

Introducing the 2024-25 VPs of Student Council

SIENNA SOEMITRO '26 & ANGEL XIN '26

This past Tuesday, on April 9, 2023-2024 Student Body President Bryce Langdon '24 announced the newly elected Vice Presidents of the Student Council for the 2024-25 school year—IV Formers Sophia Liu, Kathlynn Yao, and Tenjiwe Sithole.

Following her election as Vice President of Academics, former Dawes and current Stephens Academic Representative Sophia Liu is very excited to keep “using [her] knowledge in order to make academics easier for everyone else.” Although she will continue making her famed Quizlets, “communicating what the Dean of Academics and the administration want for the student body also plays a big role,” she added. Liu hopes to continue the work of current VP of Academics Conan Chen '24, who has implemented blind grading and alumni panels, but she also hopes to revamp some of the alumni workshops that were present during her II Form year. “Providing students with a means to communicate with the teachers about homework is a top priority,” concluded Liu, hoping to help students and teachers navigate through the new schedule next year.



Vice Presidents of Student Council

Audrey Liu '26/THE LAWRENCE

Yao ran for Vice President of Honor and Discipline to readress “aspects of the disciplinary system that need clarity and fixing.” Hoping to continue the progress of current VP of Honor and Discipline Daphne Volpp '24, Yao found that trust plays a critical factor in her new role. One of her major policies, for example, “erases students’ fear of being pulled out of their daily activities for drug testing,” thus limiting the unintended shame in social

circumstances. In addition, Yao hopes to build personal connections with all members of Lawrenceville, emphasizing her availability to “meet up with anyone worried about the disciplinary process.” She stated, “It is my responsibility to help individuals navigate the [disciplinary] system.” Essentially, Yao aims to build a support system for students. “By electing the Honor Council earlier and encouraging involvement, I

want to make students more comfortable to seek support and help,” she summarized. Additionally, as she wishes to emphasize transparency, she elaborates that, “Students need to know what specific behaviors will get them in trouble.” To bridge the information gap students have around the disciplinary process, Yao explains that she will “make a list of common infractions, organize recording of a

mock DC during preseason, send out regular questionnaires regarding disciplinary procedures, and try to make policies more flexible.” Yao aims to demystify the disciplinary system by “protecting privacy while advocating for clarity,” or in simpler terms, “getting everyone more involved.”

As Social Representative of the Carter House, Sithole has always wanted to be on the Student Council, remarking

that she “really want[s] other people to enjoy the School and have fun, and see the beauty of Lawrenceville.” She pictured the Vice President of Social Life as a perfect medium for her to organize events that she hopes will leave lasting memories, noting how current VP of Social Life Grace Chu '24 has succeeded in making the House leaderboard and other community-wide social events. Although Sithole recognizes that she now holds more responsibility, she acknowledges that creativity and having an open mindset play a big role. “The position, [VP of Social Life], entails a lot of teamwork and working with the Social Council, the rest of the Student Council, and listening to input from the student body,” she explained. She looks forward to initiating term-long challenges rather than two-week-long competitions. She noted that “a capture-the-flag or pickleball tournament would be engaging and interactive so that more people participate.” Sithole concluded that “creating memories for everyone who makes Lawrenceville special is my ultimate goal.”

The election process now moves on to selecting the representatives for Diversity, Arts, Wellness, Athletics, and Community Service.

Festivities for Arab American Heritage Month

ELLEN JORDAN '26

As the hollow beat of a drum echoed throughout the auditorium of the Kirby Arts Center, a quartet of dancers, sporting traditional Arabic dress, emerged onto the stage. Members of the Afrah Events dance group proceeded to perform the Dabke dance, a traditional Arabic folk dance.

Soon enough, after being invited onstage by the dancers, audience members began to join in on the festivities, and the stage became swarmed with students and faculty alike, hand-in-hand, dancing to the beat.

The performance from Afrah Events marked the beginning of Lawrenceville’s celebrations for Arab American Heritage Month (AAHM). AAHM, declared by Presi-

dent Joe Biden in 2021, aims to honor Arabic culture and traditions and recognize the contributions made by Arab Americans.

This year marked the first time that Lawrenceville will be hosting events to commemorate AAHM. Lawrenceville’s Office of Multicultural Affairs mainly planned these events, collaborating with various affinity groups on campus. In AAHM’s case, the Office chose the South West Asia and North Africa (SWANA) group to lead the festivities. Currently, SWANA is composed of students with backgrounds from countries such as Palestine, Lebanon, Morocco, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

SWANA student leaders Clara Khabbaz '26 and Isabella Danker '26 originally joined the affinity group to connect



Photo of Dancers

Courtesy of The Lawrenceville School

with their culture on a deeper level and to meet students who share similar heritage and background.

“I joined [SWANA] because [the group] represented the region I am from, and I wanted the opportunity to share my culture with my peers,” Danker explained.

Khabbaz echoed Danker’s sentiments and additionally pointed out that the small

size of the affinity group enabled its members to connect on a more personal level.

“I think that because [SWANA is] such a small affinity group we have a very close community, so we’re always there to support each other... it’s just a place where we can all share our culture and find community through our shared

heritage,” she elaborated.

During this past winter, members of SWANA reached out to the Office of Multicultural Affairs to inquire about the possibility of hosting events on campus in celebration of AAHM. Upon getting the green light from the Office to organize events for AAHM, members of SWANA met weekly to prepare for the celebrations to come.

Following this school-wide performance, SWANA will continue to lead the celebration of AAHM at Lawrenceville with Arabic desserts in the Abbott Dining Hall on April 19 and a Lunch and Dialogue Session in the McGraw Reading Room on April 24. “I think that dessert night is just a great opportunity to show

off amazing desserts from our [Arabic] culture, and I’m so excited to share my heritage with the Lawrenceville community,” Khabbaz added.

Danker additionally was in full praise of the upcoming dessert night and hopes that through having the opportunity to sample Arabic dishes and to learn about Arabic culture, Lawrentians will have the opportunity to gain greater insight into what being Arabic truly means.

“I feel like [the dessert night] gives people an opportunity to know that Middle Eastern culture is more than just like the conflict that’s going on [in Israel and Palestine] right now and I feel that [the dessert night] will get people to engage with a culture they may not be familiar with,” Danker concluded.

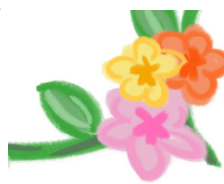
The Downfall of Student Activism

Eric Chen '27 expounds on the dangers of feeling complacent about important social issues because of a performative gesture or good intention.



Singing into Spring

Riley McKibben '25 recommends three songs for your spring playlist to put you in the mood for warmer weather and trips to Melba.



The Need to ‘Know Ball’

Bryan Boanoh '25 explains how the need to constantly be correct is killing the art of nuanced sports debate.





THE LAWRENCE

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CORRECTIONS

Readers who notice errors should contact igaskin25@lawrenceville.org.

DOG OF THE WEEK: Ti Wouj Rehanna Yakubu '25



Editorial Outside the Bubble

Lawrentians—international, local, and everything in between—come from all walks of life, each deciding to give up their unique home and community to attend the School. In doing so, many of us willingly surrender living at home and partaking in daily routines with our families. However, some simple liberties, such as staying up as late as you want or going over to friends' houses without restrictions, disappear after committing to a school like Lawrenceville. The absence of these seemingly trivial freedoms, in conjunction with losing frequent access to family, friends, and a more "traditional" high school experience, causes a plethora of students to feel as if something fundamental is missing from their high school experiences. While, yes, some of these sacrifices are a known part of coming to boarding school and receiving an early introduction to independence, the ingrained structure of Lawrenceville life accustoms us to an isolating, mundane teenage experience that conflicts with Lawrenceville's aims to facilitate our exposure to new experiences and maturation into adulthood.

Objectively, one of the easiest ways to learn and widen one's worldview is through exploration, a method illustrated by the school's focus on promoting interesting courses and diverse cultural experiences. Yet, by inhibiting less structured interconnection with people inside and outside the Lawrenceville bubble, the administration undermines its own efforts as students begin to see everything through the lens of Lawrenceville.

Moreover, Lawrenceville's rigid structure confines students to routines, leaving Lawrentians stuck in monotonous loops and unstimulating experiences. Constantly surrounding yourself with the same people

and rhetoric makes the quest of discovering our true, more evolved self much more difficult, not to mention removing the variety and color that should constitute a normal teenage experience. Part of the fun of growing up is meeting different people and gaining insight into their lives, and though Lawrenceville boasts a wonderfully diverse student body, we must acknowledge we experience the same broad strokes of life for the majority of the year.

All 800+ Lawrentians, despite our vibrant backgrounds and lived experiences, find ourselves rushing to change for sports at 3 pm and bemoaning the latest Tsai dinner, leaving us a limited pool of repetitive anecdotes that render our conversations uninspired and routine. The constant churn of the school week—commitment after commitment with little sleep in between—is draining. How can we develop our unique sense of self without properly interacting with the world around us? Does Lawrenceville owe us an escape from its demands so we can forge a personal journey that outlasts our high school vicissitudes?

Though genuine and dynamic, Lawrenceville's attitude toward exposure critically overlooks the simple treasure of informal interactions with other kids our age. While School Meeting performances and conversations with professionals are incredible educational tools, something as simple as a casual conversation with a peer from another school works wonders to alleviate occasional feelings of being "trapped in a bubble." For example, our student community tends towards liberal political attitudes, and oftentimes a conversation with someone outside the school can recalibrate our initial opinions on the latest political controversy. If every conversation we have surrounds Lawrenceville, our

If every conversation we have surrounds Lawrenceville, our experiences in our own communities are often left unexpressed, and thus, over time, diminished.

experiences in our own communities are often left unexpressed, and thus, over time, diminished.

There are many ways for Lawrenceville to tap into our wider community's resources and encourage students' personal growth. By widening the pool in which we interact, we can avoid having every conversation gravitate to the same thing—Lawrenceville. Take our future weekends with the new schedule, for example: The discourse surrounding Saturday classes causes some to worry that Lawrenceville will become a desolate, boring place over the weekend. Yet, a more relaxed and unscheduled weekend will grant students space to embark on their own explorations, like an impromptu trip to Princeton that could give us another slice of the world we are missing, or just give us something else to talk about. As much as a school like Lawrenceville defines our adolescence, it cannot and should not overtake our lives. There is much to learn beyond these red-brick buildings.

This Editorial Represents the Majority Opinion of The Lawrence CXLIV.

REFLECTIONS

In honor of Pride Week, members of the Lawrenceville community were asked to reflect on coming-out stories, LGBTQ+ life at Lawrenceville, and what pride means to them.

DR. BRIAN JACOBS

I am so proud of our GSA for all the hard work they put into planning Pride Week this year, I am proud of the students and faculty who attended events and bravely shared their stories, and I am proud of

While Pride Week may seem banal for some, it means a lot to me. When I was in high school, we had no GSA, no out students (except for one boy whose parents kicked him out), and no out teachers. It was a very isolating experience to say the least. Lawrenceville's GSA has helped create such necessary visibility here on campus, and it is so important for our LGBTQIA+ students to know that they have a place here, that they are supported, and that they are not alone.

ANONYMOUS

I guess I never really did come out at Lawrenceville, which shocks me as I reflect on my time here. Don't get me wrong, it's not like people don't know; I've done things here that have made it quite obvious that I am not straight, yet when people ask me

find out what I am—it's sad, really. I've been fighting this battle since the 5th grade. I remember when I was accepted to Lawrenceville I had this sudden burst of optimism that this would be the place where I could finally stop fighting. I don't know what to do with the fact that this place has only made me learn to fight harder.

EMILY PAN '24 GRAPHICS EDITOR OF THE 143RD BOARD

I often joke with my friends that Lawrenceville "turned me" queer; after all, I spent the 14 years prior to arriving on this campus only having crushes on guys, and though I would find other girls pretty, they weren't ever attractive in the same way. One fateful day in my sophomore year, however, I walked into math class and saw her

heart would skip a beat everytime we were assigned to the same table for that class. And when she started saying hi to me in the halls, I'd get the same warm fuzzy feeling I thought I could only get with guys. One day, it clicked. Oh, I like her!

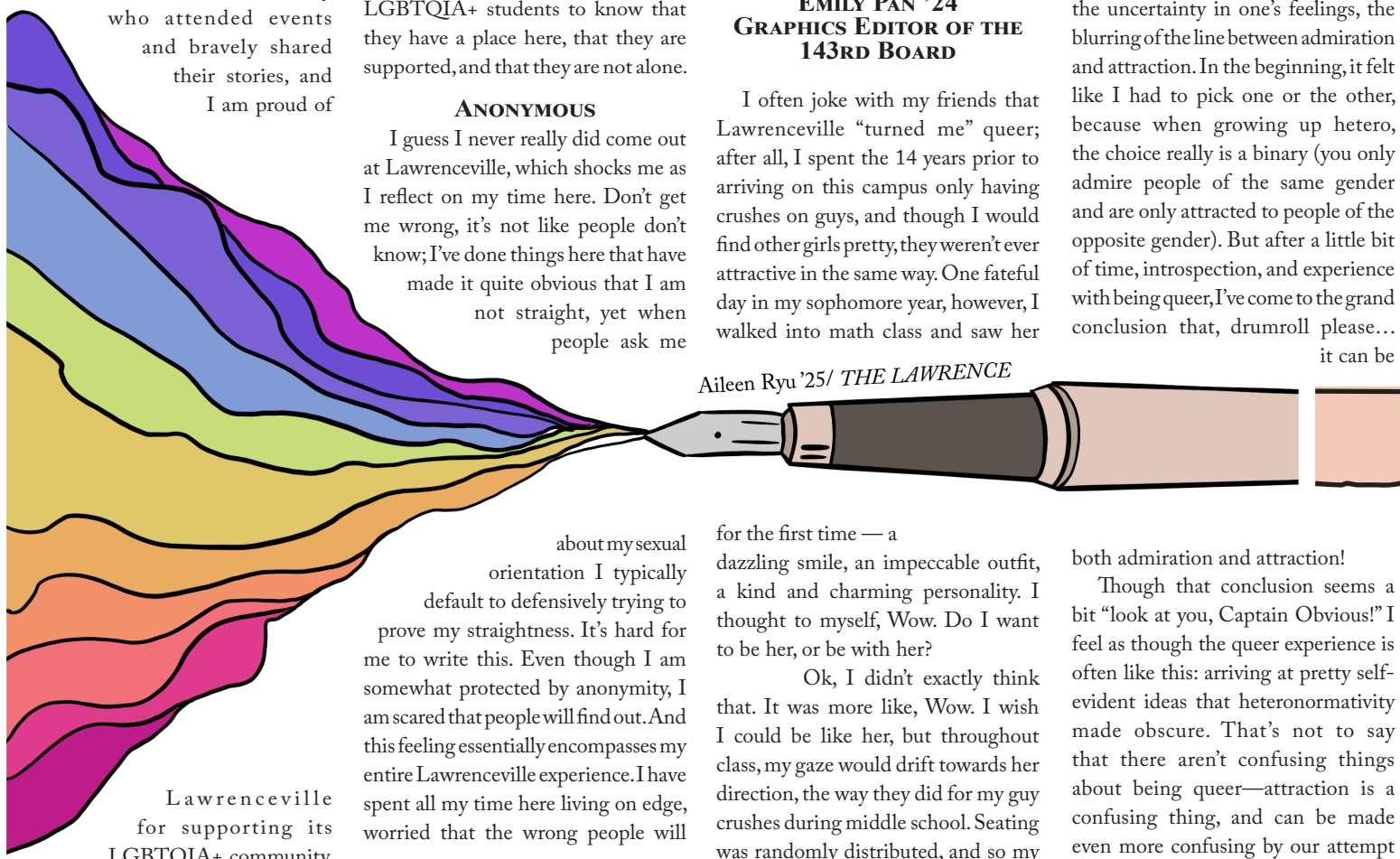
The story I just described is what I believe to be a pretty common queer, specifically bisexual, experience. It's the uncertainty in one's feelings, the blurring of the line between admiration and attraction. In the beginning, it felt like I had to pick one or the other, because when growing up hetero, the choice really is a binary (you only admire people of the same gender and are only attracted to people of the opposite gender). But after a little bit of time, introspection, and experience with being queer, I've come to the grand conclusion that, drumroll please... it can be

to understand it, whether that's through labels or definitions or even some fancy-schmancy-psychoanalysis of the human psyche (I'm looking at you Freud).

This is all to say, like who you like, and don't be weird if you can't understand why someone else likes who they like (unless it's like, a crime. Then you can be concerned).

ANONYMOUS

I came out unintentionally to my parents. It was Fall Family Weekend, and my family and I were in New York on our way to a Broadway show. On the train I had been discussing my Lawrenceville friends who were LGBTQ+ with my mother. I distinctly remember the moment it happened: I was buttering my bagel in a small diner when, suddenly leaning over, she asked in a conspiratorial whisper, "Are you LGBTQ+ too?" Although I no longer have to worry about it, I used to spend countless nights agonizing over how to broach the subject, just to have the truth torn from me against my will. Also, I had not been able to choose when to come out. Nevertheless, although those first few days were exhilarating and freeing, since then I've had to deal with questions and probing comments like "Are you sure it's not just a phase?" from friends and family. It's been a rough journey, but through it all I've found safety in Lawrenceville, where I am able to more openly express myself.



Aileen Ryu '25/ THE LAWRENCE

about my sexual orientation I typically default to defensively trying to prove my straightness. It's hard for me to write this. Even though I am somewhat protected by anonymity, I am scared that people will find out. And this feeling essentially encompasses my entire Lawrenceville experience. I have spent all my time here living on edge, worried that the wrong people will

for the first time — a dazzling smile, an impeccable outfit, a kind and charming personality. I thought to myself, Wow. Do I want to be her, or be with her?

Ok, I didn't exactly think that. It was more like, Wow. I wish I could be like her, but throughout class, my gaze would drift towards her direction, the way they did for my guy crushes during middle school. Seating was randomly distributed, and so my

both admiration and attraction!

Though that conclusion seems a bit "look at you, Captain Obvious!" I feel as though the queer experience is often like this: arriving at pretty self-evident ideas that heteronormativity made obscure. That's not to say that there aren't confusing things about being queer—attraction is a confusing thing, and can be made even more confusing by our attempt

Lawrenceville for supporting its LGBTQIA+ community.

The Art of the Compromise

Mike Johnson's Strenuous Path Forward

ELLEN JORDAN '26

It is a question that has become an intense matter of debate: *who is Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (R-LA) always on the phone with?* Whether it be the conclusion of a press conference or a committee session, Johnson has become somewhat famous for his exits, speed-walking past eager reporters with a phone pressed to his ear, leaving onlookers to speculate the recipient (if there even is one) of his calls.

Looking back, Johnson's rise to political power has largely been unorthodox: for a majority of the six years that he has served on Capitol Hill, he flew under the radar as an obscure and far-right backbencher from a deep-red state.

Yet everything changed for the seemingly invisible Johnson during Kevin McCarthy's (R-CA) tenure as Speaker. Last fall, following a sequence of events reminiscent of a coup d'état, McCarthy was abruptly ousted. What followed was equally chaotic, as House Republicans scrambled, and failed, for weeks to find the fallen Speaker's replacement. In the end, it was Johnson—triumphant over more recognizable stars of the Republican party, like Jim Jordan (R-OH) and Steve Scalise (R-LA)—who emerged as the new Top House Republican—despite 43 percent of Americans not recognizing his name, as a poll conducted by NBC found. In addition to his low national profile, his scant experience within the political ranks raised the most questions from both Democrats and Republicans: upon his promotion, he became the second-most inexperienced Speaker in history, with just 6.83 years in Congress compared to McCarthy's 16.

Since taking over from the ousted McCarthy, Johnson has struggled to maintain order in a still-largely chaotic House primarily due to his right flank, the far-right faction which is spearheaded by figures such as Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-FL) and Matt Gaetz (R-FL). Greene, Gaetz, & co. have remained a thorn in Johnson's side, as they continue to oppose the legislation favored by Johnson. Take Ukrainian aid, for example. On many occasions, facing staggering yet non-negotiating demands from the far-right, Johnson has had to rely on House Democrats to pass critical aid for the war-torn nation, as the far-right

remains critically opposed to financial assistance for Ukraine.

Further, under Johnson the government has narrowly avoided partial shutdowns on multiple occasions, saved only by last-minute funding bills that have additionally earned Johnson harsh disapproval from the far-right. This is because (like the dilemma of Ukrainian aid) Johnson has had to rely on Democrats to take the lead on funding bills. For the far-right, this bipartisanship and diplomacy on Johnson's end is nothing short of a betrayal.

Johnson's failure aside, the Speakership has long been dubbed the "worst job in Washington," and for good reason. In recent years, the Speakership position has become notoriously difficult, specifically for Republican holders, due to the party's increased dividedness and the far-right's increasingly stubborn nature. McCarthy remains the most recent victim of this inner-party turmoil, overthrown by just eight members of the far-right.

Now, Johnson too is under threat of removal: following his passing of a \$1.2 trillion spending package last month with help from the Democrats and the White House, Representative Taylor-Greene filed a motion for Johnson's removal. A few days ago Taylor-Greene renewed that threat, placing Johnson's job in greater peril; under the new rule the right flank had won while negotiating with McCarthy, a single member can trigger a "vote of no confidence" in the Speaker.

However, when all seemed to be going downhill for the already battered Johnson, former President Donald Trump threw a lifeline.

Last Friday, the pair stood side-by-side at a conference held at the ex-President's resort of Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Florida. Beaming with pride, Johnson looked on as Trump officially pledged his support to the Louisianaian.

"I stand with the speaker,"

Trump declared, praising Johnson for "doing a very good job."

However, despite the significance that Trump's words may hold, his endorsement of Johnson should not come to a surprise to many, for Johnson has supported the former President on multiple occasions. Back in 2020, Johnson encouraged over a hundred Republicans on Capitol Hill to sign onto a lawsuit challenging the results of the 2020 Presidential Election, of

Party for the recipient. McCarthy's spoiled political career is a case in point.

Following Trump's groundbreaking victory against Hillary Clinton in 2016, McCarthy immediately situated himself as close to the then-President as possible and took every possible opportunity to showcase his loyalty to the Trump Administration. Eventually, it seemed that his efforts had paid off: in addition to becoming known to Trump affectionately as "My Kevin," when Speaker elections rolled around last January following Nancy Pelosi's resignation, Trump encouraged Republicans to elect McCarthy to lead the House.

Indeed, McCarthy eventually gained enough support, but the victory was short-lived. Just a few months later, a group of far-right Republicans, led by Matt Gaetz, motioned to hold a vote of no-confidence in McCarthy's leadership. Unfortunately for McCarthy, the rapport that he had put so much time into building with Trump was for naught, for the former President did nothing to save Mc-

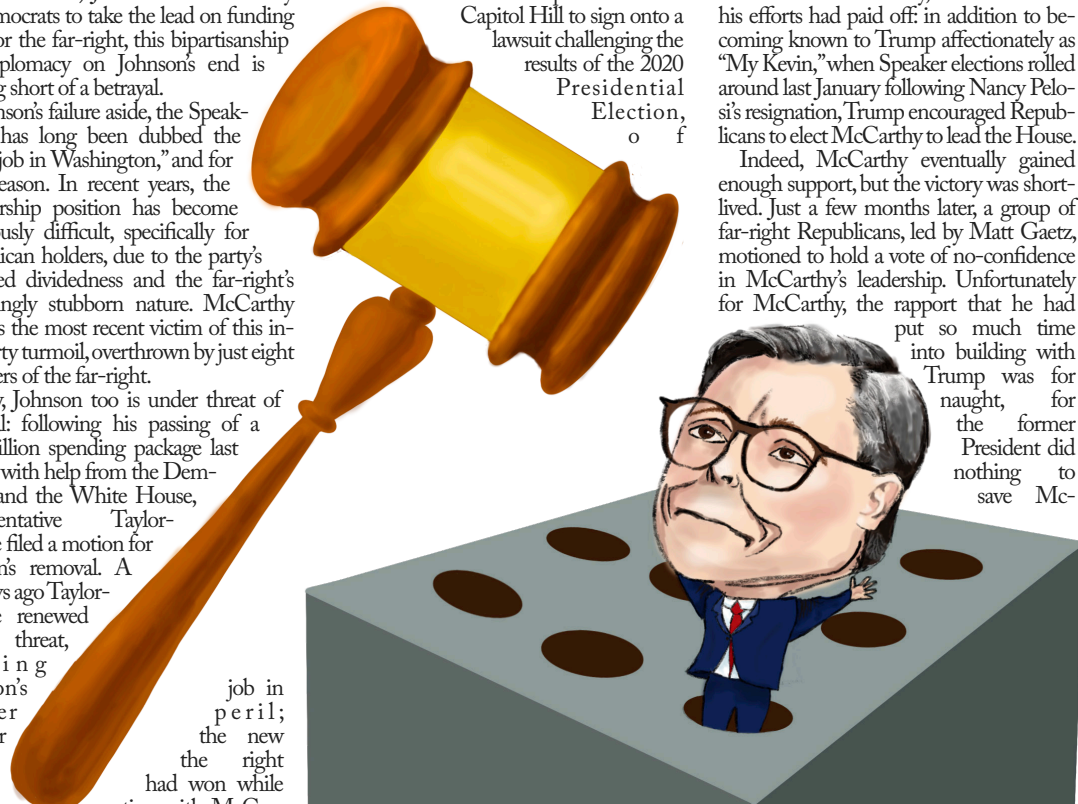
Carthy, and Trump's support has its limits, so Johnson cannot rely on Trump to save him.

Bringing back the focus to the far-right in the House, Johnson must not cease to forget the tendencies of radicals such as Taylor-Greene and Gaetz. As a result of a resurgence in right-wing populism spurred by the rise of Trump and his own unique political ideology, the far-right has become increasingly stubborn and continues to utilize a "my-way-or-the-highway" ideology, meaning that they are unwilling to compromise and will only support legislature if their needs are completely met. This approach is great for garnering publicity and bringing one's leaders to their knees, but bad for governance. Johnson should heed the warning of his predecessor and know the support and loyalty of the far-right is unpredictable and unsustainable. Rather, he should be aiming to appeal to more moderate Republicans and diplomatic-minded Democrats.

Johnson is stuck between a rock and a hard place, but at the end of the day, he is the Speaker of the House. Moreover, it is this title that brings forth the burden of running a House that serves the best interests of the people, and part of this responsibility is passing legislation.

Johnson accordingly has two options to keep the government functioning: either the exceptionally slim Republican majority must put aside its internal differences and coalesce into a solid bloc, or Johnson will need to negotiate with the Democrats. Given that the first option has thus far proven impossible to both Johnson and his predecessor, Johnson must begin to appeal to those on the other side of the political spectrum.

As has already been proven time and time again, the only way of appealing to the far-right is through wholeheartedly meeting their demands. This is a tactic that is detrimental to political progress and only places the power of the "people's house" into the hands of the few. Indeed, in order to both stay in power and to remain a Speaker faithful to the American people, Johnson must continue to learn the art of compromise and reach across the aisle to cooperate with Democrats.



Clare Pei '26/THE LAWRENCE

which Biden was victorious. Although the lawsuit ultimately was thrown out, to Trump, Johnson proved his loyalty.

Transitioning back to Trump's remarks, it may appear that Trump has single-handedly saved Johnson from his predecessor's fate. And by the expression on Johnson's face, he shared the exact opinion. However, it must be remembered that Trump's endorsement does by no means grant immunity within the Republican

Carthy from being ousted.

McCarthy's fall from grace, which Johnson witnessed first-hand, brought forth a clear message: Trump's support can appear and disappear with the snap of his fingers.

However, it seems that Johnson has failed to heed this warning, as it appears increasingly likely that he aims to mold himself into a Trumpian speaker and shift further to the right. At the same time, he has already resorted to the same tactics as

ERIC CHEN '27

A few months ago, I walked into Tsai only to be greeted by an entourage of people asking me for donations. There's a word in Chinese that perfectly describes this situation—*dào dé bāng jiǎ*, or "moral kidnapping." You feel as if denying them the 10 or so dollars they're asking for is a denial of homelessness or animal welfare (or whatever the money went to) as a key issue: In a way, denying them the money is denying your moral character. This, paired with the fact that you might know the person asking you for money, creates a scenario where there is only one option that doesn't end in awkwardness—giving them the 10 bucks in exchange for a Rice Krispie. *At least the money is going to a good cause*, I often say to myself after giving into the "moral kidnapping." However, our love for bake sale fundraisers and minority heritage months may not benefit the world in the ways we think they do. Enacting real societal progress requires both money and broad awareness, but our urge to donate a buck or two and our need to have one (and only one) month to celebrate minorities allow a sense of complacency to creep in.

Our limited attempts at creating change have their downfalls. Of course, donating is one of the easiest and most effective ways to help causes; however, whenever money is involved, it's important to ensure the money you spend will do the maximum amount of good. When going to Costco, we often buy items in bulk such that the price of a single unit is lower. The same logic should, in theory, apply to charities. We should make sure that the price of a single unit of "helping the world" is lower, so your money can purchase more units of "helping the world."

Do you really know where the money you donate at Tsai goes? How large is the organization? What's the track record of this charity? How effective will they be with the money? How will they spend my money? These are the questions we should be asking, yet we never truly ask. Even large charities with high profile names are known to have a stained track record. The American Red Cross famously embezzled funds and lied about the results of

their work; after a 7.0 magnitude earthquake hit the country of Haiti in 2010, a ProPublica and NPR investigation found evidence of disabled Haitians forced to sleep in their wheelchairs and emergency vehicles used by the Red Cross as "props at press events." The Humane Society of the United States has faced endless controversy over

their misappropriation of funds while misleading donors. When donating to charities, ask yourself, *how do I know the charities I give to are using my money in the best possible way?*

The answer is only a quick Google search away. Many well-known charities do life-changing work around the world, such as Partners in Health, the Helen Keller Foundation, and Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders). Though I'm certain that our donations are helping the world, our good intentions could have a bigger influence if we simply ask whether these resources will serve their maximum potential.

Through websites like GiveWell and movements like Effective Altruism (EA), people are thinking a little bit more about who they donate their money to. As Ezra Klein penned in an article for *The New York Times*, "Plenty of charities sound great to donors, but their programs are never studied, and when they are, the benefits often disappoint." Movements like EA, started by philosopher Wil-



Chloe Needham-Potts '25/THE LAWRENCE

liam MacAskill, focus on charities whose "work is backed by unusually high-quality studies showing that they save lives and prevent illness at lower costs than pretty much anything else we know of."

Beyond donations, Lawrenceville (and the rest of the world) prides itself in celebrating heritage months. There seems to be a heritage month for every minority under the sun. For each heritage month, there is an event with a speaker and, perhaps, some ethnically diverse food at Tsai—that's about it. Outside of Lawrenceville, things aren't that much better; perhaps a big corporation might attempt a statement marginally better than the School's.

The intention of a heritage month—celebrating a group's culture and background while recognizing the discrimination they face—is great, but these efforts do not solve systemic issues. Systemic discrimination is what truly causes inequality, and fighting it takes systemic solutions instead of a fleeting annual event.

Heritage months only serve their purpose if they prompt people to act.

The "good deeds" we do on this campus often unintentionally create a savior complex while sim-

No. Can LGBTQIA+ literature be condensed in a month? No. Can African American culture be condensed in a month? No. Can Latinx heritage be condensed in a month? No. Why must we pretend as if all of that is possible? A heritage month creates three dangerous assumptions: firstly, the suffering and background of a single minority can be condensed in a month; second, every other month in a non-minority month; and third, focusing on that minority for a month and only a month is enough.

When we feel like we've donated enough of our time and money to a certain issue, we perceive our fair share as "done"; comfortable with doing no more good, we shift our attention to something else. Complacent, we might not ever donate again unless prompted by someone to do so. We don't participate in local or national politics to push for policy change.

We must expand our definitions of ethical global citizens: while still continuing to donate and celebrate heritage months thoughtfully, we must understand, on a deeper level, how our actions are contributing to the solution. Furthermore, we cannot ever grow complacent or smug from our willingness to help, nor should we ever expect anything in return for our continued fighting. Large-scale societal issues are complicated to both understand and solve: Read the news, donate regularly, and vote in elections, but never stop at just these efforts.

While actual change is created by committed individuals fighting continuously for systemic solutions and committing to real-life actions, student donations and heritage months make us complacent.

Once you step outside the gates of Lawrenceville, there will no longer be urgent and needed speeches about inequality forced upon you, nor will there be a reward for donations (I'm fairly certain that by donating to the Malaria Consortium, I won't be given a Rice Krispie). Once we are hit with the indifference of society towards those who care to help, would we still be willing to give, listen, and fight?

plifying complex issues. Donations and heritage months inflate our own conception of how our actions permanently alter the world while, in far too many cases, they don't. Ironically, these misperceptions lead us to underestimating the severity and importance of the issue we thought we lent a hand in solving: deep down, we wonder if these problems are as grave as we thought they were. *If a month, a year, or a few bucks allows me to lend victims of this issue a helping hand, how hard could solving it be?*

On the other hand, heritage months allow us to gratify ourselves by learning about minorities who have been continuously ignored. We feel good, maybe a bit too good, about the new-found awareness we're giving. We begin to ask ourselves, *if AAPI Heritage Month is all that we need, is racism towards AAPI individuals a big problem?* However, can we package immense problems into just a month of attention?

Can Asian American and Pacific Islander history be condensed in a month?

Outside the Bubble OJ Simpson Dead at 76



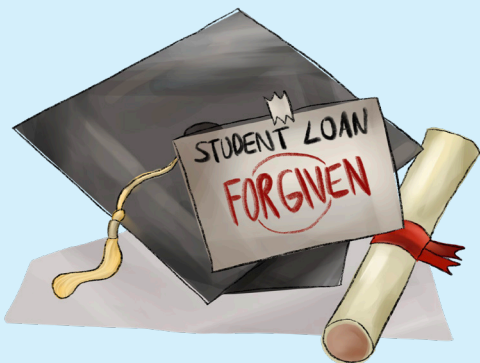
AILEEN RYU '25 / THE LAWRENCE

ELLEN JORDAN '26

Though O.J. Simpson was a star football player, actor, and celebrity, his murder trial entirely enthralled American media. On April 11, O.J. Simpson passed away from cancer—according to an announcement from the Simpson family—leaving behind a legacy clouded by controversy. He rose to fame as a star running back for the University of Southern California, then he joined the NFL and was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1985. After retiring from the NFL, Simpson continued

to catapult his stardom through sportscasting and acting. However, in 1994, his former wife Nichole Brown and her friend Ronald Goldman were found dead, and due to the prior accounts of abuse in his relationship with Brown, Simpson quickly emerged as the murder's sole suspect. Despite the prosecution's presentation of physical evidence that tied Simpson to the murders, Simpson's attorneys—nicknamed the "Dream Team"—acquitted their defendant of the charges by arguing that racist white police had framed Simpson.

President Biden Issues Student Debt Relief Plan



GLORIA YU '26 / THE LAWRENCE

MARCUS TSAI '27

According to *The New York Times*, President Joe Biden has released a plan to alleviate up to \$20,000 in student debt interest for 25 million Americans. This plan includes relieving \$5,000 or more in student debt for 10 million borrowers and will help people considered to be "low and middle income." Projections

say up to 23 million people could see their entire interest balance wiped out, meaning that all of the debt accrued due to interest and inflation would be rescinded. Therefore, undergraduate and graduate students will be completely debt-free. Though the timeline for this plan remains indefinite, it is projected to take effect during this upcoming fall.

New Approval of Firearm Background Checks

ISABELLE LEE '27

On April 11, the Biden-Harris Administration announced a new plan to expand requirements for firearm background checks. The expanded requirements implement the 2022 Bipartisan Safer Communities Act and will take effect 30 days after publication in the Federal Registry. The Administration aims to use the expansion of background checks to track illegal firearms used in crime and those who supply

them. According to a White House Fact Sheet, President Joe Biden stated that he will "make sure fewer guns are sold without background checks" and hopes to "continue requirements implement to do everything [he] possibly can to save lives." Attorney General Merrick Garland told CBS News that "the final rule...will not affect firearms dealers who already have licenses to sell guns...but will bring unlawful dealers into compliance with federal law."

Telling the Story of Tonight: Reach Out to the Arts Trip to Hamilton

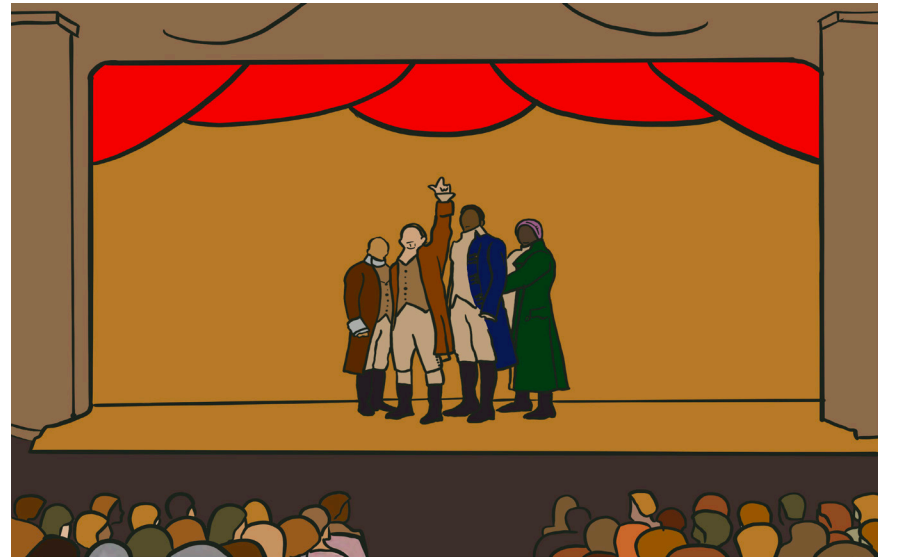
DOROTHY LEE '26

This past Sunday, April 14, the Reach Out to the Arts (ROTTA) program hosted a trip for students to see the award-winning Broadway musical *Hamilton* at the Richard Rodgers Theatre in New York City. Written and directed by Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Hamilton* follows the story of American founding father Alexander Hamilton and his role during the American Revolution and its aftermath.

According to Department Chair of the Visual Arts Chloe Kalna, all 44 spots on the trip were claimed within the first two minutes of the registration form's release, and a substantial waiting list developed immediately after. "It's really nice when students are looking forward to events and... [finding] out ways to connect with the arts," Kalna commented.

Co-directed by Kalna and Department Chair of the Performing Arts Matthew Campbell, the ROTTA program offers opportunities to engage with the professional arts, primarily through off-campus excursions. Speaking about the trips ROTTA offers, Sydney Wang '25 reflected, "I think [they] allow people who usually don't have time or the resources to go off campus." She appreciates Lawrenceville's efforts to provide cultural learning experiences from the regional area.

Wang "was very impressed" by *Hamilton* and explained that she



AILEEN RYU '25 / THE LAWRENCE

especially enjoyed the choreography. "[The dancers] were all really powerful," she said, "each ensemble member could be seen on the stage, playing a really significant role."

Abigail Joiner '26 described how the choreography incorporated set transitions as well. "People would lift up chairs and take them off stage, making it look really artistic," she explained. Joiner reflected that viewing the performance live was an "exciting and different" experience. "Sometimes singers would bring in their own personal spin to the lyrics," she said, "and some parts of [the songs] would include the audience." Joiner also remembered enjoying the environment of the theater, stating, "When you watch [the musical] in person, you feel enveloped in the energy of the stage." Throughout the performance, members of the audience

mouthed along to the lyrics, and each number concluded with cheering and applause from the house. "I think that *Hamilton* really brings people together," Joiner concluded. She considers the ROTTA trip to have been an "excellent" experience.

"Art is happening all around us in so many ways," Campbell explained, "it happens everywhere all the time, and all you have to do is give access to these spaces so that students can become participants in that conversation and in that experience." Campbell believes that art can "change, move, and develop" students' minds, and he looks forward to continuing the offering of opportunities such as the recent *Hamilton* trip through the ROTTA program.

"The Taking of Hostages is an Act of War": Guest Speaker Hugh Dugan

ELLEN JORDAN '26
DOROTHY LEE '26

On April 4, Lawrentians had the opportunity to attend a seminar hosted by Hugh Dugan P'20 '21 that focused on hostage-taking. Dugan, an international affairs practitioner, served as the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs under former U.S. President Donald Trump.

Dugan commenced the seminar by recalling the recent United Nations (U.N.) resolution that called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza during the month of Ramadan, which, Dugan emphasized, was extremely successful. Dugan then transitioned into discussing some of the resolution's shortcomings.

"The resolution fell short on what you see is happening [in Gaza]," Dugan noted as he critiqued the resolution for failing to condemn the Palestinian militant group Hamas—which has been designated by the U.S. and the E.U. as a terrorist organization—for its role in the conflict. Dugan additionally pointed out that the U.S. opted to abstain from voting on the resolution, which, Dugan suggested, may demonstrate that the U.S.'s once-strong relationship with Israel is beginning to deteriorate. "[The United States' abstinence] is a way of signifying the White House's unhappiness with Israel," Dugan elaborated.

Dugan then transitioned into discussing the U.N.'s Resolution 181 of 1947, which outlined how the British-Palestinian Mandate should be divided following Britain's relinquishment of the territory of



PHOTO OF HUGH DUGAN

COURTESY OF THE LAWRENCEVILLE SCHOOL

Palestine in 1948. The Resolution called for the division of Palestinian land into two states, one Jewish and one Arab, and placed Jerusalem under a special international regime.

Following the introduction into Israel's history and the U.N.'s role in the nation's creation, Dugan moved on to discussing the six U.S. hostages who are currently being held by Hamas. "Our [U.S.] law states that we do not negotiate with terrorists. We do negotiate with governments," Dugan explained. Dugan argued that the U.S.'s position as the leader of the free world caused smaller countries and terrorist organizations to take U.S. hostages as a method of gaining leverage against Americans. "This asymmetrical form of power, I fear, may be the next form of warfare," Dugan elaborated.

Dugan concluded the seminar by stressing that while the U.S. must remain steadfast in its current policy of not negotiating with terrorists, it is becoming increasingly essential to develop repercussions for hostage-takers. Following

the seminar, there was a Q&A session, which included questions ranging from whether the U.S.'s current hostage policies are truly sustainable to what it takes for a nation-state to become classified as a terrorist state.

According to Chloe Lee '26, Dugan's career in national security provided a unique perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. "I think [the seminar] was really informative from a security and logistical standpoint," Lee said, "rather than just providing an opinion based on [which nation] one supports."

This seminar contributes to the School's expanding initiative to engage Lawrenceville students in thoughtful discussions about Middle Eastern history and politics. Lawrenceville will continue to invite various speakers throughout the Spring Term, including former U.S. Ambassador to Israel Tom Nides, providing opportunities for students to be informed about this issue.

Concerts, Plays, and All That Jazz: An Update on Spring Productions

JANE SHINDNES '26

Spring Term has finally arrived, ushering in warmer temperatures, a generous amount of rain, and most importantly, an array of incredible performances occurring throughout the next month. As seniors prepare for their next journey, many of them will take their final bows on Lawrenceville's stages this term in the plethora of upcoming productions.

In just a week, two highly anticipated performances will grace our campus. On Friday, April 26, the Lawrenceville jazz ensembles will return to the Dresdner Hall to give one final, riveting concert of the 2023-24 school year. Lawrenceville's Director of Instrumental Studies, Steven Rozek, will be directing the 8 O'clock Jazz Combo and The Little Big Band, which feature committed Lawrenceville musicians who have spent their mornings and evenings preparing for the concert. Clara Khabbaz '26, who plays the clarinet for the 8 O'clock Jazz Combo, noted, "[The jazz concert] is much

more intimate than any of the other performances" because the musicians and the audience are all seated in a room together, "so the audience can really connect with the performers." With an exciting repertoire of recognizable pieces, this jazz concert is truly an incredible opportunity for music lovers and curious newcomers alike to experience jazz.

Immediately following the jazz ensembles, on Saturday, April 27, the Kirby Arts Center will open for a school-wide favorite—the Spring Dance Series, led by Director of Dance Derrick D. Wilder H'78. En Corps groups, led by student captains, have been tirelessly choreographing and rehearsing for the final dance series of the year. Similarly, *Puffs Rehearsal* the faculty-led Lawrenceville School Dance Collective has been hard at work, rehearsing three times per week under the direction of Wilder, Kristin Devine Jones '10, and Erika Mero. The performers aren't the

only ones contributing to the show; Wilder made a point to call out the incredible school atmosphere, saying that he is "extremely proud of our community" and that the viewers

and the last for others.

On the weekend following these concerts, the third and final play-reading series of the year will take place. On Friday, May 3, a cast of seven actors will present *The Vertical City*, a science-fiction comedy written by Diana Burbano. Directed by Sonia Lackey '25, the play reading will take place in the McGraw Reading Room. While rehearsals have not begun yet, this play reading will undoubtedly be just as intimate and captivating as the previous two.

Harry Potter fans, hold your wands—Lawrenceville's production of *Puffs*, written by Matt Cox, will top off the year's performing arts season in KAC's Black Box Theatre on Friday, May 10, and Saturday, May 11. Under the direction of Gabrielle Lescadre, an English Teaching Fellow, 15 of Lawrenceville's performers will take the stage, portraying a comical and endearing spin on everyone's

childhood dream school: Hogwarts. Mimie Pinpakornkul '25 expressed her adoration for the play, mentioning that although she is admittedly not a fan of the Harry Potter series, "it's a really fun take on Harry Potter" and she's glad that "the play gives the Hufflepuff House the recognition they deserve." As the Production Stage Manager, Pinpakornkul notes that the props and special effects will play a tremendous part in bringing the show together. The actors are hard at work, rehearsing almost every day after sports to make sure this year's closing act charms its viewers.

While it is hard to compete with Hogwarts' intriguing magic, Lawrenceville's performing arts department never fails to produce an impressive number of exceptional performances as the school year comes to a close. Whether you are involved in the assortment of productions that will be taking place this term or are an enthusiastic viewer, this spring is sure to bring a promising and talented closure as we all take our final bows.



Puffs Rehearsal Suzie Nguyen '26/THE LAWRENCE

are "truthfully the best audience [he's] ever seen." An impressive number of Lawrenceville students are participating in the Spring Dance Series, which will be a first for some

Singing into Spring: A Spring Playlist

RILEY MCKIBBEN '25

"Blue World" by Mac Miller

With Miller's soothing voice and thoughtful, reflective lyrics, this song perfectly captures the feeling of serenity. The melodic arrangement lends itself to evenings spent unwinding and reflecting on House porches, mirroring the sense of renewal and growth accompanying the season's arrival.

"Hold On, We're Going Home" by Drake and Majid Jordan

This soulful Drake anthem blends smooth vocals with infectious beats, creating a captivating groove impossible not to sway along to. The song's lush lyrics evoke a sense of warmth and anticipation, reminiscent of long-awaited springtime afternoon trips to Melba.

"Take a Walk" by Passion Pit

Combining vibrant synth lines with driving percussion, this indie-pop gem creates an irresistibly upbeat tempo perfectly tailored for springtime adventures. The tune's catchy melody and rousing chorus inspire listeners to embrace change and seize the day, making it an essential song to queue for long springtime walks around campus.

Phoebe Rayner '27/THE LAWRENCE

Out With the New, In with the Old: What Makes a Gripping Period Piece?

CELESTINE SUTTER '27

Whether you're browsing through a library or BookTok, you are bound to come across the term "period piece" at some point, but what does it mean? First and foremost, a period piece is defined as a work strongly reminiscent of a certain historical period, as opposed to historical fiction, which centers around a more specific historical event. As seen from America's obsession with *Bridgerton*, there is no question that period pieces remain an important facet of popular culture.

The execution of a period piece typically falls under two categories: aesthetic and accurate. The first type takes a more romantic approach to anachronistic media, or, media from an earlier time period. With decadent balls and bookish heroines overcoming societal norms, some period pieces—often set in Victorian England—sacrifice a degree of historical accuracy to maintain an idyllic atmosphere. Yet, we must not discount the

cultural value of readapting Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* for the umpteenth time. As seen with *The Notebook* and *Downton Abbey*, romance-centered period pieces are not only picturesque but successful. But what makes these so perfect for binge-watching? The modernized plots curated to be more relatable to contemporary audiences make these pieces feel relevant and entertaining in the present day. Romantically centered period pieces transport the viewer or reader to an idealized time and place, which further amplifies the escapist quality of fiction.

Alternatively, period pieces with an emphasis on historical accuracy are also influential and widely appreciated. Here, the distinction between historical fiction and period pieces

becomes more nebulous. The key difference is that a period piece's plot can be shifted to another era only with minor changes, yet a historical fiction relies on the events and zeitgeist of the time

little.

I find, however, historical accuracy to be an added bonus and not an essential factor in the perfect period piece. Chances are, if Kiera Knightly plays an underestimated woman who happens to find love (against her better judgment, of course), I'm going to enjoy it even if the costumes are not quite right or if the social behaviors of the time are slightly misrepresented. A captivating plot will most likely fill the gaps that small accuracy errors make, as long as the era is not grossly falsified. All in all, if a campy period piece instills a desire in consumers to research a time period, the work will leave a lasting impact while maintaining its digestibility. Since historical fiction and period pieces are so closely related, why not just relish a decadently flawed period piece (within reason)?

Moreover, numerous strikingly successful period pieces of value have premiered recently. *The Holdovers*, set in 1970, received five Oscar nominations this past year. Furthermore, Greta Gerwig's *Little Women* has been acclaimed for its costume design, raking in an Oscar and BAFTA award. *Enola Holmes* on Netflix is a light-hearted, enchanting mystery, made only the more felicitous with English accents and action-packed drama. And of course, adaptations of Jane Austen's novels will forever reign over the realm of period pieces.

Regardless of whether the work bends history or rigidly adheres to it, period pieces will never go out of style. Many resort to media revolving around a "simpler time" to escape the present. Regardless if a period piece is set in the 1880s or the 1980s, its timeframe and historical accuracy do not change the fact that a historical setting makes a book, show, or movie that much more interesting.



Emily Pan '24/THE LAWRENCE period. For instance, *The Godfather* takes place in the late '40s and maintains the overall integrity of the time with a bold plot. Thus, one can deduce that "accurate" period pieces are intended to be taken more seriously—you might even learn a

Senior Profile: Garrett Heffern '24

ANGEL XIN '26

Garrett Heffern '24 is a versatile individual: an Opinions Editor of the 143rd *Lawrence* Board, a Merrill scholar, and a Woodhull House prefect. Describing campus life as “a mixture of stress and fun,” Heffern embraced diverse responsibilities and ventured beyond his comfort zone throughout the past year.

The Woodhull House has been a big part of Heffern's Lawrenceville career. “We are a family,” he explained, “[The House] is a built-in friendship and support system.” While it was challenging at first for Heffern to transition from a member of the House to a prefect, he quickly embodied his role, trying to “go the extra mile [by] taking on house duties.” Similarly, *The Lawrence* splashed “colors [on his V Form] year.” Heffern expressed that having his co-editor leave the School during the 143rd Board's first term made it a difficult period for him. “I have never been the best at planning things out,” he confessed, “and working alone blurred out the time stamps.” Although working for *The Lawrence* occupied a significant proportion of his free time, the company of other board members made the experience extremely enjoyable for him. Similarly, the Merrill Scholars program changed Heffern's relationship with writing. *Brideshead Revisited*, a novel by English writer Evelyn Waugh, particularly

reshaped his perception of literature. “[The book and the Merrill Scholars program] made me realize how fun writing could be in a small, tight knit group of passionate people,” he elaborated.

The electives that Heffern enrolled in during his V Form year also showed him a new side of Lawrenceville. “Research in Molecular Genetics, for example, blew me away,” he stated. Heffern was stunned by the course content and its flow of tasks. “You get to truly work on what you are fascinated by,” he expanded, while highlighting the collaborative nature of the class. “Creative Writing: Techniques in Poetry and Short Fiction,” taught by Victoria Stitt, has also proved to be one of Heffern's favorite electives. “I was exposed to writing styles I [had] never seen before, and I loved it,” he explained. “Normally, I tend to gravitate to areas that I relate to and resonate with, but this course forced me to explore outside the box,” he added. The English class, however, wasn't the only instance in which Heffern stepped outside of his comfort zone during his V Form Winter Term.

“I really burned out after IV Form year,” Heffern remarked. He recalled that he was “constantly studying in the Woodhull [House] library.” Yet, by the end of the year, he found himself “not having the same work mentality.” As a result, Heffern was encouraged to “branch out and be less heads-down” in his V Form year.



Garrett Heffern '24

CeCe Gibb '25/THE LAWRENCE

From actively engaging in line dancing and acting in Winterfest, to meeting and guiding new members of the Woodhull House, Heffern embarked on numerous new journeys this past year. “I participated in Winterfest because it made me nervous,” he further recalled, but it resulted in a very rewarding experience. Looking ahead, Heffern hopes to continue venturing into new areas and activities. “I want to try out intramural sports like soccer in university and become more involved with

engineering,” he elaborated. As a member of the Robotics team at Lawrenceville, Heffern has already been utilizing available resources to explore his interests, and he is hopeful that there will be more opportunities like the robotics co-curricular in the future.

While Heffern was “tempted to say that [he] should have started [his] college applications earlier,” his V Form year also produced some of his most defining memories at Lawrenceville. “I felt so much more comfort and confi-

dence walking into V Form fall,” he remarked. Ultimately, these moments made their way into his college application essays and will always shape his narrative of Lawrenceville. Heffern has consistently maintained the philosophy of “trying not to regret,” a sentiment he held onto fervently during his journey at Lawrenceville. Reflecting on his last year at Lawrenceville, he tells underformers that “it's okay to be nervous about college applications, but [it's] just as important to have fun.”

Blossoming Joy: The Magic of Spring

MIRA PONNAMBALAM '26

The English language has a plethora of idioms anticipating the arrival of spring, from “spring has sprung” to “March goes in like a lion and out like a lamb.” The coming of spring is also significant across many cultures. For example, the Hindu celebration of Holi commemorates the chance to start fresh with the new season, and a massive celebration of the Spring Equinox is held in Mexico City each year. So what makes spring worth celebrating for so many people?

Recently, the spring weather has seemed far from a cause for celebration. “The other day, the wind almost knocked me over into the mud and turned my umbrella inside-out. The trees definitely suffered a little. A lot of the flowers got blown away,” recalled Sophie Yang '26. With endless rain the past few days, walking across campus in torrential downpours can certainly be an irritating experience. However, rain comes with the promise of something better. The idiom “April showers bring May flowers” puts it best. When the storm clouds clear and the sun appears, the entire atmosphere of the campus changes.

Despite the inconveniences

rain may bring, Yang “[loves] the smell when you walk around campus in the morning after it had rained the night before. It smells so fresh. You can almost smell the dew drops on the grass.” Of course, there are the aforementioned “May flowers.” The cherry blossom trees outside of the Bunn Library have started to bloom, leaving pink petals floating through the air. Mila Cooper '26 noted, “I love all the plants and flowers that come out when it gets really warm. It's definitely the best part of spring.” The combination of rain and sun doesn't just bring color to the plants—from time to time, it gives the sky a splash of color. “The double rainbow on Friday was gorgeous,” recalled Akhila Mantri '25.

The joyous atmosphere that sunny weather brings is infectious on the Lawrenceville campus. “I think that when it's nicer out, people tend to be outside and really happy. When we had the solar eclipse, everybody came outside. I think everyone's mood really changes with the weather,” explained Cooper. There's something about clear skies and bright sunshine that improves campus morale.

Perhaps it's because with the nice weather comes the opportunity for outdoor activities. “I like going on



Students Observing the Solar Eclipse

Rhianna Scott '25/THE LAWRENCE

walks. Even in the summer, it's a bit hot for that. In the spring, you can go outside, [bike], and take pictures of the flowers,” mentioned Cooper.

Sometimes, no activity is necessary; simply being outside is enough. “I like sitting on the lawn outside of the Carter House in the spring. It's so fun to watch everybody walking around on the Crescent Green going to sports or the house,”

added Yang. The warm weather is good for more than just fun, as Lawrentians can take advantage of the sun to study. “Studying outside has been really nice, since I feel like I concentrate a lot better,” said Mantri.

Furthermore, spring sunsets bring longer days and shorter nights. For Yang, this extra daylight is the best part of spring. “When I do homework and I see that it's still light out,

I get so much more motivation to finish my work before the sun goes down. It's kind of like a natural timer,” she remarked.

Spring weather is certainly a cause for celebration, as it makes the Lawrenceville community happier, even with the frequent raining. Like Yang said, “Spring has its downsides, but once those are gone, you get to see the sun and everything good that comes with it.”

Flavorful Zen: Ooika Matcha

HELEN CHANG '26

"*Irasshaimase!*" the barista exclaims to every customer as they step in the door. This greeting, which means "welcome to our store," is a trademark of Ooika Matcha, a newly-opened matcha café on Main Street. With wooden furniture, quiet ambient music, and the white noise of the matcha mill, the aesthetic café has become a new relaxing hub for Lawrentians.

Matcha is a Japanese tea made from finely ground, dried, young tea leaves and has an earthy and slightly bitter taste. The green tea plant is grown in a shaded area and harvested by hand only once every year, usually during May. Only the youngest and greenest part of the tea leaves are picked. The bright green matcha powder is made by milling the dried tea leaves. Matcha comes in powder form and is dissolved in hot water and whisked to make tea, or sprinkled in as flavoring. Because matcha plants are grown in the shade, the tea is rich in caffeine, amino acids, and antioxidants – drinking matcha can even prevent cell damage and aid in weight loss. Despite only recently becoming popular in the United States for its health benefits, it has been a foundation in traditional Japanese tea ceremonies

for centuries. To make matcha, a "chasen," a special whisk made from a singular piece of bamboo, is used. Unlike conventional metal whisks, the tool will not scratch the bottom of the bowl while frothing up the matcha. Since matcha never dissolves, the best matcha is simply whisked until frothy. To best use the chasen, it should be whisked in a special "W" pattern in the bowl.

Marc, a Lawrenceville native and one of the owners of Ooika Matcha, has been in the tea industry for 10 years. After entering the field, he "lived in Japan and got really into matcha." Marc decided to open up a matcha store after getting a matcha mill for fun during the Covid-19 pandemic. Ooika Matcha began as an online matcha shop, and Marc wasn't originally planning on having an in-person location, but he wanted to make high-grade matcha more accessible. Setting up the shop took three years because "the [Lawrence] township rules made it difficult to set up a new store." Ooika's matcha is unique because it is the only matcha in the world that is "milled fresh every day." Most matcha stores, even in Japan, use matcha that is about six months old. At Ooika, the matcha sold is more expensive, "single-origin matcha,"



Outside Main Street's Ooika Matcha

Sonia Shum '26/THE LAWRENCE

which means all of the leaves used to make one jar of matcha powder are grown from a single location. For first-time customers, Marc recommends their most popular drink, the strawberry matcha latte, and the upcoming matcha and sakura ice cream for the summer. For longtime fans who want to immerse in the "high-grade matcha" experience,

he does not recommend the café drinks and instead suggests single-origin matcha jars called *usucha* that are served "traditionally in Japan."

Many students have become frequent customers, including Angela Yang '25 and Audrey Liu '26. Liu's favorite is the original matcha latte, and she loves that the drinks "use exclusively oat milk," making all

drinks lactose-free and vegan. Yang likes both the strawberry matcha latte and the strawberry soda. With an abundance of refreshing items to pick from, consider Ooika Matcha the next time you need a refresher. Offering drinks and snacks like sesame lattes and sakura-flavored soft serve, they will definitely have a treat that fits everyone's taste.

Designing Your Own Curriculum: Independent Studies for the IV and V Form

LILA SCHMIDT '27
KARINA STAKH '27

During their IV and V Form years, students have the unique opportunity to pursue and further study a preferred topic of their interest outside the standard curriculum. An independent study project comprise one class for students to explore something outside of the traditional curriculum. This one-of-a-kind course lets students shape their educational experience to match their interests, allowing for extensive examination and personal growth. As Constance Sharp '24 explained, "[independent studies are] a way to...push the breadth of the curriculum and do something really interesting." This detailed investigation is supported by a chosen faculty advisor, whose job is to mentor the student throughout their project—ensuring the study remains focused and organized while also giving support, guidance, and advice when needed. The projects themselves come in all different forms. From working as an elementary school tutor or volunteering at a hospital to serving as an apprentice in an architectural firm, the possibilities are endless. Sharp's independent study focuses on the concept of



Aileen Ryu '25/THE LAWRENCE

the gaze in artwork and literature, exploring power dynamics between protagonists. She describes her project as an inspection of "how literature conveys who has the power and who does not, [looking] ultimately at the intersection between artwork and literature." This interdisciplinary approach allows students to form connections between different fields, making their overall educational experience even more compelling. One of the key features of an independent study project is the flexibility it

offers. As Sharp points out, "I have the proposal and I'm largely sticking to [it], but if things diverge along the way, I have the freedom to change that." The flexibility allows students to adapt their projects based on new discoveries and insights, maintaining the relevance and immersiveness of their studies. To conclude their independent study, each student presents their work at the end-of-the-term Academic Showcase. Sharp plans to wrap up her project in a culminating paper, in which she will "analyze *Lolita*

and *Invisible Man* more closely for language...and hopefully use mini writings [she has created] along the way." This final presentation is a testament to students' hard work and dedication to their studies—showcasing their explorations and the insights gained throughout.

For her independent study, Cindy Shum '24 chose to explore her passion for photojournalism with Visual Arts Teacher Gil Domb P'17 as her advisor. The project allowed Shum to combine her academic pursuits with her personal

interests, creating a project that was both fulfilling and educational. As Shum explained, "I've always been interested in photography, but I haven't been able to take a [related] course because of my other academics. I think [conducting an] independent study is great to pursue [a topic] that you've always liked but haven't had the time to [explore]." Throughout her independent study, Shum has immersed herself in the world of photography, capturing action shots in athletic games as well as different nature scenes around the campus, which she presented at the Academic Showcase. She recalled, "I present[ed] my poster... [which] was also a portfolio of [around] 40 photos that were edited and cropped." The chance to share her passion with the Lawrenceville community served as evidence attesting to the value of independent studies in allowing students to pursue their interests and share their achievements.

Through mentorship and exploration, students take part in a refreshing learning experience by conducting independent studies that help them gain independence and research skills. Their newfound knowledge and expertise prepare them for future pursuits in their chosen areas of interest.

How the Need to “Know Ball” Is Destroying Sports Discourse

BRYAN BOANOH '25
SPORTS EDITOR OF THE 144TH BOARD

Everybody wants to be factually correct—this is not a revolutionary statement. No one enjoys taking a stance or making a claim only to realize that what they said or thought turned out to be wrong. This forces an individual to ask questions of themselves. What can be said about a person if they are consistently wrong? Is it worth it to keep putting your thoughts out into the open air if they are so often grounded when they come into contact with reality? Again, I am not making any profound discovery here; insecurities are real, and they can manifest themselves in many different facets of our lives.

Considering the section in which this article is being published, you can make an educated guess about what backdrop I am going to use to examine the ideas of insecurities.

Sports discourse, at its core, is built upon conflicting opinions where no side is necessarily “wrong.” Of course, statistics do exist, and they play a large part in influencing our opinions—LeBron James’ career average of 27.1 points per game would prove to be a large obstacle if you were trying to convince someone that he was worse than Killian Hayes and his lofty 8.1 career average—but stats only serve as a numerical confirmation of what we see. No amount of advanced statistics can ever paint a more accurate depiction of an athlete and their playstyle than their actual on-field or on-court performance, and that’s something that you see for yourself. Therefore, you are free to make almost any sports-related claim you want, as long as you cite your eyes as evidence. You are your own primary source.

But damn us and our inherent human need for external validation. Our own confidence and assurance in the validity of our own thoughts and opinions simply is not enough for us. No, we need to outsource these opinions to the masses with the intention of establishing our own intellectual superiority in the realm

of subjective analysis. We must prove that we “know ball.”

In the attempts to prove that we have “ball knowledge,” sports fans will lead crusades to social media comment sections. We will engage in near-fatal combat in lunch table colosseums, performing for raucous crowds. Some of us take up the microphone and make our own auditory “ball knowledge”

internet points from strangers in order to reinforce their own belief that they do indeed “know ball.”

Comparison is the theft of joy, which is why, of course, the need to compare our levels of ball knowledge to those of our peers is perhaps even more important than just confirming the fact that we do indeed have it. “Okay,” the sports fan thinks, “I know, through the meaningless plaudits of strangers whom I will never meet, that my subjective sports opinions are valid, now the only way to further prove the superiority of my sporting knowledge is to tear down the subjective opinions of my peers,” and the sports fan sets out to do just that, because why strive to just be correct when the possibility of becoming more correct than somebody else exists? This question has become a poison seeping its way into every crevice of sports discourse, nearly ruining the medium.

Nowadays, people tear down any opinion that runs opposite to theirs with little to no effort being put into understanding where the opposite side is coming from. *Oh, you think that the best soccer player from the 2020s even holds a candle to my childhood heroes from the 2000s? Clearly, you are an inept child whose frontal lobe is merely too underdeveloped, otherwise, you would agree with me. Because I have ball knowledge, and you don't.* It is much easier to classify anyone with differing opinions as someone who is merely on a lower plane of intellect than you, and it is equally effortless to devalue their opinions and declare yourself above them. In this day and age, that’s how you win.

I’ve been using the word “we”



Aileen Ryu '25 / THE LAWRENCE

applications through the creation of podcasts (listen to *Two Brothers and their Sports*, available on Spotify, Apple Music, or wherever you choose to listen to your podcasts). The alleged “best of us” have our faces broadcasted to millions, as we have morning shows devoted to our debates, essentially monetizing our “ball knowledge.” It’s truly inescapable. The insatiable need to prove we have ball knowledge has become an epidemic, leeching its way into every avenue for sports debate. You can’t swing a cat in an Instagram comment section without hitting someone spewing controversial sporting opinions, hoping to gain a sufficient number of intangible

The Scoreboard

SATURDAY

Varsity Track @ Hill Relays: Placed
Boys Varsity Baseball @ Lawrence: 2-12 L
Boys Varsity Tennis @ Blair: 2-5 L
Boys Varsity Golf v. Blair: 199-211 W
Girls JV Softball v. Hamilton West: 1-23 L
Girls Varsity Softball v. Hamilton West: 0-4 L
Boys JV Golf vs Blair: 200-227 W
Boys Varsity Lax v. St. Anthony's: 13-7 W
Girls JV Lax @ Summit High School: 3-17 L
Girls Varsity Lax @ Summit High School: 9-15 L

MONDAY

Boys Varsity Golf @ Blue Devil Invite: Placed
Boys JV Tennis @ West Windsor-Plainsboro South: 0-6 L
Girls JV Golf v. Stuart: 47-61 W
Boys JV Baseball v. Notre Dame: 1-5 L
Boys Varsity Baseball @ Pennington: 2-3 L
Girls Varsity Softball @ Princeton: 5-2 W

TUESDAY

Girls Vars Golf @ West Windsor-Plainsboro North: 162-206 W
Boys JV Golf @ West Windsor-Plainsboro North: 152-178 W
Boys Vars Tennis v. Episcopal: 6-1 W
Girls Vars Lax @ Peddie: 16-4 W
Girls Vars Softball v. Penn Charter: 3-13 L
Girls JV Lax @ Peddie: 10-2 W

WEDNESDAY

Boys Vars Golf V Hill: 207-206 L
Girls Vars Golf v. Sommerville: 162-213 W
Boys Vars Lax V. Perkiomen: 17-7 W
Girls JV Softball @ Blair: 2-7 L
Boys Vars Baseball @ Blair: 7-2 W
Girls Vars Lax @ Sacred Heart Greenwich: 9-11 L
Boys Vars Baseball @ Blair: 7-2 W
Boys Vars Track & Field v. Big Red Classic: Individual Results
Girls Vars Track & Field v. Big Red Classic: Individual Results

THURSDAY

Girls JV Softball @ Hillsborough: 6-12 L
Boys JV Baseball v. Dunellen: 10-0 W
Boys Vars B Lax @ Pennington: 16-3 W

	<i>Eli Lacey '25</i> StuCo President	<i>Sophia Liu '25</i> VP of Academics	<i>Kathlynn Yao '25</i> VP of Honor	<i>Tenji Sithole '25</i> VP of Social Life
One goal for next year?	Spamming the community group chat	Quizlets for every class :)	To be joyful	Get hype
If you could be an ice cream flavor, what would you be and why?	Chocolate, iykyk	Vanilla: you need vanilla ice cream for every recipe	Pistachio because it's so flavorful and exquisite	Mango sorbet, its reliable and suits any mood
Go-to Starbucks order?	Used to be a vanilla bean in a vente guy, no longer a frequent Starbucks goer any more	Say no to caffeine	Not applicable (i order something different every time)	Grande iced matcha, oatmilk, sugar-free vanilla, light ice
Favorite on-campus publication? (hint: there is only One right answer)	Lawrence obviously, read my article about the best bathrooms on campus it'll blow your mind	The VILLEage Green!	The acta diurna, go read my classics publication in pop!!! and the lawrence	The First Amendment
Cheeseburger soup or chilled strawberry soup?	Strawberry cause it sounds more natural	Pass for both	Skip	... I'm vegan
anything else that's funny?	My freshman year Elijah, Jon, Jalen, Nathan, Pablo and I were all lingering in the bathroom after lights out, PK busted the operation and had us line up to take a photo. I've been on a journey to find that photo ever since.	If I hadn't done track, I would have gotten a heart attack from Conan's phone call.	Me	I haven't had a job for the last 3 weeks