

The Red & White

Family Weekend Edition Oct 3, 2025

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A SEASON OF NEW VOICES: WELCOMING OUR NEW FACULTY FOR 2025–26!

LEO WU '27
MANAGING EDITOR

This fall, our campus community continues to quietly grow—and not just with new students. We're thrilled to welcome sixteen new faculty members who bring fresh perspectives, passions, and experiences to the hilltop. The Red & White had the precious opportunity to interview several of them and learn about their responsibilities, beliefs, and (many) fun facts.

Matthew Vivian, St. George's new AB Calculus and Introduction to Precalculus teacher, Dorm Parent in West Village, and Pickleball Club leader. Drawn to SG by its passionate community (and, he jokes, the free food), Vivian brings experience from Belmont High School, where he learned to adapt his teaching for all kinds of learners. He hopes his students leave his class more confident in math and more comfortable embracing "productive

struggle." Outside the classroom, he's a spike ball enthusiast (several of St. George's students have witnessed his, quoting an anonymous contributor, "terrifying skills") and time-travel dreamer (as long as he can make it back for class).

Lilly Furtado is St. George's new Biology teacher, a Middlesex alumnus, and Mr. Vivian's designated villain if his life were a movie. With a background in shark research and experience mentoring students from high school to university, Furtado loves connecting science to the real world. She's planning plenty of hands-on labs, guest speakers, and even a boat trip investigating biodiversity for her classes. Outside the lab, she enjoys hanging out with her cat Boo, baking chocolate chunk cookies, and sipping vanilla rooibos tea from her favorite local café.

Caitlin Hart-Loi is St. George's new Honors Algebra 2 and Precalculus teacher, as well as a cross-country and swim coach, and Arden dorm parent. After four years at Poly Prep in Brooklyn, she traded city streets for Newport's seaside trails and couldn't be happier to live, teach, and jog among a close-knit community. She hopes her students leave her class proud of doing hard things (and with more math confidence, too). Her mornings start with toast, butter, and Bonne Maman jam, always packed from home in portable sizes, and her bookshelf favorite is Christopher McDougall's *Born to Run*, which she has read three times and counting.

St. George's new Director of Jazz Band and Orchestra, and instructor of Music Technology, Songwriting, and Foundations in Music, is **Karl Grohmann**.

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CONVOCATION 2025

KATHERINE CLOVIS '26
MANAGING EDITOR

On the morning of September 4, 2025, the Hilltop saw a sun that streamed through the windows of the storied and beloved chapel; there, the annual Convocation service took place. The day arrived after an onslaught of orientation activities, frenzied move-in festivities, form meetings, and various social programming. Garbed in starch collars, pressed blazers, and flowy dresses, the student body filled the wooden pews with great anticipation for the year ahead. Head of School Michael Wirtz opened the service with rather banal patter about the "power" of the St. George's community—then came the twist: he revealed to the audience that his opening remarks were generated by ChatGPT. Wirtz then crumpled up his speech, cast it aside, and proceeded to deliver a far more incisive message: "Shortcuts are almost always available," he declared, "but they do not yield the best results; real learning, real growth, real improvement requires effort."

Following Wirtz's Convocation Chapel address, Associate Head of School Elizabeth Bickford introduced the new and Emeriti faculty members directly to the school community. Next, Dean of Academics Gretchen Boger enumerated the many students who earned awards for their scholarship and leadership.

Three sixth-formers—Lila Jette '26, Eric Lin '26, and Angel Yu '26—were inducted into the St. George's chapter of the Cum

Laude Society, a national organization committed to recognizing superlative scholastic achievement in high schools. Six additional students of various forms were named Top Scholars: Colin Spence Fitzgibbons '26, Emma Fillmore Levi '26, Eric Lin '26, Antonio Mattera '26, Angel Yu '26, Alice Opal Tamsin Lank '27, Leo Wu '27, Jiaming Xu '27, and Jessica Yao '27.

A procession of awards was then conferred to those who displayed outstanding levels of scholastic achievement. Charlotte Li '28 claimed the highest scholarship in the third form; The Class of 1904 Prize, given to a student "for highest scholarship in the fourth form," went to Jessica Yao '27; Emma Fillmore Levi '26 earned the same distinction for the sixth form.

Awards were also granted to students who distinguished themselves in academic disciplines ranging from STEM to the humanities to the arts. The Howe Prize, "for excellence in graphic arts," honored Zoe Chen '26; the Pell Award, for distinction in United States history, was bestowed to Angel Yu '26; the Chinese Prize, "awarded to a student who has demonstrated consistently high performance in the study of Mandarin Chinese and shown a genuine interest in the Chinese language and culture while at St. George's," was presented to Cecile-Jeanne Gillin '26; the Rensselaer Prize, "awarded to a member of the fifth form for outstanding

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NEW FACULTY

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A teacher with two decades of experience, he approaches each rehearsal with confidence and empathy, enabling students to develop not only as musicians but also as creative thinkers. Now a Wheeler resident and JV Boys Tennis coach in the spring, he is excited to become part of a community that celebrates the arts and individuality in equal parts. Whether cueing up a trumpet solo or a new tune in class, Grohmann hopes students will leave feeling inspired, nurtured, and just a little more in tune with themselves.

From surfboards to sketchbooks, **Edward Benfield** brings creativity and energy to the hilltop as the new Visual Arts teacher, leading Visual Foundations and Introduction to Photography, coaching the Surf Club and JV Boys Lacrosse, and serving as a Thursday-night Dorm Parent in Astor. Formerly teaching 3rd–8th graders at Shady Hill School in Cambridge, he has a knack for helping students discover their artistic voices early in high school. He hopes every student leaves class confident in their creativity, knowing everyone is an artist. Off the clock, he makes homemade hot sauce, frequently checks Surflife for waves, and recently celebrated his wedding on September 20th (go congratulate him!).

Meet **Jacob Bonnell**, St. George's new College Counselor, Eccles Dorm Head, and Varsity Volleyball Coach. With experience at Woodberry Forest School in Virginia and a school outside Tokyo, he brings a global perspective and a passion for connecting with students in all facets of school life. He wants students to know that while the college admission process can be tricky, he'll help them navigate it with confidence. Beyond counseling, he's undefeated in ping-pong for the past three years and, as a kid, dreamed of being a Ceratosaurus with the spikes and all. Most importantly, he loves being part of St. George's welcoming, close-knit community.

Meet **Madelyn Beitler**, St. George's new Honors Biology, DNA Science, and Field Ecology teacher, Varsity Field Hockey, Ice Hockey, and Lacrosse coach, and West Village A Dorm Parent. Drawn to SG by its location and tight-knit community, she is excited to live closer to family in Rhode Island while mentoring students in all aspects of school life. With experience at a previous boarding school, she brings hands-on, approachable teaching that makes science feel accessible, fun, and relevant. Outside of her classroom, she runs on iced coffee and dreams of swimming with dolphins, truly blending curiosity in and out of the classroom.

Nathaniel Waters, new III Form Humanities and American History teacher, East Dorm Head, and Boys' JV Hockey coach, is drawn to St. George's by its intentional approach to place-based learning and the Episcopal tradition. He was equally excited to work alongside faculty he admires and to join a welcoming, vibrant community. After 16

years at his previous school, he brings experience tempered with a “beginner’s mindset,” eager to learn and grow anew. In class, he hopes students leave having laughed, felt connected, and challenged in equal measure. In his free time, he’s mastering omelette technique via Jacques Pépin videos.

Last but not least, three familiar faces have returned to the Hilltop this year—**Isaac McCray, Chyra Williams, and Liam Smith**—all proud St. George's alumni who bring fresh energy and occasionally reminiscent perspectives (i.e. challenged to call past teachers by their first names) to the community that helped shape them. McCray joins the Admission team while serving as Offensive Coordinator for Varsity Football and a Dorm Parent in Eccles, eager to give back to the mentors and traditions that guided his own St. George's journey. Williams, now teaching Precalculus and residing in Porter House, brings patience, encouragement, and a belief that every student can find confidence in math. When not in the classroom, you might find her surfing or coaching swimming. And Smith, returning after time at Tufts University as a yoga sculpt instructor and software engineer, teaches Computer Science 500 and 600, where he challenges students to see coding not just as a skill, but as a way to question technology's social impact in the very contemporary year of 2025. The community is very fortunate to have them ready to inspire the next generation just as St. George's once inspired them.



New Faculty
(Image Source: Communications Office)

LIFE AS A FACULTY KID



Caroline Whitlock '29
Contributing Writer

Almost everyone at a boarding school knows the difference between being a day student and being a boarding student. But what about faculty kids? A faculty kid is exactly what it sounds like: a child of someone who works at the school. Oftentimes, these kids have lived on campus for several years before ever taking a class. In addition, they get to experience aspects of both the day and boarding student experience. I myself am a faculty kid and am lucky enough to have lived on campus for the majority of my life. I recently spoke with fellow third-form faculty kids to discuss our experiences living on campus. Growing up on campus means making many St. George's memories over the years. Some favorites included going to the ice rink during school breaks with friends, getting to experience the thrill of Friday Night Lights, and the excitement of eating dinner in King Hall. One student even recalled her top three spots on campus from growing up. In no order, she said, “The Field House, Big Tree, and the playground.” For those unfamiliar with the Big Tree, it's a faculty kid staple, located near the rink, and is home to two rope swings. Over my years growing up here, other faculty kids and I have been known to spend hours playing and climbing in the trees, and of course, sometimes getting stuck way up high. Thankfully, our parents are right on campus to help with any rescues. With all these memories around the school, the freshman year transition is a unique experience for us. Some recalled the strange familiarity of having classes in rooms that they remembered from distant childhood memories. Others shared that they were surprised by their lack of knowledge of the inside of academic buildings, as those were places they hadn't previously explored. Though there were many things left to

learn, these students acknowledged the luxury of having prior knowledge of the school. One shared that “Knowing King Hall is nice, and it's nice to be able to point people in the right direction.” Another mentioned possible downsides of being so familiar with the campus. One faculty kid pointed out that since they knew about the experience, starting high school was not as “shiny and new,” in comparison to other new students. This student further explained, and said that starting high school as a faculty kid felt like “Looking at someone else's gently used map.” With this said, many mentioned feelings of excitement. While growing up at St. George's, some recalled feeling like they were never a true member of the community. These students expressed their eagerness to finally call themselves official dragons. Many were excited to not just be observers but to be a part of the action. Specifically, they were ready to finally be a student for events like Middlesex weekends and all the dances. Lastly, some shared their advice for future third-form faculty students. “Make sure you know the last names of your teachers, not just the first name!!!” “Call buildings by names that people know. Not just the big glass building, it's the Academic Building.” Ultimately, the experience of growing up on St. George's campus leaves a profound impact on every faculty kid. Growing up here gives us lifelong friends, unique memories, and a deeper appreciation for the school. Reflecting on my own experience, being a faculty kid has had such a positive impact on my life. Between rolling skating in the hallways of West and having endless waffles at the dining hall, living on campus allowed me to just be a kid. I could knock on any neighbor's door and spend hours wandering around campus, without a care in the world. Just like my fellow faculty kids, I am so excited to finally experience the Hilltop as a student and cannot wait to make so many more memories at St. George's.

CONVOCATION 2025

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achievement in mathematics and science,” went to Henry Liu ’26; and last—but certainly not least—the Robinson Chemistry Prize, presented to a student for excellence in chemistry, was awarded to Jiaming Xu ’27.

The awards ceremony concluded with three awards honoring students who had exhibited exemplary leadership, scholarship, and character in the preceding year. The Allen Prize, “awarded to a member of the fourth form who during the year, in the opinion of the faculty, has maintained a high standard in all departments of the life of the school,” was given to Peter Duhamel ’27; the Yale Prize, awarded by the Head of School to a sixth former for “for excellence in scholarship and character,” was presented to Zoe Chen ’26; at last, the Harvard And Radcliffe Clubs Of Rhode Island Prize, “for the student of the fifth form whom the Head of School and the faculty deem most worthy in scholarship, effort, and character,” was awarded to Jules Patterson ’26.

Following the ceremony, the chapel doors swung wide, releasing the St. George’s community into the crisp September morning as students and faculty scurried to their classes en masse—the new academic year had officially begun, and with it, the promise of all that lay ahead.



Convocation 2025
(Image Source: Communications Office)

ANIMALS ON CAMPUS



Avery Baker ’28
Contributing Writer



Brooke Holland ’28
Contributing Writer

Everywhere you look on the St. George’s campus, animal friends are running around and enjoying everything the Hilltop has to offer. They bring so much life and happiness to the community, whether they’re playing, exploring, or just being their adorable selves. Every single one of these St. George’s pets is amazing in their own way, and it’s hard not to smile when you see them. For this edition, we’re taking a closer look at three of these animals to share their stories and show why they’ve become such a fun part of life here on the Hilltop.

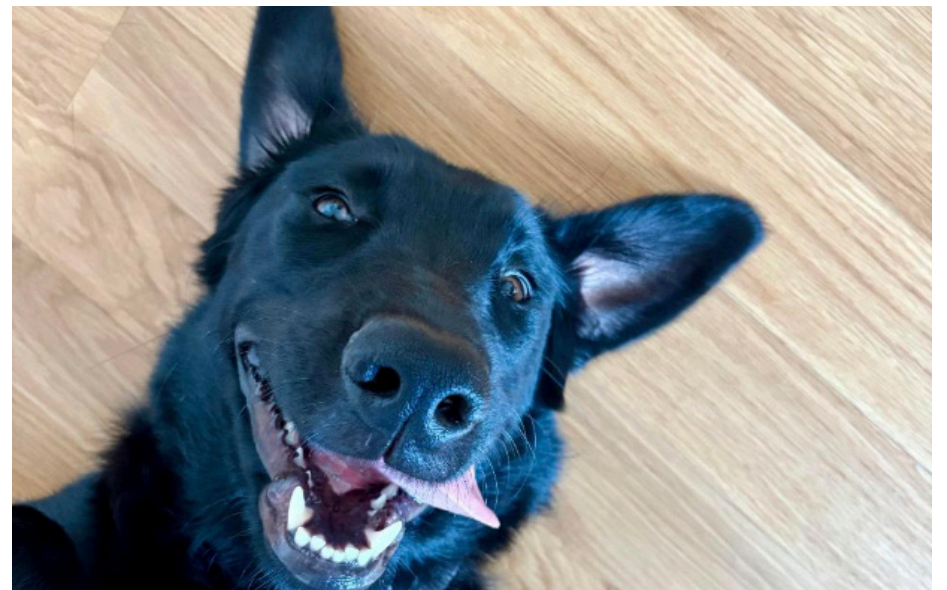
Starting with one many know, but for those who don’t, meet Nico. Partner in crime to Neile Golding, he loves life. When it is his day for dorm duty, he is beyond thrilled. Roaming the halls for leftover snacks and seeing the kids makes his day. Another side to Nico besides his charm for people is his love for sports that he shares with Golding. Kicking the soccer ball with her is one of his favorite hobbies that he could do endlessly. He loves the tennis courts and, obviously, all the amazing tennis balls that it has to offer. Really, anything that involves the outdoors is up his alley; he loves nature and strolling whenever he can. One final attribute that concludes who Nico is can be summed up in one word: food! If there is food, no matter what size or flavor, he will be there to clean it up for you. Beware, if food is near, Nico isn’t far. On his birthday, the guy loves buttered steak and sweet potatoes with peas on the side. For dessert, any remnant of ice cream left in the container is all his! This gentleman named Nico is one to remember, and hopefully next time you see him, say hello!

Next up, meet Suki, the lively and lovable Lab Retriever mix who’s quickly stolen everyone’s hearts on campus. At just one year old, this sweet pup from South Carolina has quickly made herself at home since joining the Hart-Loi family on September 12, 2025. Whether she’s curling up for a cozy snuggle session on the couch or eagerly sniffing out the campus bunnies during her walks, Suki’s curiosity shines through continuously. She adores splashing through the waves at the beach and gets extra excited during dorm duty at Arden and cross-country practice, where she makes new friends in every corner of campus she goes. And if that wasn’t enough, after every walk, she stands alert by the Diman door, hoping to catch someone who’ll give her a little extra loving affection. It’s clear that Suki has certainly found her home very quickly here on the hilltop.

Last but certainly not least, meet Jack O’Lantern, a very friendly, very social cat who’s quickly become a beloved member of the Manor community. Adopted by the MacMullen’s

from the Potter League in Middletown back in 2023, Jack’s charm is undeniable, even if MacMullen admits some bias! Since moving to St. George’s, Jack spends much of his time peacefully napping in his cozy window hammock, which offers a perfect view of Second Beach. Known for being quite vocal, he also loves playtime, especially with toys covered with fur or feathers. This summer, Jack’s outdoor adventures stepped up a notch with the addition of a catio (cat patio) on the porch, now his favorite new hangout spot. MacMullen even hopes to bring him to class someday, just like some faculty bring their dogs. With many charming qualities, Jack is another wonderful example of the furry friends who make campus life so special.

All in all, Nico, Suki, and Jack show just how much the Hilltop is full of life, not just from the students and teachers, but from the pets too. They make our days brighter, keep us smiling, and bring a little extra fun to campus life. Whether it’s Nico chasing tennis balls, Suki making new friends on her walks, or Jack hanging out in his hammock, each of them is part of what makes St. George’s feel like home. Next time you see them or any St. George’s pet, say hi!



Suki
(Image Source: Caitlin Hart-Loi)

A DEAN AND HIS DOG: MR. JONES RECEIVES TABS KALEIDOSCOPE AWARD



Miles Johnson '28
Contributing Writer

During assembly on Friday, September 12th, Xander Jones, dean of students at St. George's, was awarded the TABS Burch Ford Kaleidoscope Award. TABS is an acronym for The Association of Boarding Schools. According to TABS, this is an award granted to a boarding school administrator who has "Shown an exemplary spirit of vocation, a devotion to service, and a leadership gift" and "Modeled inspiration, commitment, and integrity as a person and as a professional." I sat down with Jones to hear how he came to St. George's and what this award means to him.

Jones described himself as being "kind of born into it (boarding schools)." He and his sister grew up on a boarding school campus where his parents worked. His own career began at Salisbury School in Connecticut. After two years of working there, he took on the role of Assistant Athletic Director, which is where his career in administration began. This career has spanned over the past seventeen years, ten of which he's spent at St. George's. Here, he worked under former Dean of Students, Derry Mason, before claiming the role himself.

When I asked Jones what the most important parts of his job were, he responded, "I think the important aspects of being in this role are being present and visible. I think having the ability to make connections with the student community, with the adult community, is really, really important. And the best ways to do those things are to not hide in your office all day... being able to get out and see, to see the campus, to see the kids, to see your colleagues,

"There's a whole ensemble cast that helps with all of those things... It's never about one person."

— — *Xander Jones*

while possibly difficult, is really important."

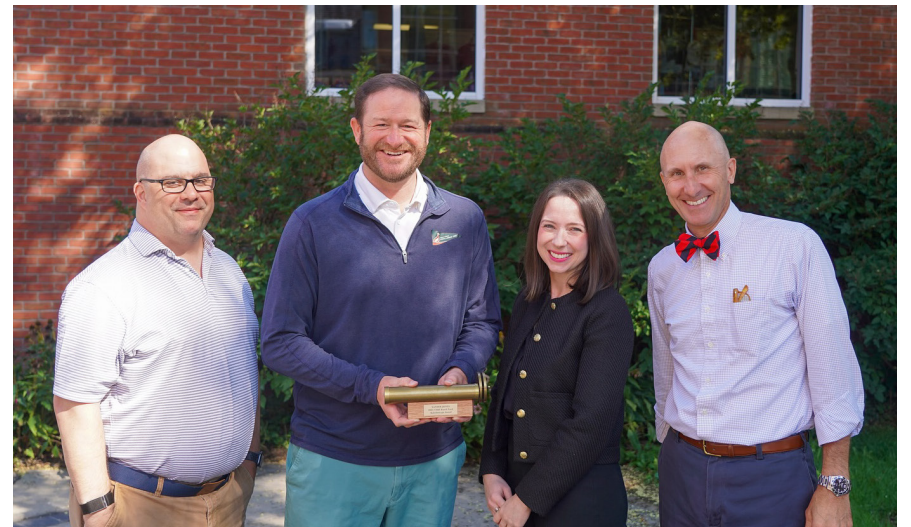
Of course, discipline is a sizable portion of the job as well, and it leads many deans to be viewed as people who are there only to punish the students. Jones, however, claims that that's only about five to 10 percent of his job.

We also talked a bit about Jones' goals for the school. He told me, "When I think about the opportunities for students, my hope is that they take advantage of what is in front of them in this environment... Students have the opportunity to try something here and learn if it might become a passion. If they try it and they decide, you know, I'm happy I tried it, but it's not for me, that's just as good. So I guess if I had a goal for the school and for the students of the school, it would be to create an environment where people feel it's safe to take a risk, a healthy risk." He recounted his own experience of being forced to take an art class in high school. The class, called acting improv, had such a profound effect on him that he stated, "I truly don't think I'd be in the role I'm in today (if not for taking it). It taught me so much."

"It was a shock to receive it. I admittedly had never even heard of it." This was Jones' first response to my question of what the award meant to him. His next words, "I think what it means to me is that I've done enough to make a positive impact on others," reflect everything he's said before about being in tune with the community, and his belief that this is primarily a supportive role, rather than a punitive one. He also acknowledged the people who helped him along the way. "While I was one of the handful getting recognized for this award, it's not without tremendous help from others... I think of my parents, I think

of my past colleagues and mentors, and I think about my current colleagues and mentors. Awards, individual awards are about more than just that person. There's a whole ensemble cast that helps with all of those things. Whether that's through mentorship, whether it's through direct and actionable tasks, or idea creation. It's never about one person."

At the end of our conversation, I took the opportunity to ask Jones about his dog, Moose. The presenter of the Kaleidoscope award mentioned that he was a gift from students, which many of us were unaware of. The plan to get him a dog was a very poorly kept secret. Jones recalls that "In January (2023), kids in the senior class started asking me, 'If you were to have a dog, what kind of dog would you like?' I was like, what? And then in February, the questions kept going, but it was like, every



Xander Jones receiving the TABS Ford Kaleidoscope Award
(Image Source: Communications Office)

now and then I'd catch something." Finally, the mother of a student involved in the operation told him about the plan. He recalls not taking this seriously or thinking it would actually happen.

However, he said that in March, "A small handful, like three or four of the kids, came into my office, which was upstairs, and were like, we found you the dog. Will you accept it? I really thought this was a joke the whole time. I didn't think they'd actually have the ability to pull it off." But they did, and after checking with some other faculty members to make sure it was appropriate, Jones accepted the gift. "Yeah, so, April of 2023, he made his first appearance on campus. He's had a good time ever since."

"I think what it means to me is that I've done enough to make a positive impact on others."

— — *Xander Jones*

WHY OUR MASCOT MATTERS: HOW ONE DRAGON EMBODIES ST. GEORGE'S



Catherine Maloney '28
News Editor

Walking across campus on a crisp fall morning, with Old School and the view of the Atlantic Ocean stretching out beyond Second Beach, it is hard not to feel the weight of tradition at St. George's. The Hilltop has seen generations of students pass through, carrying books to class, skates to the rink, or sticks to the field. And always above them, watching from banners, jerseys, and carvings, is the dragon.

St. George's adopted the dragon mascot in arbitrary fashion, but the choice carries real meaning. In legend, Saint George defeats a foe far stronger than himself. Students here know that same feeling: confronting the dragons of daily life—mountains of homework, packed athletic schedules, club commitments, and the challenge of finding our own voices in chapel. Yet unlike the legend, our dragon lives on. Because reality is more complicated than a simple story, St. George's has transformed the dragon from an enemy to a symbol—not of something we slay, but of something we become.

The dragon is our source of power, resilience, and spirit. It shows up in unexpected places: pushing us to class after a snowstorm, giving us fire in a rivalry game against Middlesex, or even reminding us that courage is needed just to step up and speak in front of our peers. When the community gathers for the tradition of slaying the zebra cake before taking the field against Middlesex, we feed our inner dragons and remember that we are united, not just as players and fans, but as parts of a powerful community.

That community is what the school's mission statement points us toward: "to give its students the opportunity of developing to the fullest extent possible the particular gifts that are theirs and to encourage in them the desire to do so." The dragon is more than a mascot; it is the living expression of this promise. Each of us has our own dragon traits that fuel us to greatness that St. George's fosters, whether it is a love of music or science, English or sailing. Whatever we do, whatever we love, none of us stands alone. A dragon is only powerful with its scales, wings, and fire acting together. When our community comes together, we become One Dragon, which embodies the truth that the school is strongest

when every individual grows and every member of the community cares for one another.

Our dragon also embodies multiple powers at once. Academics, athletics, faith, and community life aren't separate tracks but parts of the same body, moving together.

New students arrive looking to find their dragon fire. Faculty and staff are the brains and heart of the dragon, providing knowledge, wisdom, and comfort. They help the dragon make sense of the world and shape how the fire is used. The whole school community continues "feeding the dragon" through contributions, rituals, and traditions that sustain its life. Alumni go out into the world, becoming wings on the dragon that not only lift up the school financially but also pave the path for current students.

As Head of School Michael Wirtz explains, "One dragon is about a community pulling together in support of one another, how we treat each other and show up for one another. It is shorthand for who we aspire to be and represents our core values." Wirtz got the idea of One Dragon when he was interviewing Miss Ham, and she mentioned Connecticut College's One Camel concept. He felt this year was the right time for One Dragon to take flight.

NEW COURT CULTURE: AN INTRODUCTION TO GIRLS' VARSITY BASKETBALL HEAD COACH



Veronica Visconti '27
Contributing Writer

For the past few years, the girls' varsity basketball team has dominated NEPSAC Class B. They've played hard every season, made it to the finals time and time again, and even won championship games. This success didn't just suddenly happen, though. It is the direct culmination of years of team building, passion, and collective grit. One might ask how that culture has come to be, and why the team continues to grow. The simple answer is leadership. The athletic department has brought a new coach to the Hilltop for the 2025-26 season. Maddie Bledsoe, a Wesleyan alum, has been appointed as head coach of the Girls' Varsity Basketball team. She also teaches third form biology and assists with junior varsity coaching in other areas. Becoming the GVB coach is not a light role to take on, but

Coach Bledsoe is prepared. When asked about the type of culture she's looking to build in the program, Bledsoe described a "we over me" philosophy, where the prosperity of the team as a whole is prioritized over sole individual. "The best teams play for each other, and that's how we're going to get the most out of the talent we have," Bledsoe said. Teamwork and unity are fundamental to cultivating success, as Coach Bledsoe knows. However, even the most selfless teams face obstacles during the season. In this level of basketball, where the most skilled come together to play, the environment is intense, and college recruitment is on the line, challenges are inevitable. The pressure to do well, win games and impress scouts starts from the very beginning of the season, and grows steadily throughout. The question is, how does one rise above that pressure? Maybe, it's by simply staying passionate, and enjoying the game. In an interview, Payton Scurry '27 said that the team was looking for "a coach who will guide us to improving not just individually, but as a team, and a coach

who makes sure we are having fun while doing so." While this again emphasizes the goal of collective teamwork, it also serves as a reminder that joy is important to accomplish success in a sport; necessary, even. A coach who facilitates a fun learning environment, where players improve while staying passionate, is a coach who has done their job. When asked how she approaches tough times during the season, Bledsoe replied, "I focus on building winning habits early on, so that when times get difficult, as they do in every season, we have those habits to fall back on so that we can push through and ahead." Additionally, Bledsoe said that she is planning to bring players of different ages together on and off the court by "sticking with the team culture piece," which involves "Playing games early in the fall, doing activities together, bonding, and forming those connections across grades." "We have a really good, welcoming group of girls," Bledsoe added. It is true that teamwork is made possible with inclusivity, regardless of age or years of experience. Younger or less experienced players can be acknowledged not just on the court, but off it as well, in the team's social setting. So, where has Bledsoe developed all of these coaching values from? Where has the influence stemmed from? When asked what made her aspire to become a coach, Bledsoe said, "For one, I have a very strong passion for basketball as a sport. But also, through high school and college, I had some very influential coaches who changed the trajectory of my career, who were also very important people in my life. I want to take the opportunity to be that person for others." Now that she has the chance to extend the same positive influence that she once experienced onto the girls' varsity team at St. George's, Bledsoe seems excited, and ready. She will undoubtedly foster a great environment and lead the girls' team strongly throughout this upcoming season.

ARTIST OF THE EDITION: REESE STARLING '26



Angel Yu '26
Editor-in-Chief

"The Very Hungry Caterpillar", a childhood encounter with watercolor, was how Reese Starling '26 embarked on her artistic journey. If you have stopped to appreciate the artwork displayed in the Art Center, or flipped through pages of The Dragon, you will find Starling's unique presence there. Her earliest memory of art is of a hot summer morning, when she slipped away from nap time and pulled out a set of watercolors to paint her favorite stuffed animal. The painting still hangs in her home, a reminder of the immense joy she felt putting color to paper.

"I've always tried to put joy on the paper," as Starling recalled, "And I was always known as the class artist or the family artist."

Over the years, her relationship with art has deepened beyond doodling and matured in both techniques and emotional expressions.

Stepping into high school, as Starling recounted, was a period of significant artistic challenge yet also great inspiration. Being enrolled in systematic art classes as a freshman altered the way Starling viewed art and her identity as an artist. "Art used to be very recreational for me, but the classes were very skill-based," as Starling remembered. Accessing resources and curricula that honed in on fostering both techniques and creativity, she also created one of her proudest works during freshman year. Starling completed an expressive self-portrait with graphite pencil, through which she explored introspection of emotions and an inner juxtaposition. The portrait captures Starling's push-and-pull of emotions during a stage of transition both in life and in art. From then on, a deeper and more complex relationship



Juxtaposition
Artist: Reese Starling '26



Observational Drawing: Peppers
Artist: Reese Starling '26

with art was established. As Starling said, "I realized what messages I want my art to bring to the audience, rather than just drawing something pretty." While continuing to navigate the visual appeal and intricacy of her art, Starling began to develop a more complete art persona, through which she is not only representing herself but also speaking to the audience.

Arriving at St. George's, Starling continued on her artistic journey. In Mike Hansel's 2D Drawing class, she created a series of drawings that explore her connection to her identity as a female. "I was raised in a household of women, and even my pets are female," she laughed. Femininity and female experience, both personal and collective, became an important anchor in her work. In her concentration, she created a painting that depicts "a torso with flowers on the outside of it, with hands plucking away the flower petals." Developed from an idea that she had carried for a long time, the work became her way to respond to current events surrounding women's bodily rights and autonomy. "The hands plucking the petals represent the person not having control over what's done to their body," Starling explained.

But this evolution did not come without difficulty. Moving from recreational painting to concentration-based work proved to be a challenge. "I would stress about wanting the message to be captured precisely and perfectly," Starling admitted, "I would draw thumbnail after thumbnail, but struggle to get it on paper. But eventually, I realized it was more about getting the ideas out rather than being perfect." The ability to empathize and provoke reflection is essential to Starling's creative process, as she strives to grow both as an artist and a storyteller through art.

"A piece of art either needs to be created with strong emotions, or to create a strong emotion," as Starling shared.

To Starling, true art is not equated with sophisticated techniques, but its ability to capture the human soul and provoke the desire to create. That is why she finds herself continually inspired by artists and movements that foreground emotion and connection. The Impressionist movement, with its dream-like colors and shapes, is one of her favorite styles. She often longs to create with that same free-flowing quality, but also reveres the power of such of style of art. Among her favorite artists is Vincent Van Gogh, whose use of color she described as "pleasing to the eye but also powerful." Starling also became greatly interested in the art group Guerrilla Girls, an activist art collective that challenges the art world's inequities. Many of their posters that are humorous and provocative resonate with her both as an artist and a young woman seeking to capture authentic experience in her own work.

For Starling, art is not a practice but a language. It is a way to translate joy, frustration, and memory into what people can see and empathize with. Next time you encounter a display of Starling's work, whether in the wind tunnel or the Hunter Gallery, pause for a moment. You will find more than color and technique— you will find a story, an emotion, and a glimpse into an artist's soul.

“FIRST DANCE” TO “FALL BALL”



Harper Craig '26
Editorial Writer

The Fall Ball, formerly “First Dance”, has been a St. George’s tradition for many years. This dance is a great way to kick off the new year. Every grade has a specific theme. For Freshmen, the theme is tie-dye T-shirts; for Sophomores, it is metallic; juniors wear neon; and Seniors wear black. Grades come together to dance and listen to music played by a DJ in the Great Room.

This year, First Dance has undergone numerous changes, including a title update and new rules. Many faculty members have explained that these rules are intended to ensure the safety of students and prevent harassment. For example, there has been a tradition for the seniors to rip the Tie-Dye shirts of the freshmen as a way of playful “hazing”. However, this became very controversial. The faculty has decided to ban the ripping of these T-shirts and has also removed the use of water guns. These are all precautions to protect the safety of the students. However, another banned tradition that has led to some confusion is the prohibition on whistles that seniors would bring to the dance. In the

past, whistles were part of the seniors’ theme, but some faculty members have mentioned that they have been taken “too far” recently. Instead of using them as a fun accessory to complement the music and general vibe of the dance, our faculty have mentioned that some seniors used them to “haze” underclassmen, bothering many students. Another significant change from “First Dance” to “Fall Ball” is its timing. In previous years, First Dance was always held on the second weekend of school, making it feel like the start of the school year. Now, Fall Ball is held after a month of school, shifting the energy of the dance.

I asked some students their personal opinions on these changes. Lilly Bostwick ’27, said, “I think that it is a really fun and great way to bond all the grades and to kick off the beginning of the year”. Bostwick explains that she has always loved First Dance for this reason; however, she also stated, “I think that it makes sense for the teachers to want to get rid of the ripping of the tie-dye shirts, but it’s hard for teachers to understand how that is what makes it fun.” Some other students have agreed with Bostwick that, although there are justifiable reasons for these new rules, it is hard because they have always been traditions that have given people of each

grade something to look forward to.

I also spoke to Annie O’Connor ’27 about her opinions on the name change. “I think the reason I liked the name First Dance was because it was unique, but Fall Ball could be something any school could have,” she said. O’Connor also reflected on the timing of the event, adding, “It really felt like the start of the school year.” She admitted, “I get why they made the changes how they did, but it takes away some things that made First Dance unique to St. George’s.”

Overall, whether it is “First Dance” or “Fall Ball,” the student body remains excited and ready for the dance. There is excitement from every grade, as the freshmen get to experience their first-ever dance at St. George’s, while the seniors are happy to be the oldest at a dance, finally. The faculty have explained that they are less worried about “hazing” at Fall Ball due to their new rules, and students continue to appreciate the tradition as a way to come together as a community. While some may miss the aspects that made First Dance unique, Fall Ball remains one of the most anticipated events of the year, symbolizing both school spirit and the shared energy that marks the beginning of the year at St. George’s.



First Day of Classes 2025
(Image Source: Communications Office)

ATHLETE OF THE EDITION: NICOLAS ALBERGA '26



Harshan Hundal '26
Arts & Lifestyles Editor



Antonio Mattera '26
Sports Editor

Nicolas Alberga '26 is from Montreal, Canada, and is an integral part of the recent success of the Boys Varsity Soccer Team. Coming off a season with 14 goals and 3 assists, along with the prestigious “all NEPSAC” award, he looks to help lead the team into an even better season. “Building off the historic season we achieved together, we must continue to work harder to have even more success. There are more expectations for us this season so we have to go out and prove everyone right,” he said. Starting off at 3-1-1, the St. George’s Boys Varsity Soccer team has not disappointed so far.



Nicolas Alberga '26
(Image Source: Nicolas Alberga)

When Alberga arrived at St. George’s, he was unsure if he would fit in socially or understand the team culture right away. However, “My teammates have always treated me as if I were their brother and never as an outsider,” he shares, crediting that the team’s welcoming environment as a major factor in his confidence on and off the field. These strong relationships within the squad can be attributed to Coach Quintin, who has sought to make the boys friends and teammates first, then individuals second. Alberga appreciates greatly that “Coach Quintin has always believed in me. Since he first saw me play in Canada, we became close and he gave me an opportunity. He has treated me as a son and supported me as an international student. I am committed to repaying his efforts by bringing home a championship.”

Alberga has high aspirations not only for himself, but also for the rest of the soccer team, as he states, “I want to win team MVP for the second year in a row, as well as being an All Offensive Player in the ISL. I would also love to finish out my senior year with a class B and ISL championship, bringing some hardware to our cabinets.”

The team has been dangerous in front of goal so far, with 16 goals in 8 matches. This may be in part due to the several strong recruits Coach Shay Quintin brought in this year, notably including Titus Henries '29 and Mitchell Kollie '29, both coming from NationOne Academy in Liberia. According to Alberga, “The new recruits are integrating very well. I am working to try and make St. George’s their home away from their home, which is thousands of miles away. They have had a direct impact on the team’s results and have helped us win. With some more time to understand our tactical preferences, they will be even better and more impactful.”

Tactically speaking, Alberga believes that the team is already clinical but could definitely work on lifting another up defensively: “We are a small but very technical team that is

dangerous going forward, so all that is left to do is play with passion defensively and stay together, and the sky will be the limit.”

The team dynamic has gradually improved year by year. With eight seniors this year, Alberga and the others are working to uplift everyone and build off of the success from last year. According to Lawsen Fevrier 26, “Nico is my friend first and teammate second. Our close bond allows us to overcome adversity while playing in the midfield and work harder because I am relationally invested with Nico and our team’s success.”

Alberga’s favorite moment in a St. George’s jersey was both painful and unforgettable: “I dislocated my shoulder twice in our first ever playoff game against Middlesex and still managed to score the winner that sent us to the semi-final.” Even though that moment was bittersweet, it fueled Alberga’s drive to compete for a championship in Class B. Having set his sights on bringing home a championship, Alberga is ready to lead by example and make his final season at SG his most memorable yet.

NFL SEASON



Henry Picotte '27
Sports Editor

The 2025 NFL season has finally kicked off after months of a grueling offseason full of trade rumors, free agency, draft surprises, and speculation from fans everywhere. Teams across the league are in action with old and new faces chasing a Super Bowl victory. With big-name stars changing teams and rookies looking to prove themselves, each team has its eyes set on the Super Bowl.

The Philadelphia Eagles enter the season as defending champs after beating the Kansas City Chiefs in dominant fashion in the Super Bowl. However, staying on top is not easy, and the rest of the league has been busy making moves.

After seemingly endless contract disputes with Cowboys’ Owner and General Manager, Jerry Jones, top defensive player Micah Parsons was sent to the Green Bay Packers just a week before the season’s kickoff, in arguably the most impactful trade of the entire offseason. Meanwhile, the Washington Commanders have gone all in after their loss in the NFC Championship game last season, trading for offensive tackle Laremy Tunsil and receiver Deebo Samuel. Alongside these moves, Washington was able to re-sign longtime WR Terry McLaurin to a three-year deal, giving QB Jayden Daniels what he needs to succeed.

The AFC saw few blockbuster trades and signings, but still boasts a plethora of dominant teams and players competing. Reigning MVP Josh Allen and the Buffalo Bills look poised to finally reach their goal of winning a Super Bowl after years of heartbreaking losses, especially after their 41-40 win against two-time MVP Lamar Jackson and an extremely dangerous Baltimore Ravens team in a Week 1 game of the year contender.

The Cincinnati Bengals are suffering from the loss of Joe Burrow, who sustained a toe injury in week two that will keep him on the sidelines for at least three months. Burrow threw for nearly 5,000 yards and had 43 touchdowns last season. The Bengals had a promising start to the season, but the outlook is no longer as bright without Burrow.

Also in the AFC are the Kansas City Chiefs. Despite a 0-2 start, Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs can never be counted out, and are still one of the favorites to make it out of the AFC and return to the championship game after appearing in five of the last six Super Bowls.

The best part of each new NFL season is the unknown. Every year, some unknown rookie comes out to make headlines, or a team projected to be at the bottom of the standings makes the playoffs. This season will be no different, which is what makes the NFL so exciting; you never know what’s going to happen.

ARE SELF DRIVING CARS A FIT FOR NEW YORK CITY?



Audrey Vachon '27
Science & Economics Editor

The driverless ride-hailing service Waymo is aiming to expand into New York City. While Waymo already operates in other major cities like San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Austin, bringing it to New York City would present a different set of challenges. These other cities are car-dependent and don't rely as heavily on public transportation as New York City does. New York, however, has millions of residents who depend on subways and buses to get around. Adding driverless cars to an already dense urban landscape could potentially create more problems than it solves.

To understand these risks, we can look back at what happened in the mid-2010s, when ride-hailing companies like Uber and Lyft became extremely popular. This rapid growth occurred in cities that didn't have strong regulations in place. Without these rules, both companies were able to expand quickly, hiring more and more drivers to meet customer demand and outcompete one another. Additionally, to attract more customers, both companies began lowering their prices, leading to a price war that made rides cheap and easily accessible.

While this seems great for customers who want cheap transportation, it causes serious problems, especially in a city like New York. In a place where "48 percent of workers rely on public transportation" according to the New York Times, that kind of shift can put stress

on the roads. The streets of New York are already crowded, and adding even more vehicles would likely lead to heavy gridlock and longer travel times.

While lower prices helped riders save money, they also made life much harder for drivers. Since there were no laws guaranteeing a minimum wage, many drivers struggled to make ends meet. They were responsible for their own gas, insurance, and car maintenance, and their earnings dropped as ride prices continued to fall. In response to these growing problems, former Mayor Bill de Blasio introduced a series of new policies. He put a cap on the number of ride-hail vehicles allowed on the road, created a minimum pay rule for drivers, and supported congestion pricing. One of the major steps was adding a "\$2.75-per-ride surcharge" for non-taxi services, meant to reduce congestion and fund public transit improvements.

New York City has learned from this experience. That's why city officials are being much more cautious about allowing new technologies like Waymo to operate. The fear is that without smart rules and regulations, Waymo's services could repeat the same mistakes that Uber and Lyft made, adding to crowded streets and hurting public transit. As the New York Times put it, "When Uber came to town, New York was naïvely giddy, allowing technology to govern the city." Now, the city is trying to do the opposite because "it should be the other way around."

A NEW NEIGHBOR IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM: NASA FINDS SIGNS OF POTENTIAL LIFE ON MARS



Lilly Bostwick '27
Contributing Writer

Are we really the only ones? The question that lingers in everyone's brains when they watch E.T. for the first time. Only this time, NASA might actually have an answer. On September 10th, 2025, NASA announced that one of its rovers, Perseverance, found a sample that had signs of potential life on Mars. The sample is called "Sapphire Canyonne" and was taken from a rock, "Cheyava Falls", in an ancient river bed in the Jezero crater.

Billions of years ago, water once flowed through Mars. Now, it is all dried up, but there are still formations that contain information about that time. The rover found Cheyava Falls while exploring a formation of rocky outcrops called "Bright Angel" on the northern and southern edges of Neretva Vallis, an ancient river valley measuring a quarter-mile wide in the Jezero crater. The sample Sapphire Canyonne found there contains layers of red-ish clay that

formed when water still flowed throughout Mars. But why would some clay lead to the belief in microbial life on Mars?

There are three main reasons that NASA believes this could lead to signs of life on Mars. First, the sample had a "leopard spot" texture that is formed by chemical reactions that involve phosphate, and on Earth, those features are commonly associated with mineralogy being altered from microbes eating organic matter. The second reason is that the rover detected organic carbon, organic carbon is also the building block for living things on Earth. One of NASA's Perseverance scientists, Joel Hurowitz, says that "The combination of chemical compounds we found in the Bright Angel formation could have been a rich source of energy for microbial metabolisms". Lastly, the sample contained the minerals vivianite, iron phosphate, which forms in environments with decaying organic matter on Earth, and greigite, iron sulfide, which can be produced by microbes on Earth that use sulfate for energy. These two minerals are also a part of the redox gradient, a chemical process that can happen without life, but sometimes is so slow that living organisms need to accelerate it, meaning that there could have been microbial life to help

that reaction occur within the sample.

Although nothing is yet confirmed about the possibility of microbial life on Mars, researchers and scientists will continue to do research and experiments on the sample found. To truly find out if there was at any point life on Mars, the sample Sapphire Canyonne would need to be brought back to Earth to do advanced laboratory testing on it. These features on Sapphire Canyonne could have appeared without biology, but this is the closest scientists have ever gotten to finding life beyond Earth, and it is inspiring to see how far technology and science can advance to hopefully find more clues in the future about what possibilities of life lie beyond a 7,900-mile-wide planet.



Mars
(Image Source: NASA)

POLITICAL BIAS ON AI



Jocelyn Connett '29
Contributing Writer

ChatGPT is made to give “balanced information and perspectives in its answer.” But unfortunately, people are quickly discovering that it can contain biases due to the data it takes from the Internet that may be biased in itself already, which the AI can’t seem to detect. Two years ago, some scientists in the U.K. conducted an experiment that resulted in the finding that the chatbot they used often presented more left-leaning views which would support the U.S. Democratic party and the U.K. Labour Party. This would attract others to speculate as biases are concerned when something is made purely to be unbiased and since millions of people use AI on a daily basis.

“Biased AIs ‘could shape public discourse and influence voters’ opinions,’ said Luca Rettenberger, a researcher at Germany’s Karlsruhe Institute of Technology. ‘I think that’s especially dangerous.’” Rettenberger has expressed other concerns though towards this issue, such as how chatbots may be representing more mainstream views rather than more niche opinions. This can mean the LLMs (large language models) that power chatbots would not be exposed to these ideas, which is the main problem. Rettenberger also showed worry over this, stating, “LLMs could amplify existing biases in the political discourse as well.”

More researchers are looking into this, trying to investigate and solve the issues with the political bias in LLMs. “In recent work, Suyash Fulay, a Ph.D. student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and his colleagues wanted to identify how political bias might be introduced into LLMs by honing in on certain parts of the training process. They also were investigating the relationship between truth and political bias in LLMs.”

To perform the experiment, the team used three open source language models from RAFT, OpenAssistant, and UltraRM, which ranks the prompts by generating a score that indicates how well it aligns with human preferences and guides the AI model to produce wanted results. The models they used were altered to focus on data changed by people to learn the human preferences, and aimed to improve responses to more politically neutral text. The team tested models to prompt them, which led to over 13,000 political AI generated statements with the LLM GPT 3.5-turbo. Models ended up giving higher scores to the left-leaning statements, rather than more right-leaning.

Observation of this led to them wondering if the human-labelled data influenced the final results as it is subjective and has the chance of having opinions. After this, they gave a different set of models three datasets, with truthful information that are to be used as objectively benchmarks, which means they are using unbiased and measurable criteria

to compare performance and evaluate the quality of the responses. The updated models still leaned more left, but that didn’t surprise Fulay, instead, it was that all the AIs had the same or similar bias, no matter which dataset was used in their programming. This suggests that no dataset is entirely objective, regardless of curating and editing to be used objectively. One more possibility that was suggested is that “the models themselves have an implicit bias that relates the notion of truth with certain political leanings”.

Meanwhile, another team configured a plan to determine whether or not other popular open-source LLMs are politically biased by using a different approach. A tool named the Wahl-O-Mat designed for the European Parliament election to help motivate voting by asking views from citizens through a few dozen questions. Rettengerger stated, “I thought to myself, ‘I wonder how an LLM would answer these questions’”. So, he and his team used the Wahl-O-Mat to test the LLMs, and found that the LLMs were still more aligned with the left-leaning ideologies in every experiment they did. Models are trained to be neutral, but considering the Wahl-O-Mat program is used in Germany, when they tested the programs in German, the answers were “generally more partisan and stances varied depending on the model used, whereas responses were more neutral in English.”

The theories for the models performed this way with different languages are one; this could be due to the LLMs mainly being trained in English, so likewise they’ll perform in a way ideal to this language. Another theory is that the German part of the training datasets has different political content than the English one. The model sizes were observed and thought to have an effect as well on the political leanings. Smaller models tended to be more neutral than larger ones for instance. The larger models however were more consistent in political stances in both languages that were tested, for an unknown reason, but theorized to be highlighting the need for users to be aware that LLMs do not always give you a neutral or fair answer.

Finally, the team wants to follow the study up with more evaluations on recent LLMs when a newer version of the Wahl-O-Mat is released in a future election. Rettenberger believes the languages different results requires them to look more carefully for any possible biases in the training datasets and that other techniques should be made to help mitigate them. The team plans to follow up on their study by evaluating political bias in more recent LLMs when a new version of the Wahl-O-Mat is released for a future election. Rettenberger thinks their language-related results highlight the need to check training datasets more closely for biases, both of a political nature and otherwise. Techniques should also be developed to help mitigate them. “I think (moving) in that direction would be very useful and needed in the future,” he says.”

LABUBUS: THE COMMON ENEMY



Annie O'Connor '27
Contributing Writer

Labubus are more than just an innocent keychain; in just one summer, they have grown into a fad sweeping across the globe, consequently emerging as a hot topic on the Hilltop. A schoolwide poll of the St. George’s student body asked if they knew about the creepy collectibles and what their opinions were. Of 162 students who responded to the poll, a whopping 90 percent were aware of the existence of the trendy plush toys. When asked about their opinions toward them, students were evidently divided in their views; over 75 percent indicated that they strongly disliked or hated Labubus, whereas only 17 percent felt positively about them. Indeed, it is rare for the student body to achieve such majority in opinion. Some even went so far as to describe them as “demonic,” the root of “all world problems,” or even “a symptom of our

economic nightmare.” What was once perceived as just a simple keychain is now a heavily contested global frenzy and symbol of consumerism.

Labubus originated over a decade ago in 2015, yet did not start to garner popularity until around 2020. The toy is most typically released in a blind box, concealing its color from the buyer. Over time, blind boxes became in vogue, and with them, Labubus. It was not until they reached the mainstream, however, that people began to turn against them.

But what makes this new fad so controversial? While they may be strange in their uncomely faces, the hate directed toward these fuzzy creatures appears unjustified. It could be the high price that comes with the rarer forms of the toy. However, stuffed animals like Beanie Babies have garnered attention in the past without receiving nearly as much hatred. No other stuffed toy has been quite as relevant as the Labubu, whether that be due to hate or love.

The Labubu controversy lies in a deeper societal context. Many are quick to note the toy’s association with

the rise in consumerism as a rationale for this hatred. Its swift increase in popularity parallels that of Stanley Cups and fidget spinners, other trends of the last decade. Similar to Labubus, global society bought into these trends, with many people spending hundreds of dollars on them. These items, while arguably pointless, are not inherently harmful; Labubus, Stanley Cups, and fidget spinners were all given extreme amounts of hate for seemingly no reason. Out of this resentment, however, rises an unexpected unity.

In a society rapidly growing more polarized, Labubus, Stanley Cups, and fidget spinners serve as a common enemy, uniting people in their shared disdain. Controversy on the lines of politics and beliefs is widespread. But ideological debates risk fractured relationships and deepening divides. The people want something to hate; that is undeniable. Labubus offer an outlet for this need, without posing risks of actual controversy. Whether you love or hate them, Labubus unite the people.

CHARLIE KIRK ASSASSINATION



Jocelyn Connett '29
Contributing Writer

As many know and have seen on the news, Charlie Kirk was shot and killed recently. At the event hosted by Turning Point USA—an organization he co-founded—he had been giving a speech at Utah Valley University when a single bullet was fired and struck his neck, killing him. Charlie Kirk was a 31-year-old man who worked as a right-wing conservative activist. He was a supporter of gun rights, an opponent of abortion, was critical of transgender and gay rights, and promoted false claims about COVID-19. His views drew much criticism, with critics calling his comments offensive to minority groups, including the LGBTQ+ community and Muslims. An organization, Turning Point USA, which Kirk co-founded at 18, wanted to spread conservative ideals at liberal-leaning US colleges, and played a major role in convincing people to vote for Trump and other Republican candidates in the election last year. The organization began after President Obama was re-elected in 2012. Kirk was a husband and father of two young children. His wife, Erika Frantzve, a former Miss Arizona, often attended his events. The couple was said to be pious evangelical Christians and often talked about their faith as a guiding force in their lives. As an advocate of conservative values and gun rights, Kirk spoke of anti-transgender views and scepticism over the COVID-19 pandemic. Comments from Kirk on race and crime often prompted a backlash. In 2020, he called George Floyd, a black man who was murdered at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer, a “scumbag”. He also publicly promoted the false claim that the 2020 election was stolen from Trump.

Tyler Robinson is a young man and the alleged killer of Charlie Kirk. His prosecutors are seeking the death penalty for his crimes. He is 22 years old and attends Dixie Technical College. Before this case, Robinson had no record of any criminal activities, and public records reviewed by the BBC suggest that Robinson had registered as an unaffiliated voter in Utah as well. He lived in an apartment in St. George, which was near his family’s home, and was not a student at UVU, where Kirk was killed. “In a statement, the Utah Board of Higher Education said he was a third-year student in the electrical apprenticeship programme at Dixie Technical College. “He previously spent one semester at Utah State University in 2021 and earned concurrent enrollment credits through Utah Tech University while in high school between 2019 and 2021”. His father ran a kitchen countertop and cabinet installation business, and his mother is a social worker. The family is Mormon as well as Republican, and is active at a local church.

The alleged killer of Kirk took the blame for the killing over the social platform, Discord, as a company spokesperson confirmed. Robinson spoke to his friends over a group chat a few hours before his arrest, stating, “It was me at UVU yesterday. im sorry for all of this”. His account was later suspended by Discord, as he violated off-platform behavior policies. He was arrested with charges of aggravated murder, felony discharge of a firearm, and obstruction of justice. The young man could possibly face the death penalty for his actions if he truly is the murderer. The Discord messages from Robinson were initially reported by the Washington Post, and “are thought to have been written and posted towards the end of a manhunt for Kirk’s killer that lasted more than a day”. A few days ago, FBI director Kash Patel told a congressional hearing that all investigators will question and search every lead that comes from those Robinson was in contact with before his arrest.

While Kirk’s death has sparked outrage and confusion from the public, both US political parties have been “accusing each other of spreading hateful rhetoric, and a hunt for his killer. Utah’s Governor Spencer Cox said Robinson had been arrested after confessing about Kirk’s killing to his father and being persuaded to hand himself in”. Though his father only did so after his mother had seen the suspected killer on the news and thought it looked like their son. He was taken into custody on September 12, after a 33-hour-long manhunt involving both local law enforcement and the FBI. He is currently being held without bail and in a special housing unit in the Utah County Jail. CCTV video showed the suspect fleeing from a rooftop after the shot was fired and escaping into a nearby wooded area. After the incident, police released images of the suspect, offering \$100,000 for any information leading to their arrest. Although “At a press briefing on Friday, the FBI refused to discuss Robinson’s background, political leanings or a possible motive, saying the investigation was ongoing”.

Governor Cox had told reporters Robinson had not cooperated with authorities, but his roommate was among those who were. Said roommate was also later revealed to

be a “biological male” who was transitioning from a man to a woman, and had been in a romantic relationship with Robinson. Patel, while criticized over the way he’s so far handled the situation, told Fox News during an interview that other text messages were found, where he had “specifically stated that he had the opportunity to take out Charlie Kirk, and he was going to do that”. Those working on the case are still trying to find the motive for why Robinson allegedly killed Kirk. Many believe it could have been due to differences in beliefs, but Robinson had been reported to live a life following the majority of Republican stances, but apparently a family member had told Governor Cox that Robinson had actually been becoming more political in recent years and had brought up Kirk’s visit to UVU during a dinner. During this dinner, “they talked about why they didn’t like him and the viewpoints that he had”. Robinson’s mother had admitted that he had started to lean more left in recent times, while Utah’s County Attorney, Jeff Gray, also stated that Robinson had been “becoming more pro-gay and trans-right orientated”.

Other sources have told CBS News that the young men, Robinson and his friends, had argued over the shooting before his arrest, and the group had involved more than 20 people prior to the incident. Robinson was also questioned in the group about whether he was actually the gunman, to which he never confirmed nor denied. He had seemingly already been planning to hand himself in, but before he did so, he had sent a few messages, one saying, “im surrendering through a sheriff friend in a few moments, thanks for all the good times and laughs, you’ve all been so amazing, thank you all for everything”.

Afterwards, one of President Trump’s workers, deputy chief of staff Stephen Miller, “has alleged that there was an organized campaign behind the assassination, but no evidence has been presented so far that suggests Robinson was working as part of a group”. Investigators are also following up on any social media accounts that Robinson had used, and according to CBS News, looking for “any signs that anyone may have known about or encouraged the shooting beforehand”. A friend of Robinson’s told and showed the law enforcement that Robinson had a contact in his phone named “Tyler”, referencing a rifle called “drop point” and instructions about retrieving and hiding the weapon. The weapon was found near the scene of the crime, where DNA matching Robinson’s has been collected and information about the gun itself, which was “unique and had once belonged to Robinson’s grandfather”. Shell casings were also examined, where two had references to online trolling humor. Many were clearly made to be humorous, as they were inscribed with phrases such as, “If you read this, you are gay lmao”. One unfired casing had the words, “Hey fascist! Catch!” and an up, right, and three down arrows. The three down arrows alone could be a common symbol used for anti-fascism. But as a whole, the arrows could reference a sequence of control inputs used in a popular video game - although this remains unclear”.

In the aftermath of the events, many people have lost jobs due to publicly celebrating or disrespecting Charlie Kirk’s death. Even people such as TV show host Jimmy Kimmel have been let go due to political statements made. Others, like pilots, medical professionals, teachers, and even a Secret Service employee, are among these people and have been suspended or fired. This sparks conflict over whether or not this violates the freedom of speech and employee protections, although US companies have a wide range of options for terminating any employees.

Vice President JD Vance himself has stated that, “People who celebrate the killing of conservative influencer Charlie Kirk should be held accountable,” and also said, “Call them out, and hell, call their employer,” Vance said as he guest-hosted an episode of the Charlie Kirk Show. “We don’t believe in political violence, but we do believe in civility”.

Later on, a young woman named Addi Jacobson, 20, whose grandmother knew the Robinson family, spoke up. Her grandmother said the family was great, normal. Even described them as very patriotic people. The neighborhood was small, so other neighbors spoke as well. “We knew their family. Our whole neighbourhood is so close,” and also stated, “That just even goes to show, you can be an amazing parent, and your kid still just chooses what they choose.” In her first statement since his death, the wife of Kirk, Erika Kirk, stated, “If you thought that my husband’s mission was powerful before, you have no idea. You have no idea what you just have unleashed across this entire country”. Finally, Addi Jacobson stated, “This whole time, I never knew that I was living next to somebody capable of something like this,” Ms Jacobson said as she played in the park with her fiancé and baby. “It just makes you kind of question ‘how much closer am I to somebody else that could be this way?’”.

SWEET, STICKY, VIRAL: INSIDE THE DUBAI CHOCOLATE PHENOMENON



Miles Johnson '28
Contributing Writer

On December 18, 2023, food-centric ASMR content creator Maria Vehera posted a simple video on TikTok. It depicted her opening a large, extravagant chocolate bar from a brand called Fix, and taking a few bites. Fast forward to today, and variants of that pistachio-filled chocolate bar can be found in grocery stores, candy stores, and ice cream parlors across the states, and even around the world.

The food itself, which has come to be known simply as “Dubai Chocolate,” has been around for about four years. The bar was originally developed by Filipino chef Nouel Catis, then enhanced, packaged, and distributed by the aforementioned brand, Fix. Dubai Chocolate’s success shows that, in the modern world, where social media is highly developed, a single viral clip can create such an impact: from unknown to a worldwide trend.

Dubai Chocolate’s success can be chalked up to one simple reason: it looks good. Over 100 million people

watched Vehera’s video and flocked to stores because of that. And it’s not hard to see why. Fix’s original bar is a delicacy, a thick pistachio paste housed in a decorated and colorful chocolate bar. It also had the benefit of being specific enough to market, but not so specific that it could become exclusive to one company. All of these aspects have made Dubai Chocolate the definitive flavor of late 2023 through 2025. You can find it anywhere from Starbucks coffee to Baskin Robins ice cream.

And it looks like Dubai chocolate is built to last. Despite the trend nearing the end of its second year, demand and sales are continuing to soar. Fix alone brought in \$22 million in sales in just the first quarter of 2025. This is made all the more interesting by the fact that its success is somewhat accidental. Many multi-million dollar ideas are designed to be just that: multi-million dollar ideas. Take the Snicker’s bar. It was invented in 1930 by the Mars company, an already established business. Its success was in large part due to the fact that Mars was worth nearly half a million dollars at the time. Fix, on the other hand, was a relatively unknown company. Of course, we’ve seen businesses boom for numerous companies and ideas

because of social media presence, but not to this degree.

The success of Dubai chocolate carries strong implications for the future of the relationship between trends and business. Year after year, these two subjects become more and more intertwined. It’s shocking to think that in twenty years, if someone were to look back on the origin of the still standing chocolate-pistachio flavor combination, they would see an ASMR TikTok video. And who’s to say that, by that time, all popular products and marketing will be rooted in social media? As strange of a reality as this is, it certainly has upsides. Social media trends can raise the potential for small companies, like Fix, to be discovered; it neutralizes the playing field.

Where Dubai chocolate goes next will say a lot about social media’s relationship with business. If it dies out, as most trends do, we will know that there is still at least some separation between the two subjects. But if it doesn’t, it will become unclear where exactly the line is drawn. So who knows, will Dubai chocolate fade away, or will it grow to be the next peanut butter and jelly?

GUNS IN AMERICA: WHY ARE AMERICANS SO ATTACHED TO THEIR WEAPONS?



Percy Gao '27
Opinions Editor

Guns in America are always a hot topic for people to discuss: whether they are a sacred right declared by the Second Amendment of the Constitution, or should somehow be controlled. Recently, due to Charlie Kirk’s assassination, the issue has once again been pushed to the forefront of public attention.

According to The Washington Post, in 2017, Americans possessed about 46 percent of the entire global stock of 857 million civilian firearms while comprising only four percent of the world’s population. The United States has the highest gun ownership rate in the world, surpassing Yemen—the next-highest nation—by more than 100 percent. Based on this, this opinion piece will discuss the historical and economic reasons

behind it while providing contextual evidence for further discussion.

Since the establishment of the United States, bearing arms has been one of the rights held by its citizens. In the American Revolutionary War, civilian militias armed themselves with personal weapons to fight for independence, which created a legacy that armed citizens are guardians of liberty. The most direct response to this legacy was the ratification of the Bill of Rights. The Second Amendment enshrined citizens’ right to bear arms. The adoption of the Second Amendment explicitly linked gun ownership to national security and rooted the belief that an armed populace was essential for securing freedom. From this time on, guns were not just weapons; they became symbols representing people’s determination against tyranny. This symbolism was reinforced again and again in U.S. history: from the Civil War to the World Wars, guns always played an important role.

Moreover, beyond historical reasons, bearing arms also has practical uses in modern times. This is connected to a notable case and to the role of police officers. The case was *Warren v. District of Columbia*. In 1981, three women living in Washington,

D.C., experienced a severe home invasion. After multiple 911 calls and assurances that help was coming, officers briefly checked the scene and left; the victims were then abducted and assaulted for hours. Later, the three victims sued the District of Columbia and individual members of the Metropolitan Police Department for “negligent failure to provide adequate police services.” However, the D.C. Court of Appeals ruled that, due to the “public duty doctrine,” police owe a duty to the public at large, not to individual citizens for protection. Thus, the lawsuit failed. The failure of this lawsuit made the public more aware of self-protection; therefore, owning guns is the most direct and effective way to provide self-defense from many citizens’ perspectives.

Other than historical reasons, the economy behind weapon manufacturing also contributes tremendously to Americans’ obsession with guns. The firearm manufacturing and sales industry contributes tens of billions of dollars to the U.S. economy each year. Based on the data provided by the Firearm Industry Trade Organization, in 2024, the total economic impact of firearms and ammunition in the U.S. reached 91.7 billion dollars and supported over 300,000 Americans with jobs. This means many Americans’ livelihoods depend deeply on such an industry. Besides ordinary citizens, politicians are also deeply influenced by these military-industrial complexes, aiding the industry with supportive policies, which are mainly pro-gun policies. In order to shape policy, gun-related organizations invest heavily each year. Millions of dollars are “donated” to politicians and lawmakers in exchange for the passage of bills. By advocating gun rights and reducing gun control, those corporations create a favorable market for firearms. Unsurprisingly, the political lobbying and messaging funded by these corporations bolster cultural attachment to guns among the public.

Overall, Americans’ attachment to guns cannot be attributed solely to historical reasons, but also should take the military industry complexes’ actions into account. Americans’ obsession with guns rests on more than slogans; it is a paradox between cultural identities, the necessity of self-defense, and a tremendous industry behind it.

THE UK'S STEADY MARCH INTO CHAOS



Fisher Baker '27
Contributing Writer

Imagine strolling along the grand boulevards of London's affluent West End. Picture businesspeople on their way to work, shoppers perusing the windows of every fine boutique, or hopping onto one of the polished red buses—a picture of perfection in which you can believe Britain is the unequaled world power it once was.

That picture, however, disintegrated on September 13th, 2025 when nearly a million people flooded the same streets, not in celebration but in rage. What we saw that day wasn't a simple far-right rally, but a howl of a dying country weeping from its own contradictions.

The streets were thick with jeers about the prime minister, lashes against immigrants, insults toward Islam, and cries for a country that once was. This fury, no matter how ugly, comes from real despair; it was a symbol of a meandering economic, social, and political decline that's plagued the Kingdom for eighty years.

Rising from the ashes of the Second World War, Britain became one of the most admired welfare states in the world. Universal healthcare, affordable housing, and reliable pensions were guaranteed, becoming the pride of a country that lost its empire. But beginning in the Thatcher era, that admired welfare state came crashing down in the name of privatization and "efficiency." Furthermore, anti-union policies and financial deregulation fueled the decline of industrial regions like the midlands and the centralization of Britain's economy in London. Today, Britons are dealing with the consequences of those decisions.

Wages haven't grown since '08 while rent gobbles a third of take-home pay (if you're lucky) and homeownership is a pipe dream for most. Exasperated by inflation, the UK has become a place where more than a full-time job is needed to live a decent life. Budget slashes to public services have been profound. Publicly-funded housing has collapsed while wait times for medical treatments can now take almost a year.

Amid economic chaos is an immigration crisis; the British government's policies have been a series of bloopers, blunders, and millions flushed down the toilet. Migrants are housed in costly hotels while MPs and PMs bicker to find long-term solutions. It is no wonder many working-class Britons feel betrayed by their government when millions are spent on migrants yet state-backed housing projects collapse under budget constraints.

The emergence of multicultural Britain over the same years have created mass demographic shifts. Far right politicians employ this change to ignite fear among constituents, using the rise of Islam in particular. Intense rhetoric on all sides has only

made things worse, especially concerning debate over the Union Jack—the UK's flag. On one hand, left-leaning factions see it as an offensive symbol representing the horrors of colonization. On the other hand, many moderate and right-leaning Britons celebrate the flag and feel wounded by the dispute. Young white male voters are especially drifting toward reactionary populism, driven by a nostalgia for a "white" Britain narrative.

Throughout all this, successive Conservative and Labour prime ministers have failed the country. Boris Johnson stumbled through Brexit with no plan for the future; Liz Truss wrecked the economy in 44 days; Sunak didn't know how to deal with illegal immigration, saying they should be sent to "Rwanda." Now Starmer, once a beacon for change, has become a symbol of indecision. Meanwhile, the streets of Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Nottingham, Glasgow, and, of course, London, burn.

Britain is not a country broken by immigrants, Islam, or young men. It's broken because its leaders sold the country off piece by piece for short term profit and political gain. The United Kingdom is in the situation the United States was during the 1950s, the 1970s, and now: a house divided with the foundation crumbling under every stomp of every furious voice. But things can change. Once people cease blaming one another for symptoms and start confronting the root of the decay, the foundation can be fixed. Otherwise, the two countries will only march into deeper chaos.



(Image Source: Joanna Chan, CBS News)

WHY LEBRON JAMES WAS THE ONLY FOREIGN SPORTS STAR INTERVIEWED BY PEOPLE'S DAILY



Samson Zhou '28
Editorial Writer

LeBron James is one of the greatest and most recognizable basketball players of all time. When People's Daily, China's most respected and widely read newspaper, selected him as the only foreign sports star worthy enough to be interviewed, it showed how unique his influence is. This choice reflected both LeBron's global reach and the importance of basketball to Chinese fans.

First, LeBron's accomplishments in basketball make him a natural fit for such an honor. He has won multiple NBA championships, earned MVP awards, and built a career that places him among the best athletes in history. In China, basketball is one of the most popular sports, and millions of people follow the NBA closely. By featuring LeBron, People's Daily gave its readers direct access to a player who represents the highest level of the sport.

Second, People's Daily itself is significant. With millions of readers each day, it is

not only one of the largest newspapers in China but also a major source of news that many people trust. For an athlete, being interviewed by such a publication means more than just publicity—it means recognition by one of the world's most legitimate and influential newspapers. The fact that LeBron was the only foreign sports star to receive this opportunity shows the level of respect and admiration he has earned internationally.

Finally, LeBron's influence goes far beyond basketball. Through his philanthropy, media projects, and business ventures, he has become a cultural icon. He is admired for his leadership, his work in education, and his ability to inspire young people worldwide. This broader impact makes him more than just an athlete—he is a role model whose story connects across cultures.

In conclusion, LeBron James' interview with People's Daily highlights both his global influence and the newspaper's importance as a respected source of information. Together, they represent the power of sports and media to connect people across borders.

Humor

Editor’s Note:

All references and comments made by these writings are entirely satirical and made-up. These writings should be read for (significant) amusement only

SG SUPERLATIVES

Pia Martin ’26 & Anabel Kim ’26

Best dressed
Ava Schmidt, Emma Sabourin, Langston Hauw

Most likely to work at Vogue
Brewster Worth

Most likely to be an influencer
Catherine Chai Maloney

Most likely to jump out of a plane
CJ Briere and Grant Vensel

Most likely to travel the world
Annie O’Connor

Most likely to go on Broadway
Z Nourjian

Most likely to live off the grid
Charlie Linz

Future CEO
Emma Levi

Most likely to get away with anything
Johnny Malkani

Kindest Heart
Cam Martish

Most likely to brighten your day
Peter Duhamel

Most likely to work at SG
Hyland Sturnevant

Most likely to bring a fish on the quad
Henry Goodman

Most likely to live on Geronimo
Xander Goodman

Best hair
Gwen Martin, Este Stifel

Most likely to be a hockey kid forever
Max Donatelli

Most likely to never leave Palm Beach
Olympia Boardman

Best bromance
BICE

Best aux
Mia Reyes

Most creative in King Hall
Ben Ryan

Most likely to be famous
Angel Yu

Most likely to go pro
Kenny Benedict

Best attitude
Lilly Bostwick

The Red & White

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Recently, I’ve become obsessed with the word “dull”. “Lacking interest or excitement,” the dictionary tells us not in the catastrophic sense, but in small, ordinary ways. Sometimes I believe my life is dull. Routines stack on routines, and days fold into one another with little to mark their passing, while the extraordinary hides itself in plain sight. The word seems to encapsulate so much with an unsettling convenience. A day without any pleasant surprises, a piece of homework that feels rather effortless, an uneventful dinner, or sometimes, writing.

But there is danger in convenience. A one-word definition seduces us to simplicity, offering an alluring shortcut to understanding that erases certain richness underneath. I’ve wondered myself, in those sentimental, late-night moments of contemplating: Is my life really dull? Or is it the name I give to a rhythm too subtle, and too unimportant to hear? To surrender to dullness is easy, but it also absolves the harder work. The times when life feels unremarkable are often the times charged with the most possibilities: the weather, the laughter, the stories, the people themselves.

Can writing be dull? I’m almost certain to say the answer is yes, it can. When it settles for the obvious, when it repeats the formulas, when we regard the process of writing more as a mandatory task than creation itself. It’s easy to fall into that temptation when we try to define people, or even communities, in writing. A person can be quiet or loud, athletic or artistic, careful or sloppy. But none can truly determine who they really are. Our school is sometimes described in sweeping terms: spirited, rigorous, competitive. Each of these terms contains a piece of truth, but none captures the fullness of what this place really is. When we settle for these shortcuts, we miss the messy contradictions that truly make the community beautiful. In reality, it is all these and more, often at once, sometimes in conflict, always in motion.

That is when this newspaper enters. This year, we wish to celebrate the obvious triumphs: victories on fields, spectacles onstage, and excellence in classrooms. But we will also search for the less visible narratives: the countless practices that led to a single win, the two-hour rehearsals for Lessons and Carols, the moments of kindness and reflection, as well as conflicts and disagreements. So, as you flip through the newspaper, I invite you to see yourself in these pages. Perhaps in an article, a photograph, or in a quotable quote we all love.

“Mad, fantastic, wonderful.” That’s also a definition of “dull”, which comes from the German root “toll”. What seems unremarkable can, in fact, be wild and alive. That paradox will be the mission for us as writers: to take what is dull and show the world its madness and brilliance.



Angel Yu '26
Editor-in-Chief

WHAT'S HOT, WHAT'S NOT

Charlotte Brislin '28 & Paitson Kelly '28

HOT

NOT

High UV	Lots of homework
Beach days	Far away games
Fall Ball	Sun setting sooner
Form wars	Tans fading
Polka dots	No DoorDash on weekdays
Grill open till 8 pm	School ending at 3:20

QUOTABLE QUOTES

“You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take, but you can’t expect to make all of the shots you take. Keep shooting, practice makes progress king.” - *Eli Goldenberg '29*

“Why are you guys doing something stupid without me?” - *Jack Gaynor '27*

“Tomorrow is not today.” - *Peter Duhamel '27*

“Motivation is good. Boredom is better.” - *Arthur Collin '29*

“My dad is not warm and fuzzy, and our hugs are always short and weird. But he’s consistent, and that counts for more than I realized when I was younger.” - *Owen Draddy '26*

“Are we gonna do this? OR NAH?” - *Sebastian Castro '29*

Jules Patterson: What’s the opposite of probiotics?
Reverend Lank: Antibiotics?

“My heart is racing. I don’t know if that’s from anxiety or going up the stairs.” - *Reese Starling '26*

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