that helps them reset and mentally prepare. Wierl also noted that the notebooks have improved the team culture and positivity. “I love that, I think it’s a great idea!” she said.

Complementing this routine is the “quote of the day” tradition she brought to Deerfield. At the start of the season, Coach Goodrick-Armstrong selects daily

quotes, prints them out on sticky notes, and places them inside the players’ notebooks. As the season has continued, she has passed on this responsibility to assistant coaches and players, allowing the team to have more flexibility and take ownership. The addition of the quotes were in hopes of encouraging both motivation and reflection, helping the players develop the mindset they need to succeed, not just in games but throughout their time at Deerfield.

Coach Goodrick-Armstrong frequently expresses her gratitude for every player on the team, emphasizing that it’s not just a group of individuals, but a united program with purpose and cohesion at every practice. “I’m grateful that we have 46 players in the program and all 46 are quite bought in, which is incredible,” she said. For her, this level of commitment across both the Varsity and Junior Varsity team is a reflection of the culture the players have built, one of mutual respect, goals, and love for the game. Each athlete plays a role in shaping the team’s identity, showing up every day ready to support one another. Coach Goodrick-Armstrong believes this is what turns a good team into a great one.

Boys’ and Girls’ Soccer Travel to Spain for Preseason Trip

LAUREN GALLI
Staff Writer

This summer, before the school year started, Deerfield Academy’s Varsity Boys and Girls soccer teams went on a 10-day preseason trip between August 9 to 19 to Valladolid, Spain. Accompanying them were Head Coach and Sports Information Director Carly Barbato and Assistant Coach Jeanette Boudway for the Girls’ team and Head Coach and Dean of Spiritual and Ethical life Jan Flaska and Assistant Boys’ Varsity Lacrosse Coach and John Taylor for the Boys’ team.

In total, twenty-five boys attended the trip led by captains Cooper Johnson ’26, Alex Salvo ’26, Jadin Smith ’26 and Owen

Tymchuk ’26. Salvo found the trip beneficial, saying, “The preseason just helped us as a team in general, with chemistry, bonding, and all that.” Furthermore, he believed that in addition to letting the team prepare and improve their soccer skills, the trip also allowed the team to meet the new players for the upcoming season.

Tymchuk has played on the Varsity soccer team since his sophomore year when he first arrived at Deerfield, and has participated in every preseason trip. He described the multifaceted nature of the trips, saying, “We [pace] ourselves well, never having more than one practice or game in a day, and I think that left a lot of time for cultural experience which was a big part of the trip.”

The dynamic of this year’s trip has improved from previous years. “This trip felt less soccer-based than years prior and more evenly balanced, it almost felt like a CSGC [Center for Service and Global Citizenship] trip in some sense,” Tymchuck said.

Johnson, who is returning from an injury this season, found the trip eye-opening and constructive. “It was beneficial because we got to work with the Spanish coaches and they knew a lot of stuff we had never been taught before, and they had a different outlook on how to play. We carried their systems over into our games at Deerfield and how we are still playing now,” he said.

The Girls’ Varsity Soccer Team also had similar feedback

on the trip, finding it enjoyable. “I thought the Spain trip was super fun! After some of our games we would eat with some of the other teams. It helped to learn more fluent Spanish,” said Captain Keira Austen ’26. Austen has taken Spanish throughout her time at Deerfield, but found opportunities to expand her understanding of the language while spending some time in Valladolid.

Other than daily practices, the two teams have engaged in other team bonding activities. “We toured around a bunch of arenas which was a really cool experience, and one [of] the best things was just playing charades with the team on long bus rides back,” said Austen.

The same sentiment is expressed by other players on the

team, who appreciated the experience during the trip. Post Graduate Cole Barrett ’26 said, “It was a wonderful experience, [and] I would do it again in a heartbeat. Coming in as a new person, I didn’t know a lot of people on the team, and it gave me a chance before school started to meet a lot of people.”

During the preseason trip, both teams engaged in building connections, enhancing their soccer skills, and expressing appreciation for one another. The teams also aimed to gain an understanding of one another and their team dynamics. Looking ahead, both teams hope the positive experiences gained over these trips can be transformed into success on the field for both programs and during Choate Week.



CURTESY OF MRS. SERPONE

Friday Theme Days Build Athletic Culture

CELINE CHANG
Associate Editor

Continued from Front

Sports Page Editor of the *Scroll* Evelyn Kunde '26, captain of Girls' Varsity Volleyball, explained the positive influence of Friday themes. She expressed that "...Friday themes are not only a good way to end the week on a strong note, but they are also a form of expression where you get to learn a little bit about your teammates each week with every theme." She stated wearing green and white before Choate day as her favorite Friday theme, though she also enjoyed the recurring themes of beach day, neon, and white lies. Additionally, Julia Yates '26, Girls Junior Varsity Soccer captain, described that Friday games further define her team's identity, distinguishing her team from others on campus. "I think it's what makes us the most fun team on campus this Fall," she expressed.

"Other teams have theme days, but I feel like no team goes all out like ours. It really brings us together and gives us positive vibes before the weekend games." Yates listed some of the most common themes the Girls' Junior Varsity Soccer team has done in the past: "Rhyme without reason, blackout, neon day, beach, color wars, and team olympics day." Among her favorites were rhyme without reason and color wars, which she said have almost become annual traditions. For many athletes, Friday theme days bring a sense of belonging into the team, and create long-lasting memories that are remembered even after the season. Kunde and Yates expressed how certain themes are repeated each year and how teams look forward to planning new ideas. "It's a chance to be creative and have fun, showing our team personality before focusing on the game," Yates said. For Dupont, she remembered when her team dressed for emo day,

with players fully committing to the dark eyeliner and heavy accessories.. "It was really funny, everyone went all out," she said. When asked about future possibilities, she suggested a "Freaky Friday" theme, inspired by Cross Country. Beyond team culture, players mention that Friday theme days offer an opportunity for teams to show unity to the rest of the school. According to Dupont, the dress-up days signal the team's excitement and cohesion to other students and faculty. "It lets everybody know that we're a united team about to play a game," she said. So, if you're ever walking to practice on a Friday and spot a volleyball player sneaking around in full spy gear, a soccer captain in a Kris Jenner wig, or even someone dressed up as an ugly boar, you're probably witnessing Friday theme day. Dressing up has turned into a tradition that pulls everyone in, makes new players feel part of the team, and brings an extra spark heading into the weekend games.



CURTESY OF DEERFIELD VARSITY FIELD HOCKEY

Athlete of the Issue: Will Machnik

SOPHIE KAMIL
Associate Editor

Playing both sports since he was a child, Will Machnik '26 is a four-year starter and senior captain of Deerfield's Boys Varsity Football Team. On top of this achievement, Machnik currently enters his second year of captainship on the Academy's Boys Varsity Baseball Team, for which he also is been a four-year starter. During his time at Deerfield, Machnik emphasized that through traditions such as 'Milk and Cookies' and everyday team activities like team dinner, football facilitates the formation of incredibly close bonds between teammates and coaches. He mentioned that one of his goals as a captain is to continue fostering this team culture. In order to do such, Machnik noted that "everyone has a big role on the team... the kind of leader I try to be on the team is one that makes sure everyone

is held accountable and stepping up where they should be." When further asked about his leadership style, Machnik described his tendency to "encourage players to do the right thing and help them better themselves along the way." He described this trait as one of his strengths as a captain. Varsity Football Co-Captain Barret Adams '27 described Machnik's leadership as "reliable," noting that "he always makes sure everyone is included on and off the field." Adams, playing both baseball and football with Machnik, further added that he has cultivated team culture by developing meaningful connections with all his teammates. Additionally, Adams believes that Machnik's proctorship in the sophomore dorm Scaife "adds to the team bonding" and helps him build purposeful relationships with the underclassmen on the team. Boys Varsity Baseball Head Coach and College Advisor Pat-

rick Moriarty described Machnik as a student who "leads by example on and off the field." Moriarty further added that Machnik possesses a "strong moral compass," which contributes to his stability as a leader. Moriarty noted that Machnik "buys into the program's philosophies and principles," which has allowed him to "perform his best in big games." Continuing on the topic of the baseball team's philosophy, Moriarty said that throughout his time on the team, Machnik's leadership set an example for his peers; through his actions, Machnik encouraged his teammates to engage in the team's culture and practice good sportsmanship. Regarding Machnik's leadership on the football team, post-graduate student Michael McColgan '26, the starting quarterback for the 2025-26 Boys Varsity Football Team, commended Machnik for being someone who is "very caring for the team and al-

ways supporting everyone, whether he is on the field or off the field." On top of Machnik being described as making an effort to form meaningful relationships with his teammates and coaches, he also leads both teams through his performance and role on the field. During the football season, Machnik plays both corner and running back, which McColgan described as especially commendable. Moreover, McColgan attributes Machnik's leadership on the field to his ability to "play both sides of the ball without complaint." The role Machnik plays on the football field is distinctly different from that which he plays during baseball season. In the spring, Machnik acts as the Boys Varsity Baseball starting catcher. On the baseball field, Machnik is responsible for keeping the ball in play and working to prevent steals on the field. On top of scoring in recent football games and the Academy's

win against the Loomis Chaffee School's Varsity Football Team, one of Machnik's most recent athletic achievements includes his dual-sport commitment to Williams College. When asked about his recruitment process, Machnik stated, "I just took football and baseball as far as I could and was open to being recruited for both of them." He recalled, "Football was my top priority and that's what got me into Williams originally, and then baseball followed soon after that." While Machnik anticipates a strong future at Williams, he also expressed continued excitement and hope about the rest of the football season. He further noted that he looks forward to the predicted success during the baseball season.



CURTESY OF DEERFIELD COMMUNICATIONS

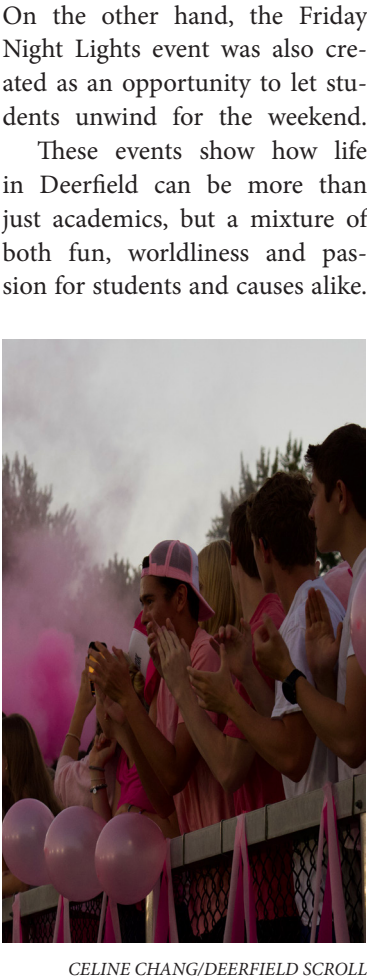
Pink Out for Breast Cancer Awareness

AARON KOO
Staff Writer

On September 26, Deerfield hosted a “Pink Out” themed Friday Night Lights football game where the Boys’ Varsity Football Team played against Cheshire Academy. The event was in collaboration with Deerfield’s Cancer Connection Club to raise awareness for Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Prior to the game, the club notified both students and faculty members to show up in pink colored clothing. Football players stuck pink Deerfield door stickers, provided by the Cancer Connection Club, onto their helmets. Club members lined the railings with pink balloons and adorned the spectator stand with pink ribbons. On top of this, they also distributed pink powder packs throughout the bleachers, which were thrown in handfuls across the stands during celebratory moments in the game. Members of the Cancer Connection Club began planning the

event three weeks prior to the football game. Associate Editor of the *Scroll* and Cancer Connection Club Co-Chair Tess Ho ’27 said, “I’m so glad we were able to organize this Pink Out event. I believe it’s important that students acknowledge wearing pink isn’t just for the spirit, but it’s our way of showing that we are here to support those fighting for breast cancer and to honor those we’ve lost.” Another Cancer Connection board member, Danny Weller ’27, added, “It was amazing to see the student body come together for such a great cause.” Like all weekend activities, a group of students and faculty coordinators organized the event, including Student Activities Coordinator Connor Merrill, who organizes campus events and weekend activities. Cancer Connection Club board member Anne Kelly ’27 further noted that, “the game was important in showcasing how cancer touches everyone. Uniting everyone against

this disease can make hard times so much easier. No one is alone and this game showcased this.” When asked about what the participation of students meant to her, Co-Chair of the Cancer Awareness Club Riley Farmer ’26 stated, “It meant so much to see the community rally against something that hits so close to home. It was amazing to see how much people bought into the theme and the message, and I am just so excited to see what else we can plan to bring awareness to our community.” The support exuded during the Friday Night Lights and Pink Out event stems from student’s demonstrated support for their peers, Deerfield tradition, and giving back to the greater community. Furthermore, the event gained further appeal and attention due to its unique time frame on a Friday night. Pink Out, through school spirit and passion for athletics, attempted to spread awareness about prevalent topics such as cancer.



CELINE CHANG/DEERFIELD SCROLL

Deerfield Football Tradition: Milk and Cookies

TONY CHEN
Staff Writer

“Milk and Cookies,” a Deerfield Boys Varsity Football Team tradition, is a pre-game meeting and preparation that takes place the evening before each game day. This tradition exists exclusively among the football players and, according to many players, is one of the most cherished experiences among the team. It has defined and continues to define the brotherhood of the football program. Head Football Coach and Eleventh Grade Class Dean Brian Barbato emphasized that unique bonds form through football and the rituals which surround it. “Football is a special game, and what we do to prepare is unique,” he said. “Some of my fondest football memories are hitting a gap to protect my buddies, celebrating after a win or a sack—there’s no feeling like it in sports, even close.” Coach Barbato further believes

that this sense of connection and brotherhood is reflected in the team’s “Milk and Cookies” tradition. The process begins with a speech from Mr. Barbato, followed by the sharing of milk and cookies among the team. Once everyone is seated again, the team enjoys a round of speeches from underclassmen and upperclassmen alike. These speeches serve as opportunities for players to build team atmosphere and strengthen bonds. Captain Will Machnik ’26 described the tradition as “something very important for the football team,” adding that “it builds a good community within the guys, and it’s a chance for them to either get the team pumped up or share something that’s personal to them and brings the team together.” Players also reflect on the uniqueness of the experience. “It’s my first year, and I think it’s good,” said Gavin Jeffries ’26. He continued, “I didn’t really have a tradition like this back in my

old school, so I really feel like it’s something that I really like. I appreciate the fact that we’re able to come together as a group. Teams can talk, Coach can talk, all that.” The captains believe that “Milk and Cookies” helps new players and underclassmen on the team bond with more senior players on the field. Machnik recounted his time as a freshman on the team, where “watching older guys open up really makes you feel like you are a part of the team at a young age.” In this sense, the tradition not only serves as a team bonding exercise, but also allows new and younger teammates to understand that their senior players share similar experiences and the same love for the game. Meanwhile, the upperclassmen and returning players perceive these meetings as an opportunity for them to speak about their experiences. The meetings promote players to share advice and continue to nurture the football pro-

gram’s culture. Bishop Benham ’26 reflected, “I’ve only been here for two years, but last year was a great thing, and even when I was hurt, I showed up to it. So yeah, I think it’s good for the younger guys, good for the older guys. [It] builds seniority, but it also creates a kind of comfortability among the team, where people can talk.” Overall, Jefferies noted that the tradition helps players play with the utmost effort not only for themselves but also for their teammates. He stated, “I think it gets us all mentally on the same page and gets us all prepared to be our best selves and be as prepared as possible for the game tomorrow.” Coaches and football players alike credit “Milk and Cookies” to helping build an individual’s testament, promote discipline, and foster love among the team. They expressed that through bonding experiences like “Milk and Cookies,” teammates have become brothers who share the field.



YONG DING /DEERFIELD SCROLL

Varsity Scores

- Boys Football**
23-20
vs Loomis Chaffee School
27-45
vs Suffield Academy
10-35
vs. Cheshire School
- Girls Field Hockey**
5-4
vs Berkshire School
4-0
vs Pomfret School
4-0
vs Hotchkiss School
- Boys Water Polo**
11-8
vs Loomis Chaffee School
17-4
vs Suffield Academy
13-10
vs St. Johns Prep

- Girls Soccer**
2-0
vs Milton
4-1
vs Kimball Union
2-1
vs Pomfret School
- Boys Cross Country**
38-23
vs Berkshire School
37-19
at Avon Old Farms, Hotchkiss
50-15
at Avon Old Farms, Avon Old Farms
- Girls Cross Country**
33-24
at Avon Old Farms, Hotchkiss
42-20
at Avon Old Farms, Miss Porter’s School
50-15
at Avon Old Farms, Berkshire
- Girls Volleyball**
2-0
vs Northfield Mount Hermon
2-0
vs Austin Prep
3-0
vs Sacred Heart

The Deerfield Intro to Dance

SPENCER TREES
Staff Writer

The Deerfield Academy Intro to Dance Class has become a cult classic amongst the athletes of Deerfield Academy—particularly with the Deerfield Lacrosse team. In fact, the class is currently one of the most sought-after courses that Deerfield offers and has become increasingly competitive in its selection process over the past year.

Dance is unique compared to the other art programs available at Deerfield. In no other class do students have the privilege to move their bodies so passionately and elegantly in raw and often beautiful displays of self-expression. Never before have athletes been so vulnerable and confident in the name of dance class—a true intersection between athleticism and expressivity that athletes on campus crave.

Intro to Dance contains a rich history, including many distinguished alumni. In fact, it seems that a direct correlation exists between athletic performance and taking the class. Star athletes such as graduates Liam Appleton '25 and Quinn Stankovits '24, who now play Division I lacrosse following their time at Deerfield, have taken Intro to Dance. While some might attribute their athletic accomplish-

ments to talent and ability alone, many entertain the idea that dance has a lot to do with their success at the highest level of college lacrosse.

It's pretty easy to tell who takes the class, as the students who do so are often found busting a move wherever and whenever they can. Whether it's in class, on the fields, or during sit-down meals, dance can no longer be escaped on campus. Dancing has become so contagious that the SLO had to create a new clause in the student handbook to quell the rebellion. Students are not allowed to dance from 8:00 am to 6:30 pm during the day.

Dance's impact on the athletes of Deerfield culminated in an intense lacrosse match against Choate last spring. A dazzling goal scored by an Intro to Dance alumni, a goal not so different from that of the precise twirls and powerful bounds seen in Dance class, put Deerfield up at a crucial time in the game. Unfortunately, the brilliance of the goal scored became subdued by the heavenly celebration that followed. The player ran before the stands, and in a magical moment of pure improvisation combined with a love for Dance, they began to strut their stuff. The celebration was stellar, as the dancers synchronized their movements and pranced about. Nobody in attendance could recall how long the performance lasted,

but one thing became clear—there was no more lacrosse to be played that day. The pure beauty and power in the performance had moved the Choate players so much that they burst into tears... Everyone burst into tears that day after witnessing such a spontaneous work of art.

Some claim the events of that faithful day were a gift from God, but those who have witnessed the power of Intro to Dance can attest to its profound impact on students. The impact is so profound that many believe that some members of the lacrosse team are simply dancers who play lacrosse. In a stunning turn of events that validated their speculations, numerous lacrosse players have decommitted from their respective universities to pursue a future in dance. As a result, students anticipate that Deerfield's next dance showcase will have some new faces eager to showcase their love for dance.

The impact of Intro to Dance on the students and athletes who took it cannot be overstated. The class offers an opportunity to engage with dance as an art form like never before. But for those aspiring Intro to Dance students, good luck getting the class, since the process has become extremely competitive.

90 Seconds with Ms. Fianza

PEGGY HUANG
Associate Editor

Q: What is your favorite part about being a dorm faculty in JL, and what is one favorite memory you have with your residents?

A: I really like the girls on my hall. They're so nice. A couple of years ago, my proctors were having a lot of fun. One of the proctors had a pink wig and they decided to try to put it on my dog...and she wouldn't sit still. It was just hilarious, and we were all cracking up.

Q: What's your favorite Deerfield tradition?

A: I think the singing of the Evensong... just seems so nice. It's a lovely song, and everyone seems to really enjoy doing that together.

Q: What made you choose Deerfield?

A: I taught in three different schools in three different states. I was looking for a change, so I did a national search. I hadn't really been looking for boarding, but when I came and visited, I was like, this seems like it would actually be a really great place. I took the chance.

Q: What is your favorite chemistry mnemonic?

A: I always tell the kids, 'Start at seven, make a seven to memorize...' the seven diatomic molecules.

Q: What are the most memorable moments you had during a lab?

A: When we do the flame tests,

everyone gets really excited to see a green flame or purple flame, because it's not what we're expecting. The first time a kid sees a chemical reaction and two clear liquids turn into bright yellow, they get excited about it, and that's just fun.

Q: What are some Deerfield teams that you enjoy spectating?

A: I have to say it would either be my own Thirds volleyball team, and I really do love track and field. I know I coach both those things, but I do like watching them.

Q: What's your take on the cell phone policy?

A: I really appreciate that we're trying to build a community where the students are all interacting without being on the phones. I know it can be really tough for a lot of the students, but I do see a lot more interactions between students at Deerfield. I like all of the intentions behind it, and I think [the students] are going to be better off.



RYAN BAI/DEERFIELD SCROLL

Deerfield Crossword

Good luck completing October's edition of the Deerfield Scroll Crossword!

The Deerfield Dress Code

- ACROSS
- 1. Performs the Evensong, for example
 - 6. Snail mail need
 - 11. Comic book sound
 - 14. Hit with, as a pickup line
 - 15. It's a crowd, so they say
 - 16. First digit of this clue number
 - 17. Twangy stringed instrument
 - 19. "___ not you..."
 - 20. Places turf (like Physical Plant did between Mather and Scaife)
 - 21. Civil Rights activist Roy
 - 22. Tag sale warning
 - 23. The human mind at birth, per Tabula Rasa
 - 26. Hardly a head-scratcher
 - 29. What many Deerfield classes might be doing before midterms
 - 32. Baking measure
 - 33. Early bird victim
 - 35. Fly's nemesis
 - 36. Carded, say
 - 38. Seasoning from el oceano
 - 40. Lair for a bear
 - 41. Bottoms that make up half of Deerfield's classic athletic attire... or what can be found in the circled parts of 52- and 62-Across.
 - 44. Mercury and others, on Deerfield's campus
 - 47. Casual greeting
 - 48. Pitiful sorts
 - 50. Quavers
 - 52. Words of wisdom
 - 54. Occassion for sit-down singing at DA
 - 56. To no ___: in vain
 - 57. Kristoff's pet reindeer in "Frozen"
 - 61. B as in Battleship?
 - 62. The yellow brick road leads to it
 - 64. Itinerary abbr.
 - 65. Taco or curry seasoning
 - 66. Discontinued iPods
 - 67. Reporter's "w"
 - 68. Warms up the crowd, say

Julia McClellan

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10		11	12	13
14						15						16		
17						18						19		
20						21					22			
				23	24					25				
26	27	28					29					30	31	
32				33			34		35					
36			37		38		39			40				
41				42	43		44		45	46		47		
48					49		50			51				
		52					53							
54	55					56					57	58	59	60
61				62						63				
64				65						66				
67				68						69				

© -

69. "___ at last!"

DOWN

1. Puzzle (out)

2. "That's all there ___ it!"

3. Not merely crave

4. Passes

5. NBC weekend comedy series

6. Real lookers

7. Use your head

8. Student found in the Hess

9. Spot-causing virus

10. The "p" of m.p.g.

11. Capital city on the Oregon Trail

12. Definitely not a pro

13. State of a sty

18. John in Milano: Var.

22. Unfinished story?

24. Weather map "L"

25. Egyptian snake

26. Items banned on Deerfield's campus

27. Broadway's McDonald

28. Zooms off

30. "Keep dreaming!"

31. Tops that make up half of Deerfield's classic athletic attire... or what can be found in the circled parts of 17- and 23-Across.

34. Field's sis

37. Takeoff annoyance

39. Some dwellers on the Baltic

42. Holiday party drink

43. Make hot

45. Musical quiver

46. "Hold on a ___ !"

49. "SOS!"

51. Paul from "Gladiator II" and "Normal People"

53. "Splish Splash" singer Bobby

54. Make, as coffee

55. "The lady ___ protest too much..."

58. Beverage in Milano

59. Famed British prep school

60. Wall Street initials

62. Deerfield Reps that bleed greener than anyone?

63. Strand studied in the Koch

Four Students/Four Q's

JESSICA WU
Senior Website Designer/Video Editor

Tucker Gongaware '26

Q: What is your go-to order from the Koch Cafe?

A: Everything sausage and an iced coffee.

Q: What is the best spot for locking in on-campus?

A: Best spot to lock in is wherever people is not. I think that speaks to the happy and social community at Deerfield. Like, if youre trying to study with people, you will start a conversation, get completely distracted in the best way, and get no work done.

Q: What is your favorite thing about Deerfield?

A: How freedom manifests in nature. For example, bike rides, cliffs, messing around by the river, et cetera. I think that makes relationships more genuine and provides for connection that is unique among boarding schools.

Q: What tradition do you hope lasts forever?

A: I want to continue to buy in. Throughout my time here, there is a pressure to be present and active in the community that people refer to jokingly as buying in. But I think it's a real force of connectivity and spirit.

Tucker Sichol '27

Q: What is your go-to order from the Koch Cafe?

A: Everything bagel with sausage and an iced coffee.

Q: What is the best spot for locking in on-campus?

A: The Caswell.

Q: What is your favorite thing about Deerfield?

A: The community.

Q: What tradition do you hope lasts forever?

A: Shriv.

Iris Zhu '28

Q: What is your go-to order from the Koch Cafe?

A: During community time, I

like to grab a dirty iced chai to sip as I study. When the weather is cold, I always go for a cinabon to warm myself up in the Fall and Winter.

Q: What is the best spot for locking in on-campus?

A: On Sundays, I like to do homework in the Greer. I find the library to be too quiet at times, and my room is too distracting, so the Greer is the perfect spot to lock in. I also like how I am able to get a snack from the Greer as I study.

Q: What is your favorite thing about Deerfield?

A: My favorite thing at Deerfield are the weekends because that's when the campus is busy with athletic competitions, dances, and activities to do with all your friends.

Q: What tradition do you hope lasts forever?

A: I love getting up in the dining hall to celebrate and sing Happy Birthday to my friends and peers on their birthdays. I think it's a very special tradition and I hope that every Deerfield student gets to experience it in their career here.

Audrey Tjoeng '29

Q: What is your go-to order from the Koch Cafe?

A: In community time, I always grab a sweet treat. My current favorite is cinabun and an iced coffee.

Q: What is the best spot for locking in on-campus?

A: Study rooms on the third floor of the library are the best, especially the one with a round table for two or three people.

Q: What is your favorite thing about Deerfield?

A: My favorite thing about Deerfield is how each class stands to chant before all-school meetings. It's a consistent showcase of the community here.

Q: What tradition do you hope lasts forever?

A: I hope we never stop clapping for meals that deserve extra recognition.