

# The Record

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## School takes strong stance against assessment absenteeism

EVIE STEINMAN &  
ANNIKA BHANDARI  
*Staff Writers*

On Monday, Head of the Upper Division (UD) Dr. Jessica Levenstein announced a new UD policy titled 'Excessive Assessment Absenteeism' through an email to UD students, parents, and guardians. This policy aims to prevent students from missing school on days that they have scheduled assessments, an issue raised in a front-page editorial in Issue 5 of The Record.

If the school notices a student has an excessive amount of absences on assessment days, their respective grade dean will send a warning to the student's parents warning them that their child's actions will result in disciplinary consequences if they violate the policy again. After receiving a warning, the students will lose a grade on the next missed assessment. A student's second offense will result in an F, and a third offense will result in an F, suspension, and possible expulsion.

The policy, written in collaboration with Kelly, was implemented to create a more equitable and honest environment, Levenstein said. "When kids are sitting in their classrooms taking a test and they look around and see four kids missing,

they're going to feel a little frustrated," she said. "They're going to feel like, 'am I the sucker who plays by the rules?'"

The increase in student absences during testing days, which has been observed and discussed since last year, is likely due to a heightened culture of perfectionism and the desire to know what is on an assessment before taking it, Levenstein said. "Students have become less and less tolerant of achieving grades that are less than perfect and their high expectations are a little beyond their grasp," she said.

Janani Bhagat (11), on the other hand, thinks that students' tendency to skip school on assessment days is a result of their overwhelming workloads. "I feel that people aren't missing school because they hope to hear

the answers but that they instead feel completely overwhelmed by their work and need more time to study."

While she believes it is key to creating a more equitable environment at the school, Levenstein

is aware that some students may view the new policy as too intense and unfair, she said. "I know that there were some students who became a little bit alarmed when they read the policy, but I don't think they read to the bottom of the email," she said. At

the end of the email, Levenstein clarifies that the administration makes exceptions for outstanding circumstances like early dismissals for athletic events, debate conferences, and health issues, she said. "We're not saying you can never be absent on a test day."

Although Bhagat believes that the reason for the increase in student absences during assessment is because teachers assign an overwhelming amount of schoolwork, she still thinks that the policy was a good idea. "I get that people have different things going on in their lives, but at the end of the day, we are all at the same school and have roughly the same workload," she said.

Anna Gruson (11) feels less enthusiastic about the policy, particularly the part that states a student will have to provide evidence from a doctor or hospital to prove they are sick, she said. "It's crazy. If I wake up and I feel sick I'm not going to a hospital or urgent care for a note."

Although the policy will be effective in preventing student absences during testing days, Nate Ogiste (12) finds the policy unreasonable, he said. "We are talking about possible suspension or expulsion," Ogiste said. "It's too stern but it will be effective, I'll give it that."

Kelly believes that this policy is a positive addition to the school and will be effective in its goal to prevent student absences during testing days, he said. "The need for this new policy was driven by a pattern of student absences on days of either in-class assessments or major project due dates. Over time, these choices fed an emerging and unhealthy equity concern, one unbecoming of a student at HM."



## The CC partners with the Friendly Fridge for Sandwiches for Smiles

HENRY PECK  
*Staff Writer*

"Everyone who was there was there because they really wanted to be, and it was inspiring to see so many people so clearly dedicated to a cause," Loewy Miller (11) said. This Monday, the Community Council (CC) hosted the school's second annual Sandwiches for Smiles initiative in the cafeteria. During the event, students from across the Upper Division (UD) prepared hundreds of sandwiches for the Friendly Fridge, a local public fridge that serves food

to underprivileged residents of the Bronx.

Last spring, Sofia Sahai (11) pitched the idea of Sandwiches for Smiles to get students more involved in the local community. "I proposed the idea to the CC as a community initiative so that we could help out and spread love within the Bronx community to make sure that everybody goes to bed with a full stomach," she said. This year, the CC coordinated with the Flik staff and Senior Director of Dining Services Brenda Cohn to order supplies for hundreds of sandwiches.

In preparation for the event, the CC

created a committee in collaboration with Dean of Students Michael Dalo to purchase the ingredients and find space to make the sandwiches, Mark Albrecht (10) said. "[The school] has done similar initiatives with the Friendly Fridge in the past, and their close proximity to school made them a great organization to work with to impact the community," he said.

Sahai introduced the initiative as a way to combat food insecurity in the local Bronx community. The Community Center for Values and Actions (CCVA) has had a strong relationship with the Friendly Fridge for years, and many students

volunteer at the Fridge during their grade's service learning day. Students like Sahai, who visited the Friendly Fridge during service learning day, have developed a deep connection to the mission of providing food to the Bronx community.

Building on last year's momentum, more than 20 students from the UD donned latex gloves and formed an assembly line across tables in the Dining Commons. Compared to last year, there was a significant increase in participation, Miller said. Students assembled the sandwiches and placed them into paper bags with chips, apples, and drinks, which they then carried in boxes to the Friendly Fridge on Broadway.

Bringing the sandwiches down the hill with a small group of volunteers was Ethan Furman's (11) favorite part of the event, he said. "We were able to talk to someone who helps run the organization, and it was amazing to hear about how much of an impact we would have on the community."

Similarly, Sahai enjoyed stocking the fridges with brown paper sandwich bags. "We got to hand out sandwiches to people just walking by, which was a great feeling," she said. While packing more than 300 bags in under 45 minutes was a bit chaotic and stressful, Sahai ultimately had fun in the process, she said.

Lily Sussman (11), participated in

the sandwich preparation because she supports Sandwiches for Smiles' goal. "My favorite part of the event was the feeling of making a difference in the local community by providing essential meals to as many people in need as possible." It was amazing to see students from all grades volunteer their time to join together to pack sandwiches, Sussman said. The event displayed a strong sense of camaraderie and selflessness among the UD community.

Miller appreciates that so many students took time out of their busy days to pitch in, he said. He also enjoyed seeing the immediate impact of the volunteers' efforts. An organizer of the Friendly Fridge informed Miller that the volunteers provided so many sandwiches that the organization would no longer have to restrict people to one item, but could provide second and third helpings.

Recognizing the importance of timing, while last year's Sandwiches for Smiles initiative took place in the spring, the CC organized this year's event in December because winter is an especially tough time for people who are struggling to find shelter, work, and food, Sahai said. The CC intends to hold another sandwich-packing day in the spring. "The need for food is always there," she said.



SHARING THE THANKSGIVING SPIRIT

Photo by Alexander James



# Volume 122

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## Putting the “Trash” in Trashketball: A time honored tradition

ADEN NATHOO  
*Staff Writer*

Trashketball, the popular and ridiculous Upper Division (UD) tradition dating back to the 1970s, kicked off last week with an official draft, followed by four games on Monday and another two on Thursday. Fostering a playful yet competitive environment, the tournament builds bonds between upperclassmen vying to have their names immortalized in white-out on the infamous Trashketball winners' bucket.

Trashketball is an annual tradition in which Commissioner and history teacher David Berenson chooses 23 seniors and/or faculty members—based on the humor of their emails requesting captaincy—to lead 12 teams of upperclassmen and faculty. Captains can draft any faculty member and any upperclassmen except those on the Girls' or Boys' Varsity Basketball teams. Trashketball teams are separated into two leagues of six teams with the top four teams from each league qualifying for the playoffs. Games occur every I period

until late February, ending in the Trashketball finals.

Last week, after Berenson released the randomly generated draft pick order, Trashketball captains meticulously prepared for the highly competitive draft. “I made a spreadsheet outlining the ten rounds of the draft, and I had my predicted first, second, third overall pick and so on,” Dunkaroos Co-Captain Noah Castillo (12) said. Castillo and his co-captain Anya Mirza (12) drew the first overall pick in the draft, granting them the liberty to select any player on the board. After weeks of deliberation, the duo selected a breakout player from last year's Trashketball triumphs: former JV Basketball superstar Rabee Singh (12).

Like Castillo and Mirza, M&M Co-Captains Madison Mitchell (12) and Mich Obia (12) scouted prospects before the draft. “We prepared by thinking of everyone we've seen in the gym, everyone who does a sport, and who can dribble a basketball,” Mitchell said. The duo also shuffled through recent editions of the school yearbook, “The Mannikin”, to find former

basketball players.

In addition to doing the same scouting as all the other teams, Berenson and his co-captain Zoe Turteltaub (12) tested a unique strategy, he said. “The Turtle [Turteltaub] and I came up with a game plan, based on scouting reports, some intense research, and the use of a Ouija board,” he said. Apparently, supernatural forces from the beyond decided that Cooper “The Red Tornado” Ferdman (12) was the right pick.

Despite the lighthearted nature of competing in Trashketball, the environment in the draft room was tense and competitive, Trash Toss Titans Co-Captain Lukas Frangenberg (12) said. “We actually put up dividers because we didn't want people seeing our list,” he said. “It was all fun and games until it came down to business.”

This Monday, the intensity extended to the Upper and Lower Gyms, where four heated matchups took place. Despite the Hoopsie Daisies' 11-10 loss against the Red Hot Silly Peppers, Hoopsie Daisies member Gray Gordon (11) looks forward



**TRASHIN' IT!**

*Photo by William Gonzalez*

to competing in future games, having learned from the team's mistakes. “The results were a little disappointing and obviously not what we were hoping for to start our season,” he said. “But we still have four more games, so I think we'll come back stronger.”

A lack of team chemistry and ball passing contributed to the Hoopsie Daisies' loss, Gordon said. The team missed countless layups and lost the ball on every other play, all while Red Hot Silly Peppers Co-Captain Brody Grossman (12) was banking numerous half-court heaves. “I think with more games, we'll build that chemistry and play better together as a team,” Gordon said.

While the Hoopsie Daisies struggled to dominate the courts, the Trash Toss Titans, captained by Frangenberg and Julia Eizenstat (12), emerged victorious from their battle this Monday, thrashing Slam Chowder 11-8, Luca Davidson (11) said. The team had a few standout plays by Kofi Boadu (11) and science teacher Matthew Boller, the Trash Toss Titans' dynamic duo. Continuous effort will be the key to the team's future success, such as diving on loose balls and playing aggressive defense, Davidson said. “We can definitely improve, but I think we can also start up a dynasty and have an undefeated season.”

## HM South Asian community celebrates through Ustav

JULIA LOURENCO &  
JAZLYN SOLER  
*Staff & Contributing Writer*

“Having these types of events allows us to embrace our culture and lets us bring our full selves to school, not just our American parts,” Janani Bhagat (11) said. On Wednesday, November 20, members of the South Asian Youth at HM Club (SAY HM) and HM South Asian Families (HMSAF) group hosted the annual South Asian Festival called ‘Ustav’. Ustav, the Sanskrit word for “celebration,” aimed to connect the school's South Asian community through various performances, including dances and songs.

Before the event started, students, staff, and parents enjoyed the wide selection of traditional South Asian foods and desserts, including mango lassi and samosas.

Lasting about two hours, the festival featured 23 performances by students ranging from the Nursery Division (ND) to the Upper Division (UD). Among the performers was Bhagat, who choreographed a two-minute classical Indian piece. “Because there were so many people performing, I had to do a really short piece, but it was a lot of fun to see everyone embrace South Asian culture throughout the show,” she said.

In addition to Bhagat's piece, students showcased a wide variety of

traditional dances and songs, along with a piano performance and a guitar solo, Ann Karottu (11) said. “The great mix of performances let us show Indian culture really well, and kept everyone engaged throughout the night.”

While students provided entertaining performances, parents in the HMSAF group coordinated the event. “Some moms hosted the practices at their houses, and all the moms helped [us] pick out outfits. My mom helped with picking out the music and dances,” Anisa Javaid (9), who has been attending the festival since first grade, said.

The turnout this year was greater than ever before. “About 550 people registered, which is crazy. Gross Theatre was pretty packed, and it was better than last year's and the years before for sure,” SAY HM President Anya Sen (12) said.

The preparation for the event was a good opportunity to connect with friends over a shared goal: to put on a great performance. “It's really fun to be with my friends and dance together,” Javaid said. “When we were little, we played tag a lot in Recital [Hall], so I have a lot of good memories because of it.”

Ustav offered a nice change from other events hosted throughout the year. “Asia night [which happens later in the year] is mainly student organized so we usually only see UD



**CELEBRATING CULTURE**

*Courtesy of Shanaya Parikh*

kids perform, but since the parents run this festival, we also get to see all of the people in Nursery and Lower Division perform, which is super exciting,” Bhagat said.

Along with the performance aspects of the event, SAY HM leaders Sen and Sharanya Raman (12) held an educational presentation to teach the audience about the diversity within the South Asian community. The presentation highlighted the differences and similarities between each country in South Asia and emphasized that coming together over food and music is what makes the community so tightly knit. “Sadly, the

technology wasn't really working at the event, so they couldn't project the slideshow, but they did an amazing job talking about the important aspects of South Asian Culture,” SAY HM Advisor and Dean of the Class of '26 Dr. Shalini Sudarsanan said.

This event was the first time the HMSAF collaborated with students to plan Ustav, since SAY HM was founded last year, Sudarsanan said. “The leaders really took care of most of the planning for the event,” she said. “They were in contact with the parents in the HMSAF group, and I was really proud to see how much work they put into it.”



# —Trans youth deserve more than silence—



Ethan Bennun

Last month, Horace Mann hosted alumnus and New York Times columnist David Leonhardt '90 for an assembly discussing the election results, which was followed by a talkback. While Leonhardt touched on various issues, his remarks about transgender rights sparked strong responses, both critical and supportive, from the school community. During the talkback session, Moxie Singer (10) asked him pointedly about transphobia, particularly in the context of conversations with Trump-supporting students and the rhetoric they often endorse.

Leonhardt acknowledged that Trump has encouraged transphobia and misogyny, emphasizing the need for Trump-supporting students to denounce such rhetoric. He also called for "open discussions" about what he referred to as "complex issues" surrounding transgender rights, including the age at which trans youth should access gender-affirming care and the participation of trans individuals in sports.

While Leonhardt likely intended to present a balanced perspective, his framing of these issues as open to debate felt deeply troubling to me. Trans rights are not theoretical or abstract—they are matters of survival. Debating them in the public sphere, especially in ways that question the validity of trans identities or healthcare, dehumanizes a vulnerable population.

This discourse also raises critical questions about Horace Mann's role in fostering an inclusive environment for its LGBTQ+ community amidst an increasingly hostile cultural and political landscape. Although Leonhardt's call for dialogue may seem reasonable on the surface, the way such debates are framed often normalizes transphobic rhetoric

under the guise of debate in other contexts.

Leonhardt suggested that people should be open to debating topics like trans youth healthcare and trans women's participation in sports. However, these debates often ignore the lived experiences of trans individuals, who already face systemic barriers to healthcare, education, and safety. Research consistently shows that access to gender-affirming care is helpful to trans youth, yet opponents argue that young people are too "inexperienced" to make such decisions about their own bodies. Trans youth often have to wait years just to see a psychologist who specializes in gender care, and are far too often put into conversion therapy with transphobic practices like "real life experience," in which the trans person has to "prove" their identity.

This opposition does not stem from doubt about the effectiveness of such care but from a belief that trans youth are too young to understand their identities fully. This paternalistic stance ignores the robust body of research and medical guidelines supporting the autonomy of

*"Trans and queer youth deserve more than acceptance, they deserve a community that actively advocates for their dignity and existence. I hope our school rises to this challenge."*

trans youth, which exacerbates existing barriers to care. Across the U.S., anti-trans legislators exploit this rhetoric to push laws that strip trans people of healthcare access, mischaracterizing gender-affirming care as harmful rather than lifesaving.

Similarly, the debate over trans people in sports often centers on concerns about physical advantages, fairness, and safety—these arguments are frequently based on incomplete or misrepresented evidence. Trans women, particularly those undergoing hormone therapy, do not consistently show a clear athletic advantage over cisgender women. Moreover, focusing on the competitive aspect of sports while sidelining inclusion sends the message that trans people do not belong. Discussions around "fairness" fail to account for the broader exclusionary culture that denies trans athletes the opportunity to participate at all, even recreationally.

The national landscape for LGBTQ+ students paints a bleak picture. According to the first survey of its kind conducted by the CDC, between 17-25% of high school and college students identify as LGBTQ+, with 3.3% identifying as transgender and another 2.2% questioning their gender identity. Yet, trans youth face disproportionately high

rates of discrimination and harassment. Trans youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide than their cisgender peers, and this risk only increases in unsupportive environments. Even at HM assemblies mentioning queer or trans identities, students have reported hearing whispers and giggles.

A study published in Nature Human Behavior by researchers at The Trevor Project found that the passage of anti-trans legislation has been associated with up to a 72% increase in suicide attempts among trans and nonbinary youth. Although private institutions like Horace Mann are insulated from restrictive public school policies, the rhetoric of exclusion affects all students. Horace Mann should be a refuge from all of this, but we're fighting the same battles here as everywhere else.

A recent Record poll revealed that approximately 25% of students at Horace Mann supported candidate Trump, whose policies have explicitly targeted LGBTQ+ and especially trans rights. Leonhardt suggested that Trump-supporting students should actively denounce Trump's overt misogyny and transphobia

tolerate—a presidential administration openly hostile to their existence. The fear of being outed, judged, or dismissed as a debate topic leaves many queer students feeling isolated in a community that should be their refuge.

To address the pervasive fear and isolation felt by LGBTQ+ students, Horace Mann should take actionable steps to create a genuinely inclusive community. One impactful way to begin is by reinstating the Seminar on Identity (SOI) program for ninth graders. This program, which was removed due to scheduling conflicts, offered a vital space to explore issues of identity, privilege, and systemic discrimination. Unlike existing health classes and some HMO discussions, SOI provided a structured opportunity for students to focus on developing empathy and allyship at a formative stage.

The challenges faced by LGBTQ+ students at Horace Mann mirror broader societal struggles. Leonhardt's visit highlighted the limitations of a "centrist" approach to human rights and humanity, reminding us that tolerance is not enough. For Horace Mann to truly lead

to try to combat this issue. However, this argument is not just a political one, rather it is a matter of life or death for many trans people. This reality casts a chilling shadow over queer students. How can you feel safe in a community where a quarter of your peers endorse, or at least tolerate, an administration openly hostile to your very existence?

For LGBTQ+ youth, this creates a terrifying environment: knowing that a significant portion of their classmates may endorse—or at the very least

in inclusivity, it must champion its queer students' identities and rights, ensuring that school is not merely a refuge but a beacon of safety and affirmation. Trans and queer youth deserve more than acceptance, they deserve a community that actively advocates for their dignity and existence. I hope our school rises to this challenge.



# Studying and social scenes: A look at student weekends

ANOUSHKA PARAKH &  
MERIT REMZI  
Staff Writers

For many students, weekends are a tug-of-war between school work, socializing, and relaxing. Whether spending time with friends, pursuing hobbies, partying, or simply catching up on rest, the social lives of students on the weekends greatly vary.

According to an anonymous Record poll of students between 10th and 12th grades, with 105 responses, 85% of students said they may stay home and rest, 53% said they might do homework, 63% said they may

*“We might have fun at parties, or go to someone’s house, but it’s rarely about drinking or drugs. It’s just about being together.”*

- Anonymous Student

casually hang out with friends at dinner or home, and 26% of students might go out with friends to a party or bar. Additionally, 29% of respondents drink alcohol when hanging out with friends, and out of that number, the majority reported having done so more than 15 times.

For many students, going out with friends is the highlight of the weekend. Friday nights are when people usually grab dinner or hang out at someone’s house, Campbell Herring (9) said. “It’s not always a big party, but just a chance to be with friends and unwind after a long week.”

Additionally, Ava Litman (10) often finds herself going out to her favorite dinner spots with friends. At dinner, Litman and her friends’ conversation is often a time to catch up and evade the intensity of the school atmosphere, she said. “We try to avoid the topic of school altogether because this time is our break away.”

Similarly, Simran Reddy (9) views the weekends as a chance to sit back and relax from school. “Sometimes we’ll just find a low-key spot like someone’s house to relax and talk,” Reddy said. “It’s not always about doing something huge—it’s more about spending time with friends and escaping the grind of school.”

On the other hand, when hanging out with friends, Litman often looks for new experiences and places, she said. Recently, she visited the Bryant Park Winter Village, a popular spot for many students during the winter season.

Other students often go to trendy spots around the city. Cooper Winter (11) and his friends often enjoy going to Sushi Ren, a popular Japanese restaurant on the Upper East Side. “Word gets out about these places and from there they just get popular,” he said.

Aside from dinner, some students opt for other activities, such as playing board or video games, Nathan Robertson (12) said. He and

his friends will often go to Hex&Co, a board game cafe in the city. “It is a super fun way to indulge in some of our favorite activities in a convenient location for all,” he said. “They have a variety of options from Monopoly to Risk.” Additionally, he also hangs out with friends from his Juilliard Pre-College Program, playing video games at home for a couple of hours.

While many students stick to simple dinners and small gatherings, others may be more adventurous, using Fake IDs to obtain illegal substances and go to places meant for those above the age of 21. “There are definitely people who go to bars or clubs,” Humphrey\*, who wanted

to remain anonymous out of fear of potential consequences from the school, said. “It’s not super common, but if you’re in the right circles, you’ll hear about it.”

Since the bars and clubs that some students go to are 21+, students usually need a fake ID to get in. For

Humphrey, the fun of going to these places mostly comes from the excitement around the risk of getting caught. “It’s about the thrill of doing something you’re not supposed to do as much as the actual drinking.”

Students not only engage in these activities at bars and clubs, but also at student-hosted parties. Beckham\*, who chose to remain anonymous as he does not want to admit to drinking, was present during an incident involving alcohol at a student-organized cast party following a school production. At this party, some students were drinking alcohol and a small number were smoking marijuana. “People were drinking White Claws, smoking, and engaging in other similar behaviors,” Beckham said. “If this was the atmosphere at a party like this, then I can only imagine the amount of substances that people consume at more intense and extreme parties.”

Many of the other parties students attend are often exclusive. Beckham often sees social media posts and overhears students talking about parties they attended over the weekends that he was not informed were happening. “There is a sort of ‘in’ group and ‘out’ group when it comes to who is invited to these

parties,” he said. “It is definitely pretty selective and it is often the ‘popular’ kids who are invited,” he said.

Other students agree with this assessment. According to the Record poll, when asked on a scale from 1 to 5 whether they believed there was an “in” crowd, where 1 was strongly disagree and 5 was strongly agree, 47% of students responded chose 4 or 5.

However, Sienna Tolani (11) feels differently. Since the student body is so large and diverse, she believes there is not any type of “social hierarchy” or “Queen B” within the school, she said. “Some people may be more cliquey, wanting to stick with their people in their immediate friend group, but that doesn’t make them look superior to others in any way.”

Although Beckham does believe there are “popular” groups within the school, he is not affected by the exclusivity of these parties, he said. “I am more used to it at this point and it does not make me upset or sad,” he said. “I like hanging out with my own

experiences when using drugs with friends in the city. After consuming THC infused edibles, they began to wander around the Upper East side, he said. They went to a sushi restaurant, then Dave’s Hot Chicken, and finally McDonald’s.

The group eventually found a quiet park and decided to sit on the swings. “This homeless guy came up and started chatting with us. At first, it was chill—he was asking if we had any snacks. Then he saw the leftover edibles and asked for one. We thought, why not? So we gave him one,” Mordecai said.

While they initially interacted with the man in a joking manner, the man began following Mordecai and his friends. “At first, we thought he’d just leave after eating the edible. But no. He kept asking if we had more and started walking faster to keep up with us. At one point, we were practically running through the streets trying to get away.”

Despite the presence of illicit substances, drug use doesn’t define the school’s social scene, Cornelius said. “We might have fun at parties, or go to someone’s house, but it’s rarely about drinking or drugs. It’s just about being together.”

Additionally, Cornelius believes that there is no pressure to use drugs and engage in this behavior, he said.

“For some, it’s just experimenting or going along with the crowd,” he said. “But it doesn’t feel like anyone is pressured into it. It’s more of a personal choice.”

However, Magnolia\*, who wanted to remain anonymous as she engaged in illegal activities, has felt pressure to drink from people of her extended friend group before. “In these situations I do my best to say no. I make up some excuse and tell them no,” she said.

Calliope\*, who wished to remain

my friends aren’t pressuring me to drink, it does often feel awkward that everyone around me is doing it but me,” she said.

Some students, like Cornelius, believe students drink alcohol to become a part of the “in” group, he said. “It’s not a big part of my friend group, but I know others who use weed or vape socially—it’s more about fitting in than anything else.”

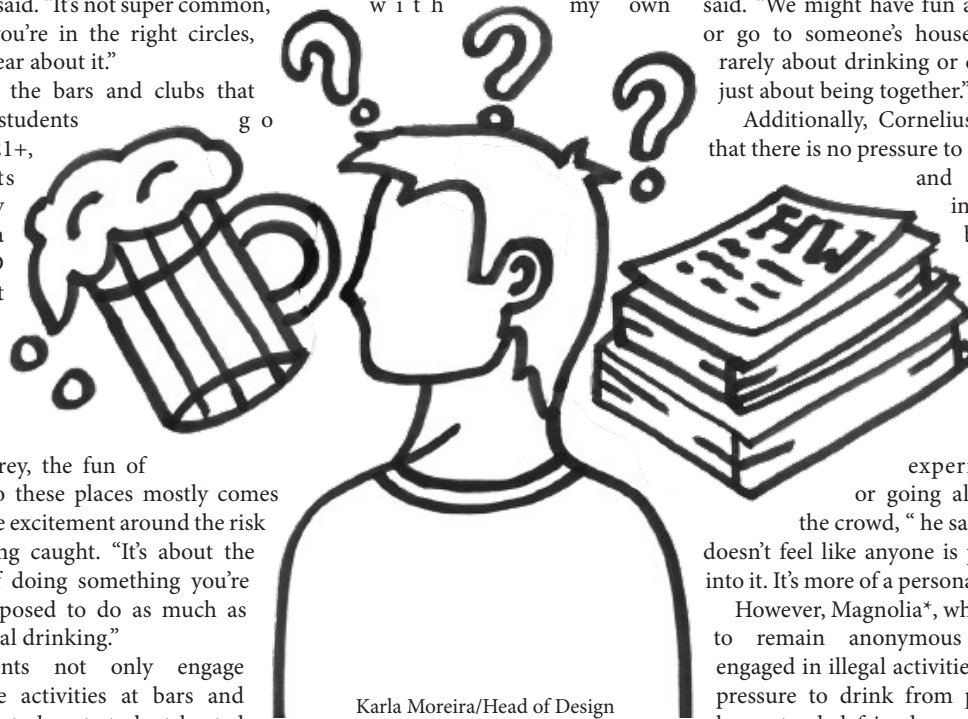
In comparison to other schools, the HM’s social scene is relatively subdued, Alexa Blackman (11) said. “We are pretty comparable to other rigorous Ivy League Prep schools like Dalton and Trinity, where the focus is more on academics,” Blackman said. “But my friends at Riverdale and Columbia Grammar are going out every night of the weekend and parties are a lot more frequent at those schools and the social culture is significantly more intense.”

Students feel that the reason is due to the school’s large workload in comparison to other New York City schools, Bianca Arcoria (10) said. Because of this, Arcoria often likes relaxing at home on the weekends to decompress from a busy week, she said.

Similarly, Blackman has seen a notable shift in her social habits from her freshman to junior year. “As I’ve gotten older, there’s been no other option some nights but to prioritize work,” Blackman said. As Blackman and her friends entered their junior year, the growing workload pushed social activities to the back burner. “When I was a freshman, there was more of a ‘going out’ culture because the work wasn’t as intense,” she said.

Now, as a junior, Blackman notices that students are less focused on the fear of missing out, or “FOMO”, and more preoccupied with achieving good grades. “It’s not that we don’t want to go out—we just don’t have the time. People are more comfortable with their social circles now and less worried about what they’re missing,” Blackman said.

Despite the social culture decreasing as students become older, upperclassmen also benefit from being able to get into bars and clubs and maneuver around the



Karla Moreira/Head of Design

group of friends and doing our own thing.”

Aside from alcohol, some students

*“It’s not that we don’t want to go out—we just don’t have the time. People are more comfortable with their social circles now and less worried about what they’re missing,”*

- Alexa Blackman

have experimented with illegal substances when out with friends. “I’ve used weed a couple of times at parties or when hanging out with friends—it’s not something I do often, but it happens,” Cornelius\*, who wished to remain anonymous due to fear of potential repercussions from the school administration, said.

Sometimes, these outings can result in dangerous consequences. Mordecai\*, who wished to remain anonymous, had one of these

anonymous due to her participation in illegal activities, has experienced a similar kind of peer pressure however in an indirect manner, she said. When Calliope is out with friends, typically in large groups at people’s houses, drinking is sometimes involved and all of her friends will do it, she said. However, she often is unable to drink as she has SAT Practice Tests every Sunday and does not want to be hungover while taking it, she said. “Although

city because of their experience and appearance, Winter said.

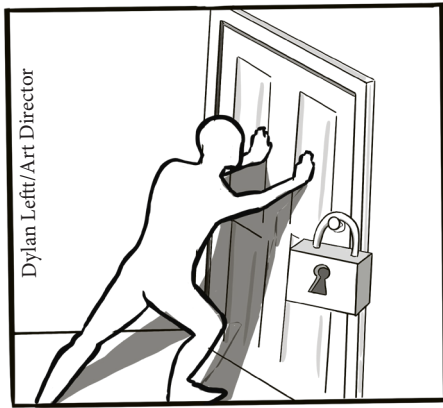
Ultimately students spend their weekends differently, whether watching TV or partying, in order to cope with the stresses of their busy schedules, Winter said. “At the end of the day, it’s about finding time to decompress and enjoy life outside of school,” he said. “Whatever that looks like for you.”



# Behind the scenes of the 8th-Grade Honors Math selection process

ELIZABETH SMAGUINE & AANYA THOMAS  
Contributing Writers

"The eighth grade honors algebra class is designed to challenge the students in unique ways that they don't necessarily get outside of school," MD Math Department Chair Quentin Brooks said. The requirements to enter eighth grade honors math have become more inclusive. However, these new prerequisites have generated debate amongst MD students.



Previously, admission into eighth-grade honors math was determined by a student's grades, performance on an entrance exam,

and a recommendation from their teacher. Now, in addition to the previous prerequisites, students wishing to be placed in the class must write an essay and conduct a fifteen-minute presentation, do well on the entrance exam, and be recommended by their teacher, Brooks said. However, the added requirements were not intended to be a deterrent, he said. Above all, the most important aspect of the application is ensuring the student is genuinely interested and prepared for the difficult course.

Although some might question the use of an essay in a math class, the primary purpose for the essay is not to examine the student's writing abilities but to understand their interest in the class, Brooks said. The teachers aim to learn about a student's drive to join honors math, he said.

However, the numerous requirements have generated controversy. Some students use tutors or take part in school math programs like the Russian School of Mathematics (RSM), giving them advantages over students who are only using their prior knowledge. However, Abigail Tak (7) believes that although there are students who utilize extracurricular math as a way to get ahead of the school curriculum, some do so simply because they are passionate about math, she said.

Maddie Greenberg (8) believes that extra tutoring would not be much of help to students as most of the test questions were based on general knowledge rather than algebra and pre-

algebra, she said. The questions on the entrance exam challenged students to think outside of the box, and Greenberg feels that the test was

*"The requirements for honors change each year, and nothing is set in stone. One thing that I like is that it's constantly evolving."*

- MD Math Department Chair Quentin Brooks

more so designed to test one's problem-solving abilities rather than being something to prepare for.

Debates have also emerged regarding the increasing number of seventh grade students in the class. According to Brooks, seventh graders comprise about 37% of the class. Many current eighth graders appreciate the seventh graders in eighth grade honors, Maddie Greenberg (8) said. "They bring a fresh perspective which is nice," she said. However, Greenberg feels that the high number of seventh graders in the class is not fair to eighth graders, some of whom feel that their spot in the class was taken by 7th graders.

Sarah\*, an eighth grader who chose to remain anonymous to avoid backlash from their peers, applied for honors but was not given a spot. In addition to what they felt was a strong essay, test, and presentation, they also had an A+ for both semesters of seventh grade math. Still, they

believed that these new requirements were a step in the right direction, they said. "They [the math department] want people who have the

ability to do well in the class and get through it, since it's a hard class," they said.

Rayden Wang (8) shares a similar view on the new requirements. "I'd say it's good because they want people to be interested in math and want to grow their interest, not just be good at it," he said.

While some like the new policies, other students, such as Gilian Siguencia (9), feel that the requirements are a bit excessive, she said. However, Siguencia does think that new requirements could be helpful if they help enhance the curriculum and student experience, she said.

Regardless of the current requirements, the math department remains open minded about their admission standards. "The requirements for honors change each year, and nothing is set in stone," Brooks said. "One thing that I like is that it's constantly evolving," he said.

## It's all about Israel: Why some Jews shifted to Trump



Evie Steinman

For decades the majority of American Jews have voted for the Democratic party. In the Jewish community that I often associate with, political leanings have been changing since the terrorist attack on October 7 that left 1200 people dead and over 250 hostage (since then some of them have died and others returned in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners in Israel).

Some of my extended family and Jewish family friends do not understand how Jews could vote for Kamala Harris who did not take seriously enough the existential threat faced by Israel. They believe, for instance, that Donald Trump provides more reliable support for Israel than Harris does. Those who I am closest to felt to be between a rock and a hard place when deciding on who to vote for. On the one hand, it was very

difficult to vote for someone who you do not morally align with, but it was equally difficult to vote for someone who you do not believe supports your ancestral homeland. When it came down to it, there were many Jews in my family's social circle that felt as though they had no choice but to vote for Trump. I sympathize with this view.

Still, the consequences of a Trump vote were very severe on the day after the election. On Wednesday, November 6th, my Instagram flooded with stories negatively commenting on quotes such as "don't let politics ruin your relationships" or going as far as to say that voting for Trump means you are disgusting and don't care about women's rights. This felt like a tactic to isolate and stifle people who supported Trump.

The issues that Israel faces in the Middle East are not the only reasons why more people voted for Trump, but in the HM community where many students are practicing Jews with strong ties to Israel, whom to vote for was not as obvious as some may have thought.

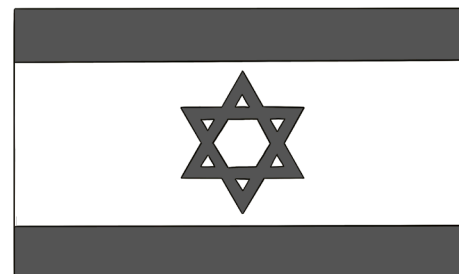
In New York, the state with the highest number of Jews (who, for the most part, are Democrats), the Jewish vote towards the Democratic party decreased by almost 15% compared to the last election. For the last century, the vast majority of the American Jewish community has voted blue in presidential elections. On election day, Fox News did a voter analysis and found 67% of Jews voted for Harris and 31% for Trump (there was an exit poll that NBC, CNN and other news outlets cited that recorded 78% Jews for Harris, but exit polls are notoriously inaccurate). This is still a large percentage of Jewish votes

for Harris, but the percentage of Jewish voters supporting the Democratic party has not been this low since the 1988 election. I witnessed first hand this shift of Jewish support.

For those Jews who shifted from blue to red, the situation in Israel feels more urgent than any other issue, including Trump's character. There are over 60 hostages still presumed alive and held in Gaza. My community is either losing hope or has lost hope that the US government can help finish the war against Hamas. For instance, my grandfather thinks that Trump is, for the lack of a better description, a bad human being overall. However, Trump is someone who many Jews, including my grandfather, feel that they can trust. One reason why they trust Trump is his 2017 decision to recognize Jerusalem as the state capital of Israel and move the American embassy there.

Another success for the State of Israel that reassured Jewish voters coming into this election, was the Abraham Accords that Trump put in place in 2020. According to the American Jewish Community (AJC), the Abraham Accords "normalized diplomatic relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, then later a renewal in ties with Morocco." This agreement asserted peace in the Middle East, and, according to the Atlantic Council, "[offered] a powerful counter to dehumanization, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia." Trump accomplished a great deal for Israel in his last term and when voting, many Jews took those accomplishments into account.

Is it fair or right for a single issue—especially one based on a particular foreign policy—to determine someone's vote? My first instinct was to think that it is not right to vote for someone just based on their foreign policies. However, after October 7, there was intense stigma attached to Israel and Jews generally. October 7 has been in



Dylan Leftt/Art Director

the back of my mind for over a year now and I wonder if this is true for many Jews. Unwavering support from the American president for Israel and its

*"For those Jews who shifted from blue to red, the situation in Israel feels more urgent than any other issue, including Trump's character."*

initiative to destroy Hamas and possibly Hezbollah is something that many Jews need to feel secure about. Hence Trump over Harris.

Still, it certainly cannot be argued that the Jews who voted for Harris do not support Israel. According to the Pew Research Center, 90% of American Jews are Zionists and 54% support the Israeli government. Harris has

openly supported Israel, but has also called what is happening to Gazans "unconscionable." Many believed she was playing both sides, as most politicians do.

The hope is that Trump will bring the hostages home. Many Jews felt that the Biden administration came off as too weak when he sought to negotiate a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, and a return of the hostages. Of course, Biden did negotiate a ceasefire with Hezbollah in recent days. The remarks by Biden about the ceasefire showed his unwavering support for Israel. Still, Harris's administration would be a continuation of some of Biden's failures regarding Israel.

Recently, Trump came out with an online post that said: "...if the hostages are not released prior to January 20, 2025, the date that I proudly assume Office as President of the United States, there will be ALL

HELL TO PAY..." He went on to write "RELEASE THE HOSTAGES NOW!" This post was applauded by many in the Jewish community. Yes, he has not done anything yet, but the previous strides Trump has made with Israel gives me the confidence that his actions as President will help Israel defeat Hamas.



# Concert showcases steel pan classes

EVELYN GROSS &  
OLIVIA CHOI  
*Staff & Contributing Writers*

Steel Pan classes performed at the Upper Division Bands and Steel Holiday Concert this Tuesday for parents, faculty, and students. Rehearsals for the event began a month ago, going straight into rehearsals right after their previous performance, Nate Ogiste (12) said.

Students in the ensembles only had a month to learn and rehearse three new songs, Damian Mojica (10) said. “While it might seem like a lot to learn in such a short time, the class’s talent and dedication made it possible,” he said.

In preparation for the concert, students dedicated every class period

to rehearsal, Ogiste said. Many students even practiced in the steel drum room during free periods to hone their skills. “I usually come in during my free periods to practice on the steel drums because 45 minutes in class sometimes isn’t enough time to learn my part or fix mistakes,” Ogiste said.

The extra practice was especially helpful for memorizing the notes and rhythms, which was the most challenging part of preparing for this concert, Ogiste said. It takes a lot of practice, memorization, and studying the sheet music to get the rhythm, timing, and strumming techniques just right, he said. “In the end, it all comes down to consistency.”

Steel Drum Teacher Obe Quarless took suggestions from the class when deciding on the songs for the concert, Mojica said. Quarless made sure the

song choices reflected the concert’s holiday theme, Mojica said. “He also ensures the songs reflect steelpan culture while creating an enjoyable atmosphere for the audience,” he said.

The class performed ‘Give Love on Christmas Day’ by The Jackson 5 and ‘Angels We Have Heard on High’ by Pentatonix, both aligned with the concert’s holiday theme. “My favorite piece was ‘Angels We Have Heard on High’ because of its catchy melody, high-energy vibe, and how well the group performed it,” Mojica said.

The band also collaborated with Valentina Perez-Merlo (12), a singer from the choir, for ‘Give Love on Christmas Day,’ adding a vocal element to their performance. “The song turned out great, and the crowd seemed to love it, giving us a lot of positive feedback,” Ogiste said.

Steel Pan members felt very proud



STEEL DRUMS PERFORMS Courtesy of Joaquin Estrella

of their performance, which drew an audience of around 100 people, Mojica said. For many members, the highlight was seeing all their hard work pay off with a great turnout and an enthusiastic audience. “We spent

weeks working hard as a class leading up to the concert, and it was incredibly rewarding to come together every day and dedicate ourselves to the music,” Mojica said.

AVERY VUKHAC  
*A&E Editor*

Art by Dylan Leftt/Art Director

## SPOTIFY WRAPPED

**Your top 5 artists of 2024 were:**

1. Zach Brain Rot
2. Charli GPT
3. Girl in Red Hot Silly Peppers
4. Matthew Brand
5. HM Doom

**March was your blood boiling barbaric baddie era.**

**June was your pink pony brat sparkle summer era.**

**November was your cry hard party harder crashout era.**

**Your top song of 2024 was Fein by Travis Scott. You were in the top 0.0001% of listeners world-wide.**

**Your top genres were: Gen Alpha Pop, Hell Week Blues, and John Dorr Lab Country.**

**You spent 300 hours on the second floor of the library crying.**

**Your top 5 songs of 2024 were:**

1. Fein, by Travis Scott
2. We Bring the Boom, by AJ and Big Justice
3. Please Please Please (admit me to college), by Sabrina Carpenter
4. Horace Mann Alma Mater, by Dr. Robert Ackerman
5. Born to Run, by David Berenson

# Holding space to watch Wicked this weekend

RENA SALSBERG &  
ANYA MERZA  
*Features & News Editors*

The long-awaited adaptation of the esteemed Broadway musical “Wicked” premiered in theaters on November 22. The movie featured a stacked cast including Ariana Grande, Michelle Yeoh, Bowen Yang, Cynthia Erviro, Jonathan Bailey, and Jeff Goldblum. Leading up to the movie’s premiere, there was a ton of press coverage and interviews circling the media of emotional cast members

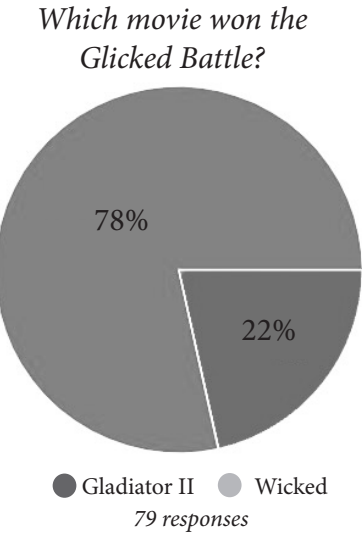
reminiscing on their experiences filming. The cast members reflecting on their experiences caused people to believe that the movie was truly going to be a hit. But were Cynthia and Ariana holding too much space? Were they too emotional and overhyping the movie? We decided to put that to the test.

Wicked did not disappoint; it really did defy gravity. From the movie’s beginning when Ariana ethereally floated down from the sky to the very end when Elphaba powerfully flew through the sky belting the lyrics of “Defying Gravity” Wicked was one of the

most captivating, emotional, and well-done movies to date. The thought and detail put into each scene and the exquisite set was superb. We were a bit worried at first about Ariana Grande being cast for Galinda, but as soon as she began singing it was clear that she was the right choice. As diehard fans of the musical, this movie far exceeded our expectations.

The production of the movie and the thought that went into it was clear the moment it began. There were the equivalent of 12 football fields full of real tulips planted perfectly for the opening

number. Cynthia Erviro trained effortlessly to perfect her stunts while simultaneously belting her songs live. And the best part; the surprise appearance of the original Galinda and Elphaba and Idina Menzel. While we did not book the sing-along theater, we wish we did because with each song we just couldn’t resist singing along. The movie has already been predicted to win multiple Oscars and rightfully so. Watching Wicked was not just watching a movie but it was an immersive experience that made us laugh, cry, and at points feel like we were flying.





# Sea lions blow Fieldston out of the water

ISABELLA BARTOLETTI  
Staff Writer

On Wednesday, the Boys' and Girls Varsity Swim teams (BVS, GVS) dominated their first meet of the season against Fieldston with GVS winning 99-69 and BVS winning 105-65.

While the team anticipated a win against Fieldston, the primary focus of the meet was to organize relay line-ups and assign swimmers to each event, Sebastian Chang (9) said. "We had to hold back so that other teams couldn't strategize or make lineups to beat us later in the season." "[BVS Head Coach Michael Duffy] was especially focused on not overswimming anyone and not revealing all our cards at once," Chang said.

Duffy also analyzed Fieldston's swimmers for strategic purposes, BVS Captain Dylan Montbach (12) said. "Last year, we were really close to beating Trinity on the boys side, but even though you would look at our team and [see] we are much smaller, [Duffy is] so good at figuring out who he can put in events to maximize the points we can get out of it."

At the meet, GVS Captain Rose Korff (12) swam a 1:09.62 in the 100 yard backstroke, tying for first with

another HM swimmer, Alice Qian (9). "I didn't even realize I tied when I first got to the wall – I just saw my time. I first thought, 'Oh, great. I wanted that.' [Then] my mom was like, 'you tied.' It was especially exciting because I got to share first place with someone else on the team."

While some swimmers like Korff shined in their specialized events, others ventured out of their comfort zone to take on relays they had

never swum before. "Ethan Furman (11) swam the 200 Individual Medley (IM) at this meet, which is something he's not usually accustomed to, but he was able to get [third place], which was big in the beginning of the meet," Chang said. "Our captains, Montbach and Noah Castillo (12), played a big role in getting the second and third place points, which was really crucial to completely pounding the beat."

While there were standout highlights from the meet, achieving personal progress carries even more value, GVS Head Coach Thatcher Woodley said. "This might be completing a difficult event for the first time, or it might mean breaking a school or league record. What is most important is that swimmers get better and grow as people."

For Montbach, Fieldston's meet served as an opportunity to cut down his 200-yard freestyle time and to work towards qualifying for NYSAIS, he said. At the meet, Montbach swam a 2:04.48, nearly reaching the NYSAIS qualifying time of sub 2:04. "I'm actually really happy about the time that I got; this is the first meet of the season, and I think there are some adjustments I can make to easily get that down to maybe a 2:01 or even reaching two minutes," Montbach said.

Consistent practice has been critical for success in the pool, Caroline Mignone (10) said. The team will regularly average 3,000 yards each practice session, ranging from sprints and distance sets to stroke-specific workouts. The team will even practice on Thursday mornings beginning at 7:00 AM; she said. "The team works really hard in practices, so the work has definitely paid off with our incredible start to the season."

For Montbach, the effort he has put into each

practice has paid off ever since he first began swimming for the Middle Division team in 7th grade. "I never swam outside of the school, but through the years, I've pushed myself so hard [that] I've made it to points where I've seriously impressed myself with the times that I'm able to go."

While swimming is often dismissed as an individual sport, BVS and GVS emphasize team spirit during meets, Skylar Fraser (12) said. "[Swimming] can be a very overwhelming

sport, so sometimes you forget that it's a team effort," she said. "Cheering people on is one of the biggest parts of these meets because you're supposed to support each other."

While Duffy is optimistic for the season ahead, he emphasizes the importance of team camaraderie to swimmers, he said. "[Varsity Swim] is a tight-knit group. When an HM swimmer is on the starting block, they know they have the support of the team behind them."



WINNING MENTALITY

Courtesy of Heidi Wu

## En garde, prêts, allez: Varsity Fencing beats Avenues in season opener

CIANA TZUO  
Staff Writer

"I think overall we all brought a really good fighting spirit to our first game of the season and were really successful. We cheered each other on, and it was a great moment," Kayla Ogyaadu (10) said. This Wednesday, the Varsity Fencing Team (VFT) had their first match of the season, defeating Avenues in all categories except boys foil.

The team is broken into different disciplines based on the technique of fencing: epee, foil, and saber.

To prepare for matches, the team starts with running and exercises that focus on footwork, Ogyaadu said. Afterward, they split up into different teams. "In the saber team, we line up and Coach Western will pretend to fence each of us, and we have to respond," she said.

The team mainly focused on their footwork and reaction times while fencing, Wendi Zhong (11) said. "The coaches watch our bouts and point out what we should fix." In addition to practicing with each other, the team has also been weightlifting twice a week at the fitness center, Zhong said.

To prepare for the start of the season, the team has been practicing frequently and fiercely, Alex Tang (12) said. For each practice, fencers play 10 practice matches, fencing everyone else in their respective categories. "That has strengthened our stamina and our understanding of the sport because a lot of people on the team are new to fencing, and it's imperative that we get them that experience before a match," he said.

Despite the disappointing loss for boys foil, there were many highlights in each game, Ogyaadu said. The results were not without controversy, as Michael Oyaniyi (10) lost a match but it was redacted because his opponent went in the wrong order, she said. Onyaniyi ended up fencing again and winning the match 5-0.

There were many students that came back and won their match after being down by large margins, Jack Zhang (10) said. One of these students was Aaron Yang (12), who had a resounding comeback after being down 4-1, he said.

Competing in a new environment was a struggle for many VFT members of the team. VFT arrived late to the match and was not given time to warm up, Tang said. "At home, we have an advantage because we're more used to our gym and space. The Avenues room was small and had a low ceiling that took some getting used to," he said.



GO FOR THE JAB

Courtesy of Nicole Au

Reflecting on the boys foil loss, VFT felt that they didn't assess the opponent as clearly as they wanted to and weren't in the best competitive headspace, Tang said. "I think that they [boys and girls epee] did well because they carefully assessed their opponent, calmed down, and thought about how to win the match, point by point, touch by touch, which we should have also done," he said.

"I think we were all key players. We all tried our best and did a good job,"

Ogyaadu said. The team felt proud of their results – with Boys VFT winning 2-1 and Girls VFT winning 3-0 – and looks forward to their second game of the season against Riverdale today. "For girls foil, I'm really proud of my team and think that they should be more confident because they have the ability to win," she said.



MAKING MOVES

Courtesy of Nicole Au

Additional reporting by Ishan Parfitt



# Record Sports LIONS' DEN

DECEMBER 6TH, 2024

8

## Girls Varsity Squash puts up a valiant performance against Brearley

ZACH HORNFIELD  
Staff Writer

"Two years ago, we won our division nationals in Philadelphia and we are looking forward to reclaiming that title this year," Girls' Varsity Squash (GVSQ) member Alex Leichter (12) said. Despite a string of early season losses and logistical challenges, GVSQ hopes to carry on its momentum from recent years and end this season with the crown once again.

To prepare for the upcoming season, the team worked to integrate a total of three new members, including two freshmen and one senior, GVSQ member Lily Sussman (11) said. Typically, this means training drills and playing challenge matches against each other to determine a starting lineup. "We have a lot of new members on the team, so team members like myself, who have been



LILY SUSSMAN (11) ON THE COURT

Courtesy of Anya Merza

here for a while, are working to integrate the new underclassmen."

For the first time this year, the team has an official coach who works with them to improve their skills, GVSQ member Anya Mirza (12) said. Though not affiliated with the school, he has given the team specific drills to practice and worked to help teach new members essential skills.

Since the school has no designated

squash facility, the team has to travel to White Plains for practice, Alex Leichter (12) said. Despite the long commute, they make the most of their daily trips. "A lot of people have been doing it since their freshman year, so they're really connected to the team, and we have a lot of fun on the bus rides," she said. "We spend a lot of time with the boys' team as well on the way up, so everyone real-

ly knows each other."

Even as a strong team with a tight-knit dynamic, GVSQ struggled against Brearley on Monday. "It was our first time playing them, but we saw their players' rankings on the US Squash website and knew they would be really good," Leichter said.

Unlike familiar opponents like Dalton or Riverdale, GVSQ had never played Brearley before, Mirza said. "All we heard beforehand was that they were a really tough team; they might be number one in our league now."

Even knowing the level of their competition beforehand did little to dissuade the players. "We went all the way to the financial district on a Friday night to play against Brearley," Leichter said. "By the time we had gotten there, we were fired up and knew we were going to try our best no matter what."

Despite the loss, each member put up a fight and made their match-

es difficult to close out, Mirza said. "Especially for some of our lower-ranked players, they didn't miss any easy points or serves, which was impressive since some of them only just started playing." Of all the matches, Mirza found Leichter's performance especially impressive, she said. "Alex managed to come from behind to claim one game as well as a decent number of points."

Sussman was also pleased to see how much effort each member put in across the board, she said. "Especially among some of the new teammates who had never played before, they put in a lot of effort and didn't give up easily," she said. "I really appreciate that."

With the exception of Brearley, few teams are stronger than GVSQ, Leichter said. "It was an unfortunate start for this season, but we're still motivated," she said. "We've won a bunch of matches in the past, and we expect to carry that on in the future."

## BVB secures comeback win against Hackley

TEDDY SPENCER  
Staff Writer

Boys Varsity Basketball (BVB) defeated Hackley 58-47 in an electric comeback win during their first game of the season this Tuesday.

In their first two preseason games against Avenues and Columbia Prep, BVB displayed their ability to score but struggled to keep a lead, especially in their tight game against Columbia, where they lost 58-49 after being up by more than 10 points in the first quarter. "They were pressuring our threes near the end of the game, and they were able to make a lot of defensive adjustments. We have to do a better job of finding different ways to score even after they adjust to our game," Matthew Fratipeitro (11) said.

This pattern of inconsistency persisted throughout the first quarter against Hackley. An early three-pointer from Fratipeitro was

BVB's only basket in the first quarter. On top of being undersized against Hackley's team, BVB struggled to keep up with Hackley's high pressure, allowing them to lead 17-3 by the end of the first quarter.

Through the start of the second quarter, Hackley kept their defensive pressure, which was eventually broken by two important three-pointers from guards Fratipeitro and Kader Kane (11), helping them catch Hackley's lead. Regardless of BVB's resurgence, Hackley quickly peeled away to widen the lead to 28-19 by the end of the half.

The break gave BVB time to adjust their defensive tactics against a strong offensive team. "Once we switched to a 2-3 zone defense [which consists of two players at the front of the defense and three players behind] we started denying all of Hackley's offense - they couldn't score," Captain Danil Hardin (12) said.

These tactical changes influenced BVB's intense defensive start to the third quarter;

only allowing Hackley to score eight points over the entire quarter, while BVB's offense was exhilarating to watch. BVB drained five consecutive three-pointers to cut their deficit to one point, going into the last quarter down 35-36. As BVB encroached on Hackley's lead, the school's crowd became increasingly loud. "The crowd motivated us. We wanted the win, but the crowd wanted the win just as much as us - giving us that extra push to keep on making our threes," Hardin said.

BVB maintained their dominance all the way until the end of the fourth quarter, closing out their first game of the season with a final score of 58-47.

Before the winter season, returning varsity players organized intramural scrimmages to get an early look at the team, Damian Mojica (10) said. "By practicing through the fall and last spring, we have definitely built a lot more team chemistry throughout the offseason."

Many of the plays that the team used were designed for their star returning players—mainly Mojica and Fratepeitro, Hardin said. "We play around two players—Damian, who is a great scorer and can score from inside the paint and outside, and Matthew, who is our perimeter threat, and branch off that."

Last year, the team endured a lackluster season, finishing with a losing record of 4-13. This season, BVB hopes to return to winning form with the help of eight new players, mainly juniors. "We learned from last year's team that they didn't have a great record, and I know the morale week to week was not great for them, so coming to this year, Mr. Bauld really wanted us to start off the season with a stronger spirit than last year," Ian Allard-Neptune (11) said.



COOPER WINTER (11) TAKES A SHOT

Photo by James Moore

## ROAR BOARD

**GIRLS VARSITY FENCING V.S  
AVENUES 12/4  
WIN:**

**BOYS VARSITY SWIM V.S  
FIELDSTON 12/4  
WIN: 91 - 74**

**GIRLS VARSITY SWIM V.S  
FIELDSTON 12/4  
WIN: 99 - 69**

**BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL V.S  
HACKLEY 12/3  
WIN: 58 - 47**

**BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL V.S  
HACKLEY 11/22  
LOSS: 49 - 58**

**GIRLS VARSITY SQUASH V.S  
BREARLEY 11/22  
LOSS: 0 - 7**

**BOYS VARSITY SQUASH V.S  
UN INTL SCHOOL 11/25  
WIN: 6 - 1**