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CORRECTIONS

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Editorial

Revisiting How We Train Our Student Leaders

With Winter Gathering around the corner, Lawrenceville stands in a period of flux—between changes in schedule, an emphasis on community, and methods of communication between students and administration, the School has leapt forward in student-faculty cohesion and positive change. Yet, as expected, students struggle to adapt to a fast-changing environment. Lawrenceville's community represents one of its greatest strengths; and, when it comes to pulling a community together, person by person, House by House, to continue this new culture of change, much of the job rests—whether their responsibility or not—on student leaders.

Prefects, since the program's inception in the mid-1980s, have served as an integral part of the Lawrenceville community; however, as their responsibilities have broadened—acting as role models, leaders, Housemates, and, as of late, stand-in counselors—their training has lagged behind. Following the tragedy of last April (near the start of the 2022-23 prefect tenure), Prefects entered the new year in dire need of tools to aid their younger Housemates—provided by well-intentioned efforts such as health and wellness tips from Director of Counseling and Psychological Services Tonita Balcom, scenario-oriented training, discussions about goals and expectations, and the distribution of a "Prefect Manual" clarifying campus policies and access to resources. However, the efforts of a preseason neglected to exceed a superficial level and soon fell apart: when prefects sought assistance dealing with grieving students after witnessing the events of the previous year, training brought scenarios with homesick students, when prefects wanted to learn how to set boundaries with their younger Housemates, suggestions stopped with "close your doors," avoiding the complex issues of interpersonal relationships and desire to assist one's struggling Housemates. While the Manual dictated an all-prefect meeting at the beginning of each month, the last training prior to January 15 occurred on October 3, 2022. Although prefects did convene for a "Leadership Training" workshop on October 17, 2022, the events focused on the importance of sleep rather than the subjects left abridged at previous meetings—such as boundary setting.

Following the most recent tragedy in January 2023, the administration scheduled multiple meetings to highlight prefects' roles and discuss the circulating concerns—too little, too late. Following Head of School Stephen Murray's H'54 '55 '65 '16 P'16 '21 all-school address the night of January 15, prefects found themselves thrust into caring for their distraught Housemates without direction. No meetings, nor electronic communication, came to the prefects, leaving them to fend for themselves while tackling challenges not mentioned in their training despite similar challenges having happened eight months prior: Google Docs talking about how to learn new students' names, post-it notes of words that relate to trust, love, or confidence, and scenarios that refuse to reflect the real issues present in Houses, while applicable for prefects to learn, paint an idealistic view of their jobs and struggle to scratch the surface of the lessons needed to perform their roles at Lawrenceville.

Beyond the lack of quality, prefect training also lacked in quantity—multiple long-term initiatives, such as the aforementioned monthly meetings and Circle Curriculum, a resource allowing Circle prefects to evaluate themselves and improve their mentorship skills to build stronger House communities, ceased updates in the beginning of October. The framework for successful training—synchronous preseason, regular check-ins, and self-guided curriculum—exists, yet lacks in potency.

However, remedying the quantity of Prefect training proves straightforward, and addresses quality along the way: training sessions should be more applicable, grounded-in-reality activities that would better equip Prefects with the necessary leadership skills to confidently approach challenging situations. Further developing the scenario-based exercises to be more timely and realistic could provide prefects with a testing ground to consider potential responses and recognize the consequences of certain decisions. Revamping the Circle Curriculum with appropriate units and implementing scenario-based exercises would be a useful tool for both current and future Prefects. Expanding the current curriculum would also be a vital step to get the Circle, Crescent, and Lower Prefects on the same page. The Crescent and Lower Prefects

do not have resources that resemble an organized curriculum, which leads to certain Prefect groups falling further behind. Although there are several benefits of providing personalized guidance to Circle, Crescent, and Lower prefects depending on their specific needs, universalizing the curriculum would bring greater clarity to the role of prefects on campus.

Outside issues in general prefect preparation, lack of clarity regarding the roles of student leaders following traumatic situations exists outside of Lawrenceville; in an interview with Atishay Jain, the Co-Head of the Mental Health Committee at Phillips Exeter Academy, he noted that while the administration informs campus leaders that adults will handle difficult situations (paralleling the words of Circle Level Director John Clore in a January 16 prefect meeting), students still "feel the burden." Jain suggested that "putting [students] through some sort of training to recognize signs of suicide, signs of depression and anxiety" proves necessary for student leaders, such as prefects, to understand their responsibilities and boundaries. Jain's sentiment aligns with those expressed at the January 22 and 23 listening sessions, and stands contrary to the worries of the administration: on January 23, Dean of Students Devondra McMillan expressed that Prefects act as role models, not counselors or people meant to resolve; they "won't be training prefects for things that [are] not appropriate to be trained on." However, as tragedy has now struck Lawrenceville twice in a brief time, crisis response appears appropriate—nay, necessary—for prefects to receive training in.

The aforementioned solutions are not the only ways of addressing the issues around Prefect programming; however, these ideas can become starting points for dialogue on how to improve the Prefect program moving forward. Revitalizing the Circle Prefect Curriculum, while expanding it to the Crescent and Lower Prefects, addressing more applicable scenarios, and hosting sessions on crisis response, offer a springboard for creating better prepared Prefects in the future.

This editorial represents the majority view of The Lawrence, Vol. CXLII.

Enemies Knocking at the Door

How NATO is Partially Responsible for the Russo-Ukrainian War

WILL O'REILLY '25
OPINIONS ASSOCIATE

More than 300 days ago, Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine, beginning a war that continues to rage on with no end in sight. Many frame the war as a land grab by Russian President Vladimir Putin, with the aim of claiming strategic territory such as Crimea and of "freeing" ethnic Russians living in Ukraine. Yet by focusing merely on Putin's motivations, we fail to realize that the roots of the Russo-Ukrainian war go far deeper than a single man.

Russia sees its attack on Ukraine as not just an attack on one nation, but on the U.S. and its allies—a way to seek revenge for pushing against its borders a little too firmly.

In 1949, following the end of World War II, the United States, Canada, and 10 European nations formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), an intercontinental political and military alliance formed with the goal of preserving freedom in Europe against the looming threat of the Soviet Union. While NATO succeeded in creating a strong front against which weaker European states could shield themselves with,

this allyship created a complex web of political animosity. NATO created a "U.S.S.R. vs. the rest" system that would govern foreign policy for decades to follow. Whether purposeful or not, as NATO inducted countries that bordered the U.S.S.R., they simultaneously alienated and provoked the Soviet Union. Thus, ever since NATO's formation, one of the world's major power struggles has been that of Russia versus the free world, and Russia, feeling alienated, has become more militarily aggressive.

With the seeds for conflict sown in 1949, we fast forward to 2008, as NATO further provoked Russian aggression. In its 2008 summit, NATO declared that it would add Ukraine and Georgia as new member states, two nations that border Russia. Although it never became a member state, Ukraine did become a NATO partner nation, confirming its close collaboration with NATO. Russia expressed disapproval, making clear that they interpreted Ukraine's collaboration with NATO as a threat. Combined with European Union expansion into eastern Europe and the U.S. transformation of Ukraine into an Amer-

ican-style democracy, 2008 Russia felt the West right at its doorstep. Partnering with Ukraine enables the U.S. and other member states to bring troops and weapons right up against the Russian border. Russia sees its at-

tack on Ukraine as not just an attack on one nation, but on the U. S.

and its allies—a way to seek revenge for pushing against its borders a little too firmly.

NATO should have been more strategic about Ukraine's induction by creating a demilitarized zone (DMZ) in Ukraine. A 3,000-mile strip of land running along the Russian border could have prevented the possibility of NATO keeping long range

missiles in Ukraine capable of being launched into Russia. The demilitarized zone between North and South Korea is a prime example of a DMZ keeping an unpredictable leader pacified. The U.S. has around 28,000 troops in South Korea today, but the DMZ between the two nations has kept Kim Jong Un from feeling threatened by the American military presence. As a result, he has refrained from launching an invasion on South Korea. NATO could have proposed a DMZ to Ukraine as a necessary concession for membership. Membership, unlike partnership, guarantees troop deployment from member states. Thus, a win-win; Ukraine gets NATO membership, and the frail diplo-

In a perfect world, every world leader would be rational, considerate, and selfless. Yet whether we like it or not, this dream is nothing more than just that: a dream.

matic balance against Putin is maintained for another couple years.

Yes, the U.S.S.R. and modern-day Russia were always going to be aggressive. Yet by carelessly inducting Russia border states and failing to recognize Putin's volatility, NATO threw out any possibility of maintaining diplomatic relations with Russia. Motivated by the

potential for power and glory, Russia flexes its military strength to intimidate its adversaries. So it may be that a conflict in Ukraine was inevitable and that NATO could not have done anything to stop Putin. But NATO, especially as an organization that brands itself as a group of freedom fighters, had a responsibility to prevent the exacerbation of tension between Russia and Ukraine—and they failed.

In a perfect world, every world leader would be rational, considerate, and selfless. But whether we like it or not, this dream is nothing more than just that: a dream. Unfortunately, there exist negligent and inhumane leaders, like Putin, who exercise massive amounts of power. There are people who determine the courses of lives that they could not care less about. As much as we would like to curse their name, stomp on their image, and threaten them, disregarding these leaders' immense ability to destroy would be irresponsible. Volatile dictators like Putin are unpredictable and impossible to negotiate with. In order to prevent dictators from initiating world wars, hegemonic nations like the U.S. and the rest of NATO have the responsibility to tread carefully. They need to understand that sacrifices and concessions must be made. The old 20th-century dream of the U.S. spreading American freedom at all costs will never come to fruition. The U.S. and NATO need to shift their foreign policy towards not necessarily appeasement, but compromise in order to keep dictatorships passive. NATO must walk the thin line between being a strong, reliable alliance and a sensitive power aware of the high stakes at hand.

Courtesy of CleanPNG



Around the World in...Two Millenia?

A Brief History of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA)

ELI LACEY '25

Martial arts and hand-to-hand combat have a rich history that dates back thousands of years. Some experts, in fact, theorize that our ancestors' faces evolved to better protect themselves after they first learned to throw a punch. Thus, throughout history, some form of organized martial arts can be seen in almost every civilization that has ever existed. But it wasn't until very recently that previously independent martial arts were merged to see which one was most effective. The combination of various martial arts styles is known as Mixed Martial Arts (MMA), which is now one of the fastest-growing sports in the world. In this article, I will be going over the complete history, technical evolution, and the obstacles the sport had to overcome to get to where it is today.

From Aikido to boxing, a martial arts gym can probably be spotted in every strip mall in America. It is estimated that over 180 different martial art forms exist today, coming from all around the world, each containing its own unique style, objectives, and technique; however, out of all these styles of combat, three have reigned supreme and are revered by mixed martial artists around the world as a "holy trinity." These three are wrestling, Jiu-Jitsu, and Muay Thai.

Wrestling is one of the oldest sports in history. That may seem surprising, but when you think about it, it makes sense. Sometime a couple thousand years ago, two humans got mad at each other, resulting in their ending up on the ground—there you go. While imaginary, this scenario isn't necessarily unrealistic. The first real evidence of wrestling as a contest can be traced back to around 20,000 years ago, inscribed in the caves of Southern Europe. Wrestling's main focus is on taking your opponent to the ground, defending their takedowns, and controlling your opponent when on the ground. Wrestling can be seen in ancient cultures such as Mesopotamia, Greece, and Rome. Today, the sport is still widely practiced around the world.

Jiu-Jitsu is another martial art with a long history. Jiu-Jitsu was first created in Japan in 1530, and focuses on putting your opponent in painful positions until they can no longer continue competing. Putting your opponent in a painful position is called

submission, which come in a variety of variations focused on different limbs and joints. Some submissions also target the neck and throat to choke one's opponent until they tap out. Now, although Jiu-Jitsu initially was invented in Japan, I must also talk about the contributions



Arjun Chai, the father of American Muay Thai. Courtesy of BlackBeltUSA

of the legendary Gracie family. The Gracie family, specifically Helio Gracie, changed the sport of Jiu-Jitsu forever. Gracie was a Brazilian whose family was heavily involved in Jiu-Jitsu. As a child, Gracie was too weak and sickly to participate in Jiu-Jitsu with his brothers. However, he was able to acquire his own style to better fit his weak physical attributes. Gracie's new style made it so that a weaker person could continually submit a stronger, larger opponent just by having sharper technique. In Gracie's own words, "I didn't invent Jiu-Jitsu, but I modified it and adapted it for the weaker person." It didn't take long for Gracie's style of Jiu-Jitsu to take off in Brazil. Now, over a hundred years later, Gracie's style is called Brazilian JiuJitsu, and it is one of the most effective martial arts of all time.

While wrestling and Jiu-Jitsu focus on the ground aspect of a fight, arts like Muay Thai are all about striking. Muay Thai originates in Thailand and dates back to the 13th century. Muay Thai was used in the ancient military of Thailand because of its efficiency. Unlike boxing or kickboxing, Thai fighters also use their elbows and knees, along with kicks and punches, to batter their opponents, which allows for more diversity of strikes when standing up. Like many

martial arts, Muay Thai values respect and discipline along with respect for tradition amongst its practitioners. In 1968, Ajarn Chai popularized Muay Thai in the U.S. and started the Thai Boxing Association. Muay Thai remains an incredibly effective and popular sport that is most likely practiced

at every mixed martial arts gym in the world.

Now that we know the base components of mixed martial arts, we can dive into how these three unrelated sports merged into one. Although mixed martial arts as we know it started in the 1990s, the first traces of martial arts being mixed in contests can be seen in Ancient Greece. The Ancient

contests employing more than one martial art still were not in existence. That was until 1928 in Brazil, when Vale Tudo hopped on the scene. "Vale Tudo" directly translates to "anything goes." It is not hard to predict what went down during these events. Despite its brutal nature, Vale Tudo was insanely popular in Brazil. Still, regardless of its popularity in Brazil, the art still hadn't branched outside the country until a group of mixed martial artists, one of whom was a Gracie, had a brilliant idea. That idea was to bring Vale Tudo to America in order to see which martial art was the most effective. These mixed martial artists created the Ultimate Fighting Championship, also known as the UFC. With that name, most of you probably assume that it was an immediate success and blossomed into what it is today. But, unfortunately, that was not the case at all. The early days of the UFC were brutal, both in and out of the ring. The company was not popular at all and barely filled a quarter of its seats by the time the main event started. The UFC also nearly shut down due to its extremely intense nature, especially because the general population had never experienced this level of combat. There were many things wrong with the UFC's rules at the time. First, fighters wore no hand wraps, making broken wrists and knuckles a common occurrence. Second, fighters could wear anything they wanted, creating obvious disadvantages for certain

This fight goes down as one of the most important fights in history because it showcased to the world the incredible efficiency of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. Before then, a 170-lb man beating a 260-lb man was unheard of, but, through the efforts of the Gracie family, it became a possibility. This was, in my opinion, the most important moment in mixed martial arts history, because it put Gracie Jiu-Jitsu on the map, spiraling the sport to become what it is today. Yet even after this event, the UFC still wasn't nearly as popular as it is today. The general public had many problems with the brutality of the sport. So after facing threats of the sport being banned, the Athletic Commission for Mixed Martial Arts was created to add some more decorum to the sport. When the Athletic Commission devised rules for what fighters could do and what they could wear, MMA became more appealing to the general public, and once this happened, the sport took off—and the rest was history.

Nowadays, MMA has become a worldwide sport, and the different cultures and societies it interacts with all play a role in its rapid evolution. Fighters come from all over, from the hilltops of Dagestan to the boroughs of New York, making MMA one of the most diverse sports on the planet. Some even estimate that one day, MMA will become the most popular sport in the world. On a more personal level MMA has had a huge impact on my life and has changed me in ways I



The Gracie family, the group that revolutionized martial arts in America. Courtesy of ESPN

Greeks held events where contestants both wrestled and boxed in a very brutal fashion. Everything except for eye gouging, biting, and genital blows were allowed. This form of fighting, in fact, is what the Spartans used in their infamous battle against Persian forces. The contest was later outlawed by Theodosius I, so it wasn't ever able to branch out of Greece. Fast forward thousands of years later, and

one. Third, there were no weight classes. Yes, you heard me right: the first couple of pay-per-view events in the UFC held no regard for weight. A 175-lb man could go up against a 260-lb man, and no one would bat an eye. That is exactly what happened in the most important and influential fight event in history. UFC 4 was an iconic match during which the son of Helio Gracie, Royce, went up against 260-lbs Dan Severn.

never thought a sport could. One reason MMA is so fascinating is because of how new it seems. In sports that have existed for a way longer time, like soccer and football, it is clear to see how the sport evolved. From the leather helmets in the 1800s to the shiny F7's that are now worn, the progression is obvious. But with MMA, progress is happening every single day, and I am so excited to see where the sport goes.

Meet One of Lawrenceville's Most Sustainable Students: Asprey Walters '24

MIRA PONNAMBALAM '26

As a Vice President of the sustainability council, Asprey Walters '24 has contributed to the Lawrenceville community in many different ways. She helps plan events and organize community service opportunities, as well as leading a subcommittee that focuses on food and dining. In addition to her work on the Sustainability Council, Walters spent this past summer working as a Leopold Scholar to help the environment. Walters developed her fondness for the environment during the many summers she spent biking, learning about gardening in her elementary school, and being encouraged by her family and teachers to live sustainably. "It has been ingrained in my thinking from a very young age that we need to preserve and protect our environment. Our actions have direct consequences that can impact the delicate balance in our ecosystem," Walters said.

When describing her experience as a Leopold Scholar, Walters said, "It is pretty amazing to be able to take what we learned in [Inquiries in Biological and Environmental Sciences] (IBES), expand it through our own research, and then come up with some interesting findings that we can apply to our campus efforts to be more sustainable." As a Leopold Scholar, Walters participated in water testing, learned about green infrastructure, and collaborated with The Watershed Institute, a New Jersey organization focused on protecting water sources. The Leopold Scholars also presented research posters to IBES students, the Faculty Sustainability Committee, and Lawrenceville's Board of Trustees.

On the Sustainability Council, Walters's subcommittee aims to enhance the dining experience at Lawrenceville while also making the selections more environmental-

ly friendly. Making careful dining choices can lead to fewer chemical and carbon as well as improved energy conservation, all of which have a highly positive impact on the environment. As Walters remarked, "Minimally processed foods and plant-based options are better for our health and the environment!" Recently, Walters and the Sustainability Council have debuted a feedback form, helped in the initiative of adding gluten-free, vegan, and non-dairy sections to Tsai, and made changes to the salad bar. The impacts of their efforts even extend beyond Lawrenceville's campus. "[We] coordinated with Dining Services to deliver our excess food to local pantries and [created a] contract with a local company to take our food waste and to turn it into compost, all to reduce our carbon footprint and to help our local community," Walters mentioned.

The feedback form showed that students and faculty had many suggestions for improving the dining experience. "[Robert] Freeman, who is the head of Sustainable Fare and runs Dining Services, and our executive chef, [Charles] Wooding, really try their best to accommodate our requests and provide a wide variety of delicious and healthy choices," Walters noted. In response to the feedback, the Dining Services team made many changes that have been beneficial to the Lawrenceville community and the environment. They added more stations to the wok bar—more customizable meals mean less food waste—which has seemed to be very popular. They also added protein variety and dairy alternatives (oat, soy, and almond milk), which are much better for the environment than red meat and dairy. Tofu, for example, has a far lower carbon and water footprint than red meat. Bath House hours have

also been expanded due to popular demand while also reducing food waste from takeout containers by providing an alternative to the Tsai commons, especially as the majority of takeout containers are not recyclable and end up sitting in a landfill.

"For me, sustainable dining goes beyond the ingredients; it's about connecting with my friends. It's really the only free time I have during the day to relax and catch up," added Walters.

The salad bar has also been expanded to include dressings, arugula, beans, cheese, kale, and hummus—Walters' personal favorite. The fruits and vegetables from the salad bar are locally sourced and sustainable ingredients. The gluten-free, non-dairy, and vegan sections that the Sustainability Council helped incorporate into Lawrenceville's dining allow the Tsai Commons to be more friendly to those with dietary restrictions and reduce the negative environmental impact of food waste. New vegan options include vegan eggs and plant-based sausage in the omelet bar, as well as a vegan section in the hot food line. "Wider gluten-free choices are a direct response to the community's request. Dining Services really listens to the comment cards!" Walters noted.

Walters and the Sustainability Council have planned numerous events connecting food and dining with sustainability, such as a Valentine's Day "Dinner in the Dark," with low lighting for electricity conservation and ambiance. Once again, the Sustainability Council and Dining Services are collaborating to plan the event in a bigger space, possibly with a special menu, and they need suggestions! Walters mentioned an exploration that the Sustainability Council and Cooking Club organized for the Winter Festival. "Our goal was to



Asprey Walters '24

Courtesy of Asprey Walters '24

introduce our classmates to sustainable dining and show them that eating sustainably doesn't mean bland, cardboard-texture type of foods." The Food for Thought Club and Sustainability Council hosted a Harvest Day for students to harvest vegetables and then donate them to a food pantry. Harvesting food can be good for teaching students about sustainable agriculture and helping them bond with each other. "Sometimes, people are intimidated by gardening, so we want to show them how it can be easy and fun. They can start with an indoor herb or tomato plant!" Walters added. Student cooking demos in the test kitchens may be in Tsai's future as well!

Even during her Leopold Scho-

lars experience, Walters got to learn more about the connection between food and sustainability. The Leopold Scholars cooked an outdoor dinner when they spent a night camping. "As a city girl, it was eye-opening, as it was my first experience camping and cooking at a campsite where we had to gather wood and start a fire. I made sloppy joes, hamburgers, and hot dogs. Luckily, no one got sick!" Walters recalled.

Whether it be farming practices used to produce the food, the choice of food, or the reduction of food waste, food and sustainability are intrinsically connected. It is Walters's goal to make sure food and dining at Lawrenceville are as sustainable as possible.

Feeling at Home Away From Home

ELOISE WIDENER '26

As many of our international students live hours and hours away from home, they persevere through the challenges of Lawrenceville while managing time zone differences between them and their friends and families. The time zone difference, as well as the long trips back, can often cause international students to feel like home is constantly shifting between two places; many feel as though they have meaningful friends and/or families in two different countries. Furthermore, after long breaks, some international students experience severe jet lag, making acclimating from break much harder. But even students who don't experience a significant time difference, like Emma Marston '25 from Jamaica, agree that finding time in the day to connect with family and friends can be challenging. She said, "the biggest time difference...is only an hour, but because our schedules are always filled, it's hard to speak with my parents for longer than a couple [of] minutes each day." Fortunately, students say that they feel like Lawrenceville has fostered a community of support for international students, especially with

the School's international student population reaching 16 percent, so that students can bond and persevere through these challenges together. As Emily Lee '26 said, "I feel like I have many other international students in the community to support me when I miss home."

With 12 to 19-hour-long flights, many international students say traveling home outside of extended breaks during the winter, spring, and summer is extremely hard, especially with the rising cost of airplane tickets. Usually, traveling home, international students go alone or travel with their peers, rather than with parents. While traveling, international students consume the bulk of their monotonous day with lots of sleep, movies, and anticipation. Lee said that she "rides the plane while watching her downloaded Netflix show," while Liepa Vysniauskaite '24 claims "her travel days consist primarily of sleeping and waiting." Vysniauskaite additionally explained that "[going home] feels strange. It takes some time to adapt, which [feels] unnatural because it's supposed to be where I feel the most at ease but somehow, moving across the ocean ruined my understanding

of where home is." At the same time, Vysniauskaite also noted that at Lawrenceville, she misses a lot about her native country, like her family and her dog, and it can almost feel like she is switching between two different feelings of home. She said that while at school, "[she misses] the food...and just wish[es] [her] friends from Lithuania were here with [her]." Lee, similarly, misses her native country's food, saying, "[I miss] Kimchi and rice [the most] because the rice here is kinda mid and soggy."

After coming to Lawrenceville, many international students have experienced significant culture shocks. When Lee, for instance, first saw people jaywalking to Starbucks, she was taken aback. She said that "in Korea, jaywalking is forbidden, and people will judge you if you do, but I feel like here, people will jaywalk when they get the chance." Vysniauskaite said that she was most surprised by the dress code in American schools and what is considered appropriate to wear to class. She says she was already aware of this cultural difference before coming to Lawrenceville, but emphasized that "[in Lithuania] going to class



Emily Lee '26 and Audrey Liu '26

Sienna Kulynych '26 / THE LAWRENCE

in [pajamas] or sweats wouldn't be socially acceptable." Another culture shock that many international students experienced was the informality in teacher-student relations. Sienna Seomitrio '26, who is from Hong Kong, commented that "[here the relationship with teachers] is more relaxed and friendly."

Overall, while acclimating to a lifestyle far away from home can be hard, international students at Lawrenceville generally enjoy their time here. Despite the difficulty in

maintaining their relationships at home, most students say they enjoy meeting new people and have made new long-lasting friendships similar to the ones they have at home. According to Seomitrio, "I found it difficult at first, but after the first two weeks and meeting everyone, I felt more comfortable...[but now she enjoys] the new experience [she] has living in the U.S. and the [opportunity] to meet new people."

From Fishing to Equipment Managing: Saying Goodbye to Mr. Millen

“Mr. Millen was a salt of the Earth kind of person that really did an excellent job connecting with the student body during his time at Lawrenceville. He brought light and joy to the athletic department. I would love to thank him for his tireless effort and dedication to Lawrenceville athletics over his tenure here. He will certainly be missed but I wish him nothing but the best in his retirement and time to spend with family and friends.”

- Nicole Stock

“Thank you for 17 years of stories, advice, a listening ear and unconditional support. You’re an icon!”

- Karla Guido

“I will sorely miss Brian Millen, who in so many ways embodies the heart and soul of this school. His combination of personal humility, folk wisdom, keen insight, and rich sense of humor have made him a friend to all. Stopping by the equipment counter was never just stopping by the equipment counter. He dispensed wise counsel freely, useful guidance generously, and endless opportunities to put a smile on your face. I am most grateful!”

- Stephen Murray

ASPREY WALTERS '24
WILLIAM WANG '24
FEATURES ASSOCIATE

With a patent to his name and a slew of sponsorships for fishing, equipment manager Brian Millen H'14 has had a long-winded—and untold—history at Lawrenceville. While students in the last 20 years may associate Millen with his friendly smile at the equipment desk or as their swing coach for the Boys' Varsity Golf team, many don't know about Millen's work with the Special Olympics or his regular donations of blood to patients with sickle cell anemia. Millen's retirement this January is the start of a new chapter; although he will no longer be working behind Loucks's equipment counter, many of his retirement goals have been in the works for decades.

For those acquainted with Millen, one thing stands out: his passion for fishing. Millen fondly associates fishing with his childhood, as he was fishing professionally by nine years old. He would go on to dominate contests in the renowned Field and Stream Magazine, a fishing publication that dates back over 127 years. “My father and I would fish every weekend—he'd take the time to document the fish, take pictures, take weights and measurements, and send them into Field and Stream Magazine,” Millen recalled. His dominance was recognized by Garcia-Mitchell, a well-known retailer of fishing equipment. Soon, Millen also began train with Joan Wulff for a certification in fly-casting, which is known to be the most difficult type of fishing.

Wulff was the national casting champion from 1943-60, commanding a majority male-dominated field and was known for creating the “Wulff technique,” which Millen continues to utilize in his fly casting class at the Princeton Adult School.

Between his time sponsored by Garcia-Mitchell and his stint as Lawrence-



Brian Millen H'14

Courtesy of The Lawrenceville School

ville's equipment manager, a number of major changes occurred in Millen's work. Despite working at General Motors for 11 years coordinating labor policy, he found it difficult to envision spending more time at the company. Recognizing that his career “was antiquated and without much of a future,” his family moved to the Catskill Mountains. Upon moving, Millen started a company focused on selling products exclusively produced in the Catskills. Voted as the number one store for three years in a row, his emporium represented over 150 regional artisans. Yet due to the difficulty of dealing with the common floods and natural disasters in the Catskills, Millen would find his way back to his hometown, Ewing, New Jersey, managing

an Orvis shop—a retailer of fly-fishing equipment and clothing. Millen continued to teach fishing and would meet Colonel David Schorr, a member of Lawrenceville's math department and Head of Building and Grounds at the time. Schorr would inspire Millen to work at Lawrenceville, and the opportunity fit Millen perfect-

ly: “The kids are wonderful. The coaches are wonderful. The faculty is wonderful. This is what I was looking for: a nice, steady job,” Millen said.

Lawrenceville's equipment managers have long been known for their dedication; in Millen's 20-year-long career, he has seen it all. In addition to his work as the swing coach for the golf program in the Spring Term, Millen's work as equipment manager entails a semester's worth of planning and purchase orders. “I always have to think a semester ahead. Do I have all the uniforms? Do they have the accessories for their sport? Do they have all the balls?” Throughout his decades-long career, a few moments stand out to Millen. He recalls a II Form basketball double overtime victory against Hun, but the

moment most present in Millen's mind occurred just this season. The Boys' Varsity Ice Hockey team's 3-2 victory against Northfield Mount Hermon to clinch its first-ever Lawrenceville School Invitational Tournament victory stands out to Millen. “Watching our hockey team win the tournament they've sponsored for 74 years was crazy. Especially considering that it was the day Argentina won [the FIFA World Cup], I was already on a sports high.”

As Millen looks toward retirement, he hopes to travel, fish, and visit his family. The fishing season, which is best in the spring and fall, have both been curtailed by his duties as equipment manager for the past 20 years. Millen also hopes to find time to enjoy golfing. Through it all, however, Millen's real focus is on his family. Visiting his family, many of whom have moved to upstate New York, is on the top of his agenda. Millen's wife works as a published historian, and now, he and his wife will be able to travel through Europe together as she researches.

Millen is also a regular donor of a type of blood that contains a rare antigen, which aids patients with sickle cell anemia. He values his work at the blood center. “Who would've thought that I could help?” he said. Reflecting on his time at Lawrenceville, Millen is blunt in his advice for students: “Count your blessings for who you are, what you are, and where you are. I took it for granted that I was who I am living in this country with all these wonderful things available to me.”

“Mr. Millen has made an indelible mark on Lawrenceville for over two decades, from meticulously attending to team needs as equipment manager, to helping community members hone their fishing skills as a sought-after guide in the region, to brightening our days with his warm conversation and supportive emails. He will truly be missed!”

- Stephen Laubach

“I will never forget your kindness and resourcefulness in repairing my favorite golf bag. Many thanks for brightening my day with the good stories and advice. So happy to know that you'll still have time for nine holes with me in the spring.”

- Asprey Walters '24

“Whether it was a quick word of encouragement, a funny joke, or a simple conversation, Mr. Millen was always there to put a smile on our faces. His passion and care for Lawrenceville will be greatly missed.”

- Roscoe Heuer '24

“He always has a smile on his face, wanted to have a conversation with everyone who stopped by, and was willing to help with whatever you needed.”

- Jocelyn Acosta '23

Holiday Hauls: Hottest Must-Haves this Holiday Season

JACKIE WILLIAMS '24
FEATURES ASSOCIATE

Winter break was a relaxing few weeks away from campus, so after a week back at school, lots of chatter has occurred about some of the newest and most trendy gifts from this past holiday season.

Little has changed from years past when it comes to the most commonly-desired gifts—everyone wants clothes and shoes. Bunny Henault-Bassett '26 and her friends received many different types of jewelry and clothes, which comprised the majority of their lists. Price Donaldson '24, specifically, noticed that many of her friends were receiving interesting water bottles this

holiday season, while Kate Mirkovic '23 was focused on everyone's new sunglasses. Additional gifts, like the trending Dyson Air Wrap and mini Ugg boots, were near the top of many lists, including those of Liepa Vysniauskaite '24 and Joey Vermut '25.

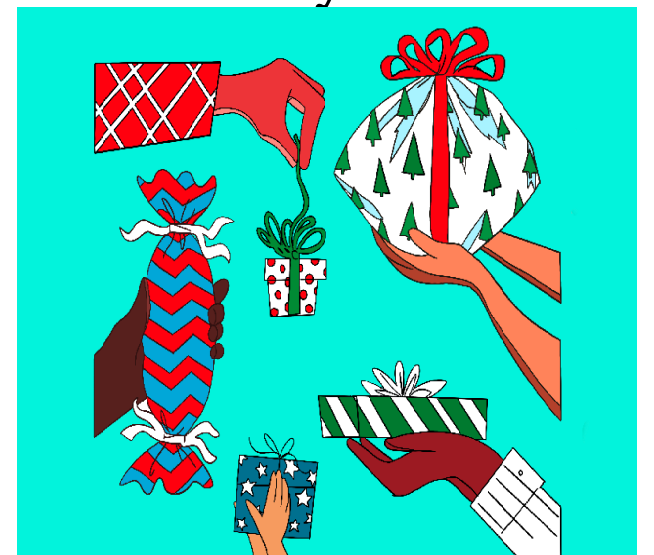
Many people celebrating a holiday had at least one gift that stood out from the others among their haul. Henault-Bassett was extremely pleased to receive tickets to Taylor Swift's “era tour,” a hot commodity which was extremely hard for her gift givers to find. Canaan Williams '26, on the other hand, found himself happy with a classic Amazon gift card, as it

will allow him to purchase anything he wants after the holidays without making a gift giver stress over what to buy. Charles Potter '25 and many other students were very glad to receive jeans and sweaters to rock around campus throughout the rest of the Winter Term.

What would the holiday season be without giving? Many students also received sentimental gifts from their family and friends. Henault-Bassett helped her dad buy clothes and other gifts for her twin sister this Christmas, while also finding cute hair ties and lip glosses for some of her friends. In the Williams household, more homemade gifts were given. Williams's parents were

given printed family photos, which was a simple yet adored gift. Mirkovic, meanwhile, was ecstatic to receive a friendship scrapbook from her best friend, Ashley Lee '23. Due to the amplified workload this Turkey Term before break, many Lawrentians like Vysniauskaite were disappointed in the little time available to find the perfect gift, as she especially appreciates gift giving.

When it came to giving gifts within the houses, however, many heartfelt gifts were a hit or miss. Williams received one of his close friends for the Raymond House Secret Santa, giving him a singular tub of microwaveable mac and cheese. For the Cleve White Elephant,



Aileen Ryu '25 / THE LAWRENCE

Potter gave his Housemate a ginormous hershey kiss. Mirkovic's “week was made” when she received a Drake fan shirt from her House's Secret Santa.

The long stretch of Winter Term will be made just a little bit easier as everyone brings holiday gratitude and their new presents back to campus with them.

The Lawrence would like to sincerely apologize for a number of factual errors made regarding the history of the Irwin Dining Center (“Farewell Irwin... We’ll Miss You,” January 16, 2023). The article claimed that Irwin’s construction was funded by an anonymous donation from Jack Irwin ’33 P’72, when in reality, it came from Jane Irwin P’72 herself. This gift was, at the time, the largest single gift to Lawrenceville from a woman, making it especially notable. Once again, we apologize for any misconceptions or confusion that the article may have caused.

Sustainuary Kicks Off With Trashion Show

LOUIS PARK ’26

Any Lawrentian will remember the Trashion Show that took place two weeks ago. Models wearing unique decorations and props and costumes that were creative but bold captured the attention of all viewers the moment they walked down the runway. However, the clothes worn by the models are not the work of famous designers. They were one-of-a-kind costumes made by upcycling waste from around us, such as plastic bottles, newspapers, and paper boxes. So let’s find out how the Trashion Show was held, the purpose of planning the show, the preparation process, and how Sustainuary will continue!

As a Lawrenceville tradition, the Trashion Show has been going on annually for almost 15 years, even virtually during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Trashion Show involves participation from all Houses and Forms, encouraging everyone to get their creative juices flowing and create fire fits from recyclable scratch. The Trashion Show occurred during the school meeting on January 12, allowing the entire student body to attend. Each House had been faced with a challenge to prepare their costume in a week, and although there were no other special regulations, everyone had one important rule to remember: Houses were only allowed to use recyclable materials for their fashionable fits. The House Sub-



Students performing at the Trashion Show

committee on the Sustainability Council, led by Amanda Park ’23, worked with House sustainability representatives, who designed the outfits, selected their models, and prepared a short backstory. After a week of preparation, the Big Day arrived, with all Lawrenceville community members present in the KAC. With the student council acting as judges, the Trashion Show was all set. The criteria for costume evaluation was set up in five categories: explanation of sustainability, costume backstory, use of recyclable materials, wearability stage presence,

and general appearance, each of which could earn a contestant between one to five points. Each House presented an outfit that they had poured their time and soul into. The costumes, with their different topics and stories, captured spectators’ expectations and interests, catching everyone’s attention. The models walked across the stage with splendid outfits, then gave a 30-second explanation of the costume’s program. The best part of the Trashion Show, however, was that all the students and faculty could engage with the process. This encouraged everyone’s participation

Courtesy of *The Lawrenceville School*

and allowed attendees to cheer for their House, forming an enthusiastic atmosphere. The 2023 Trashion Show brought down its curtain with Hamill crowned as champion, followed by Cleve in second place, and Carter and Raymond tied for third.

Sustainability Representative Alistair Lam ’23 explained that the purpose of the Trashion Show is “to spread awareness of repurposing and reusing everyday items.” Lam pointed out that although many people often associate sustainability with recycling, the preferable alternative is, in fact, “reducing the waste

we produce in the first place,” as lower landfill contributions “not only reduce the methane and other potent greenhouse gasses from accelerating climate change, but also promote a healthier culture that is not founded upon consumerism, in which our identity or self-esteem is not defined by our possessions.”

Kellen Fisher ’26, who won third place representing the Raymond House, shared his experience of preparation, as well as being the runway model. The inspiration of the House’s outfit was the cover of the album *Jeffery* by Young Thug, as he tried “to stay away from the idea that men have to wear suits at fashion or formal events.” Despite the challenges he faced, including arduous labor cutting lots of card boxes and wearing uncomfortable shoes, Fisher remarked that he learned how “perseverance brings results” and the “importance of trial and error” as the II Formers still got satisfying results. Last but not least, Fisher realized that “the message [of] this event is that sustainability isn’t something that is holding us back, but something that can be fun and good for the world.”

Through the Trashion Show, the Sustainability Council hopes that not only we Lawrentians, but also more people around us will take an interest in reducing waste, as well as reusing and recycling it.

Lawrenceville’s Second Annual Big Red Gala

LOUIS PARK ’26

The Met Gala, also known as Met Ball, is an annual gala show hosted by the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Costume Institute, featuring A-list celebrities with yearly costume themes. With showy outfits that arouse reactions somewhere between admiration and astonishment, and a star-studded lineup of the trendiest celebrities attracting worldwide attention, the Met Gala is undoubtedly one of the most prominent annual gala shows in the world. However, this title might not last for much longer after the return of another attraction: the Big Red Gala.

Lawrenceville’s second annual event, the Big Red Gala, was a wonderful success. In the Gruss Center for Art and Design as well as the Hutchins Galleries, students could attend the House runway shows, admire the high-quality artworks of Lawrentians, and even have the opportunity to attend an auction. Through the efforts of the Arts department, Arts Representative Stephanie Xu ’23, Social Representative Akeil Smith ’23, the Muse visual art club, and the Hutchins Galleries, Lawrentians were able to enjoy diverse events



Models walking on the runway

Courtesy of *The Lawrenceville School*

on the evening of January 13. Starting at 7:00 PM at the Hutchins Galleries, the first floor of the Gala displayed pieces by two students, Xu and Rania Shah ’23, which were created during their time in the Advanced Studio program. The second floor featured artworks by Lawrentians that were selected by arts department faculties. Along with the 2022-23

Student Show, the Hutchins Galleries are also exhibiting “Abstractions from the Permanent Collection” at the wooden Rotunda. Lawrenceville’s curator Melina Guarino explains that the exhibition is currently displaying modern prints, paintings, photographs, mixed media, and sculptures from a variety of prominent artists, including Sam Glankoff, Budd

Hopkins, Pierre Soulages, Aaron Siskind, as well as some work by Lawrenceville alumni. Both the student showcase and the Rotunda collection will run through Winter Gathering and will close on February 4.

The Big Red Gala also marked the opening night of the Muse Winter Auction, which will run until January 30. Here, students and faculties can see the artworks of their peers and bid on their pieces. The proceeds will go to the Trenton Visual Art Center to make art more accessible for all in the Trenton area. Shah, the president of Muse, explained that the purpose of the auction was “to showcase the talents and skills of student artists on campus” as it is a great way for students to “put their work out there and also contribute to an important cause.” The auction is a great opportunity for members of the Lawrenceville community to share the art with others and connect not only with the artists on campus, but also the ones in Trenton—spreading positive influence to the community beyond.

The last component of the Gala was the House Fashion Show, which was themed around sustainability. Following the theme, all Houses were challenged to dress in their

House color—without purchasing new clothing—as best as they could. At 8:00 PM, each model donned their very best fit and walked across the second floor of GCAD. Ultimately, through audience voting, the Stephens and Raymond Houses came out victorious, with Elon Cooper ’23 and Hudson Brown ’26 representing each House respectively. Brown reminisced about how he wore maroon to represent the House colors of Raymond, and how he “really enjoyed [the process of] figuring out [his] costume and choreographing the walk”.

Finally, Xu shared her thoughts on the successful 2023 Big Red Gala. Crediting the work by last year’s Arts Representative and Social Representative, Scarlett Taperio ’22 and Delaney Musgrave ’22, she “wanted to create a night that fully celebrates fashion and the visual arts”, along with “highlight[ing] the student artwork and the beautiful facility the art is being showcased in.” With the energy of everyone who attended the Big Red Gala, enthusiasm filled the event. Despite its recent initiation, we hope that the Big Red Gala will continue to be a Lawrenceville tradition in the future years.

Sussy Art: Ways Artists Have Stayed Green

HARINI VENKATESH '25
ARTS ASSOCIATE

Sustainability is rising in global importance, as more people and organizations recognize the need to address the environmental, social, and economic challenges facing our planet. Sustainability has been represented heavily in both traditional and digital media, with individuals and communities using their voices and platforms to raise awareness about the issue and share information about the impacts and solutions to climate change to a larger audience.

Artists in particular have been striving to raise social consciousness about sustainability by incorporating themes of environmentalism and sustainable living into their work. There have been an increase in artists and art organizations that have made significant strides toward becoming more sustainable. Many artists have incorporated eco-friendly materials into their pieces, using their work to promote sustainable practices, and have collaborated with environmental organizations to raise awareness about environmental issues.

Margot MacMahon, a former scientific journalist turned artist, said, “when you see something that is beautiful, or hear something that is beautiful, or experience a performance, it’s a direct communication into your soul.” By incorporating elements of sustainability in art, creatives present a noticeable example of human impacts on the dangers of climate change, facilitating a more widespread understanding of such pertinent issues.

Sustainable art can encompass a wide range of practices and mediums, but there are a few branches that are particularly relevant. Eco-art is a branch of sustainable art that focuses on the relationship between art and the environment. Eco-artists often use natural or recycled materials in their work, and often address environmental issues such as pollution, habitat destruction, and climate change. One such artist, Patrick Dougherty, created large-scale sculptures out of locally sourced, natural materials such as sticks, branches, and twigs. Art in sustainable activism, or Artivism, has also seen an uprising in the media, with artists using their work to raise



Anika Ponnambalam '25 / *The Lawrence*

awareness about environmental and social issues and to promote sustainable practices. Jenny Kendler, a Chicago-based artist,

creates work that brings attention to environmental issues, such as habitat loss, deforestation, and extinction. Additionally, photographer Edward Burtynsky captures large-scale images of industrial landscapes and the impact of humans on the environment. In architecture, there has also been a recent focus on centralizing themes of sustainability, with more artists collaborating with designers to create art installations and public spaces that integrate sustainable features such as solar panels, green roofs, and rainwater harvesting. For example, Maya Lin is an artist

and architect known for her work on large-scale environmental installations, including the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. and the What Is Missing? Memorial, which raises awareness about the loss of biodiversity.

In addition, green museums, or environmentally friendly art institutions, implement sustainable practices in their operations. These institutions use renewable energy sources, reduce waste, and conserve water. Green museums also use their platforms to raise awareness about environmental and social issues. In addition, some artists are working to create sustainable fashion, designing clothing and accessories made from eco-friendly materials and sustainable production methods. However, these are just a few examples of branches of sustainable art, and new forms are emerging as the field continues to evolve. The common thread among them is the intention to make art that is in harmony with the natural environment and that promotes sustainable practices, values, and consciousness.

Talking with the Artist: Merrill Poet Hieu Minh Nguyen

SOFIA CARLISI '24
ARTS ASSOCIATE

Throughout the Winter Term of the III and IV Form years, students read different types of poetry written any time from this past year to centuries ago. Rarely, however, do students get the opportunity to meet the poets whose work they read, discuss, and explicate. When the annual Merrill Poet visits, students can put a face and personality to some of the fantastic works that they have read both inside and outside of class.

This year, in their English classes, students had the opportunity to listen to and meet visiting poet Hieu Minh Nguyen. Nguyen is the author of two poetry books, *This Way to the Sugar* and *Not Here*, and is the recipient of numerous awards for his work, including the Wallace Stegner Fellowship from Stanford University.

Inspired by the 2002 movie *8 Mile*, Nguyen first started writing poetry by imagining himself having to rap battle just as Eminem did at the movie’s end. He found that writing poetry allowed him to “participate with the world” and “break out of [his] shell, even if it was just in [his] own head.” Growing up, Nguyen loved theatre, specifically black box theatre, and used this type of art to gain the tools he needed to start performing slam poetry, or just “slam.”

Nguyen’s background in slam shined through during his poetry reading, which took place in the Edith Memorial Chapel on January 12. There, he read poems from his



Hieu Minh Nguyen Presenting on Campus

Courtesy of *The Lawrenceville School*

past books, as well as new works that have yet to be published. When Nguyen first started moving away from slam and towards written poetry, he asked himself, “How can I make my poems live without me?” It was clear that Nguyen’s poems “[grew] legs and walk[ed] on their own,” but when he actually read them out loud, he got to use his voice to add new depth.

Many of Nguyen’s poems surrounded the idea of family and family trauma, along with his Vietnamese heritage. Although

many of his poems portray the hardships of life, Nguyen’s sunny disposition was a joy to be around. He created a safe space both in the Chapel and during classes for students to ask questions and hear what it is like to write poetry for a living.

Nguyen told students his poetry used to be a “mask,” reflecting “who [he] wanted to be,” but now he does not hide in his work; his poems “reveal him.” The beauty of poetry is that it does not just reveal the poet, but also the reader. This

beauty, as well as the “mystery” of poetry, is what draws Nguyen in.

During English classes, students in the III and IV Forms experimented with poetic language in a lesson hosted by Nguyen. Students were given a randomly generated metaphor about love, such as “love is an angry nanny” or “love is an intelligent triceratops.” In 10 minutes, students brainstormed and then presented an argument for why their metaphor was, in fact, a great way to describe love. Not only did the exercise demonstrate

the complexity of love, but it also highlighted the complexity of metaphors, for they made the exercise truly memorable. Never before would I have thought that “love is a playful rat,” but now, I think it just might be.

Poetry has the uncanny ability to put words to the things we cannot; it tells us that we are not alone. We look at these poets themselves, though, through the window of their work. Having the opportunity to meet someone who feels and thinks the same way as you do is such a gratifying experience.

I read “The Understudy” by Nguyen during English class, and it has stuck with me since. When describing the poem, Nguyen said it is about “moving to a weatherless California from Minnesota.” The poem describes the speaker’s longing to be “someone that someone might someday want” and how, when the opportunity finally comes along, after all that waiting, “one might find themselves, not bored, but rather over-rehearsed.” So many of us are waiting for something, whether that is a college acceptance letter, or the chance to move away from your hometown, or maybe simply to be wanted romantically. “The Understudy” perfectly captures this feeling of wanting and how sometimes, we all go “looking for things / [we] haven’t lost yet.”

This year’s Visiting Merrill Poet, Hieu Minh Nguyen, allowed students like me to experiment with words and also hear beautiful poems spoken aloud. His work reflects not only his own mind and heart, but also the universal emotions we all experience!

