

Journalists Ferguson and Ottaway Speak on the Israel-Palestine Conflict



Photo of Jane Ferguson '04
Courtesy of Allison Michael Orenstein_ Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International



Photo of David Ottaway '57 P '86 '91 GP '24
Courtesy of The Wilson Center_David Ottaway

ELLEN JORDAN '26

At a time when it can be easy to get caught up in the wave of misinformation that treads on the heels of major events, administrators at the Lawrenceville School took the initiative to educate its student body on the controversial conflict currently taking place in Israel and Palestine. On January 8, the School invited two journalists: Jane Ferguson '04, a special correspondent for PBS NewsHour who has covered topics in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia, and David Ottaway '57 P '86 '91 GP '24, who worked for the Washington Post for 35 years as a foreign correspondent in the Middle East, Africa, and Southern Europe, and was a two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist.

The presentation opened with a recounting of the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Middle East by Ottaway, who touched on events such as the 1947 United Nations Partition Plan, the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, and the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. In addition to explaining the conflicts that occurred in the region, Ottaway discussed the various diplomatic talks and futile attempts to establish peace that have taken place between Israelis and Palestinians. Specifically, Ottaway talked about American efforts at peace in the area—most notably former-President Bill Clinton's unsuccessful attempt to resolve the conflict and establish a Palestinian state. Following Ottaway's remarks, Ferguson segued the conversation into her experience of growing up in Northern Ireland amidst the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"I come from Northern Ireland, which has, for better or for worse, been often mistakenly compared to the

conflict in the Middle East," Ferguson began, referring to the bloody movement that attempted to liberate Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom on May 1921. The push to free Northern Ireland from British rule and establish a united Irish state was championed by Catholic Northern Irishmen—led by the Irish Republican Army—while the movement was opposed by Protestants loyal to the British crown.

"Other groups around the world have picked sides [in the Israel-Palestine conflict] and found affinity with one side or another, and in Catholic areas [of Northern Ireland] they used to display Palestinian flags," Ferguson continued, "I personally grew up in Protestant communities, where very often, in areas very loyal to British rule, you would see Israeli flags." Moving on from her childhood experience with raging headlines on the Israel-Palestine conflict, she discussed her experience covering the conflict from a new perspective as a reporter. For Ferguson, one of the most difficult aspects of being a journalist covering the war is watching colleagues from the region be personally affected by it.

"It's been extraordinarily difficult to watch my colleagues work while they hear that their family is in danger," Ferguson admitted, adding that, as a foreign correspondent, she is grateful that she will never be in a situation similar to that of Palestinian or Israeli journalists, many of whom have already lost family members or been killed themselves amidst the strife.

Following the conclusion of the presentation, Ferguson and Ottaway opened the floor to Lawrenceville students interested in asking questions. These questions ranged from the speakers' experience seeing

the toll that war has taken on civilians in the region to other countries' perspective on the bloodshed taking place.

When questioned on the possibility of peace in the region, Ottaway highlighted some of his doubts. "My concern is that time is running out," he said, citing his main source of concern being Israel's far-right government, which is against the formation of a Palestinian state. This perspective harbored by the Israeli government clashes with that of Ottaway and Ferguson, who both firmly believe that the "only solution is a two-state solution."

Many of the questions asked focused on the role that the media and journalism has played in reporting the conflict. "We're getting righteousness from the news rather than information," Ferguson explained, taking a critical view of the people who are utilizing the media purely to push their own beliefs rather than to broaden their perspective.

Regarding her own role in the media and journalistic responsibility to report the news, Ferguson acknowledges that, while she does not face any difficulties remaining objective in her work, she often feels pressured to share her beliefs.

"I do feel as though we're living in an era where people are expected to give their opinions, and to me that's antithetical to journalism," she elaborated.

Many Lawrentians walked away from the presentation with a greater understanding of the complicated past between Israel and Palestine and more equipped to discuss the current military conflict in the region.

"I thought the presentation was really interesting, and knowing the history of a conflict truly gives you a wider perspective of what's really going on," concluded Annabelle Yao '26.

House, Harkness, Heart: A New Wellness Plan

DOROTHY LEE '26

On Thursday, January 4, Head of School Stephen Murray H '54 '55 '63 '65 '16 P '16 '21 announced the beginning of Lawrenceville's new strategic plan, "House, Harkness, Heart: A New Era for Community Wellbeing." This wellness-focused plan is a product of various conversations with students, parents, faculty, alumni, and trustees.

According to the Lawrenceville School website, the vision statement for this plan states: "Lawrenceville seeks to build an even stronger community to which all members contribute and have the opportunity to grow and thrive physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually. Overall wellbeing is enhanced when students feel safe, supported, and empowered in an environment that promotes kindness, respect, joy, and a measured pace of life."

Several new initiatives have already been implemented, such as creating the role of Dean of Campus Wellbeing, adding a Wellness Representative to the Student Council, and organizing Wellness Day programming for students and faculty.

"I think that when you give something a title and you give something an office...it starts to be taken more seriously," said Cassie Dillard '24, Lawrenceville's first Wellness Representative. By dedicating a position to student wellbeing, the School is "willing to put the time and effort" into wellness, rather than this topic being "something [Lawrenceville will] just talk about briefly," she explained.

According to Dean of Campus Wellbeing Rae Chresfield, a primary element of the strategic plan is the Wellness Wheel, a "roadmap illustrating the different dimensions" of wellness. The diagram provides visual and easily accessible guidelines for the administration, faculty, and students on wellness within the three major facets of life at Lawrenceville: House, Harkness, and Heart.

Describing her approach to wellness within the House, Dillard said, "I think the bonds you make in the House are special and unbreakable." At the same time, she explained how the House system "can separate friend groups that are made freshman year." She hopes that the School will discuss reforming visitation policies and that the completion of the new Tsai Commons will give students a recreational space to strengthen inter-House connections.

In regards to Harkness and academic life, Dillard believes "it is really critical that we keep Lawrenceville academically rigorous." She noted that

"having rigor is good, especially as an option, at least for those who... want to take up that challenge." However, she hopes to change the widespread mindset of "having to feel the pressure of constantly taking the hardest classes and getting straight A's." The new academic schedule for the 2024-25 school year aims to address this issue by decreasing the number of classes per day through creating longer class blocks. "You're preparing less work the night before," Dillard explained.

Dillard defined "Heart" as "focusing on individuals and seeing the humanity in each student," adding, "I think your mental and physical health should always come first because you're not going to be able to be a great housemate or...the best student you can be if you're not taking care of yourself first." Dillard advises Lawrentians to focus on themselves and discover "what works for [them]" when it comes to personal wellbeing. "You have to focus on the small," Dillard said, "because the large is only a reflection of the small." For students hoping to voice their concerns, she encourages them to "reach out" to the Wellness Council, Chresfield, or herself.

As Wellness Representative, Dillard has worked with these people to prioritize "proactive well-being," with future plans including adding Narcan in every House and providing QPR suicide prevention training to the Heads of Houses. "You shouldn't wait till someone dies or gets hurt," Dillard said, "you need to start making the changes to protect students first."

As the Lawrenceville administration continues to work on implementing the different parts of their strategic plan, Dillard believes it is important for the administration to "continue asking for students' feedback" through surveys and discussion groups. Hoping to facilitate more of these conversations, Chresfield is working to create a well-being lexicon, which defines key words related to mental health "so that we, as a community, can be on the same page when we are having these discussions."

"Even though it looks like all of these pieces of the plan are separate," Chresfield concluded, "they actually work in relationship with each other...you can't have a conversation about Harkness without it influencing the House and, of course, your Heart as an individual."



Lawrenceville's New Strategic Plan

Courtesy of The Lawrenceville School



THE LAWRENCE

Class of 1968 Fund in Honor of Edward A. Robbins H'68 '69 '71 - Nicholas G. Ifft '44 Fund
- The Princeton Packet Fund (Denise L. and James B. Kilgore '66) - Michael S. Chae '86

Claire Jiang
Editor-in-Chief

Luke Park
Executive Editor

Helena Chen
Nicole Jin
News Editors

Garrett Heffern
Arya Vishwakarma
Opinions Editor

Jackie Williams
William Wang
Features Editors

Sofia Carlisi
Arts Editor

Bryan Boanoh
Sports Editor

Arisa Okamura
Web Editor

Emily Pan
Graphics Editor

Sofia Bonilla
Outreach Editor

Aki Li
Copy Editor

Cindy Shum
Photo Editor

Sabrina Ottaway
Copy Editor

Faculty Advisors

Mrs. Elizabeth Buckles

Ms. Ansley Keane

The Lawrence, the weekly newspaper of The Lawrenceville School, is published during the school year except for the periods of Thanksgiving, winter, and spring breaks, by the students of The Lawrenceville School, 2500 Main Street, Lawrenceville, New Jersey 08648, with offices in room 027 of Father's Building.

Typesetting and layout is by the students of The Lawrenceville School. Printing is by Stellar Printing, Inc. Opinions expressed on the Opinions pages do not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Lawrenceville School or The Lawrence. The Lawrence reserves the right to edit letters to the editor and opinions.

Readers interested in subscribing to The Lawrence should contact the Editor-in-Chief at cjiang24@lawrenceville.org. Letters to the editor should be mailed to the address above with C/O Elizabeth Buckles or emailed to lvillawrence@gmail.com. The Lawrence may be accessed online at thelawrence.lawrenceville.org

CORRECTIONS

Readers who notice errors should contact lpark24@lawrenceville.org.

Dogs of the Week Mars Liepa Vysniuskaite '24



Reflecting on Kamala Harris

ELLEN JORDAN '26

There were hints of history-making in the air on January 21, 2021, when Kamala Harris, sporting a purple dress suit paying homage to both women's suffrage and bipartisanship, was sworn in as the 49th Vice President of the United States.

That moment contained many "firsts": Harris became the first female, black, and South Asian American to be elected as Vice President, both embodying progress, and, for her supporters, carrying high expectations for how she would perform in the job.

During her bid for the Democratic Presidential nomination in 2020, while proving to be a skilled debater, Harris failed to make meaningful progress in the primaries. Welcome news followed for her supporters when Harris was announced as Joe Biden's running mate, and upon joining the ticket, Harris certainly did not let the opportunity go to waste. She effortlessly swept aside then-VP Mike Pence in a televised debate and played a key role in Biden's victory due to her debating and policy-making talents. On that chilly January morning, Harris' reputation trended tall.

Yet fast forward almost three years later, and Harris remains a shell of her former self's assertiveness and initiative, and according to some polls, is one of the most unpopular Vice Presidents in U.S. history. Seemingly from the moment she took office, she faced increasing criticism from all sides of the political spectrum for her lack of accomplishments, and it is unclear at what point that crescendo of criticism will peak and begin to wane. While the satirical publication *The Onion* is not a conventional source, a scan of its headlines nonetheless capture the per-

ception of irrelevance she has achieved, with headlines ranging from "Kamala Harris Assures Public No One Has Given Her Single Classified Document" to "White House Urges Kamala Harris to Sit At Computer All Day In Case Emails Come Through" to "Kamala Harris Freezes After Seeing Vice President Position Posted on White House Careers Page." While these are obviously parodies of her performance rather than actual news, as the three-year anniversary of her inauguration draws nearer, they highlight the question: What went wrong?

Tragically or ironically, it took mere weeks for her reputation to unravel. The seeds of Harris' decline were planted in late March of 2021, when her first major assignment was to manage the flow of migrants traveling to the border from Southern and Central America. This had become an acute political crisis, with the Democratic Party criticizing many of the Trump Administration's policies, in particular, separating families and confining children.

Harris' statement, "Do not come," to the increasingly desperate migrants, many of whom were fleeing violence and economic destitution in their home countries, disappointed the progressive wing of her own party, who believed her stance violated U.S. immigration laws that grant the right to apply for asylum. Harris' words were even viewed as hypocritical due to her own background as the daughter of immigrants. However, it was not just her words that drew criticism from Democrats: her lack of concrete action—including her failure to spend any time in any of the impacted border regions—was pointed out by both center-leaning Democrats and the entire Republican Party. Her ineffectiveness was dramatically ex-

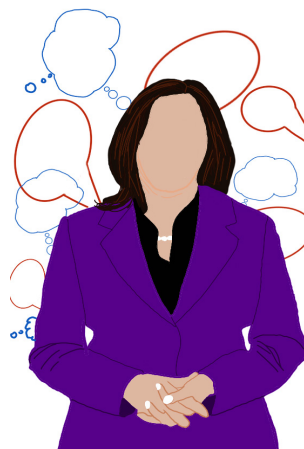
posed in an interview with NBC News' Lester Holt, when Harris was asked if she had any plans to visit the border. "This whole thing about the border, we've been to the border. We've been to the border," was her frustrated response. However, humiliation was only on Harris' end, when Holt shot back. "You haven't been to the border," was his reminder to the flustered Vice President. The interview (obviously) was a disaster and damaged Harris' reputation. But ironically, it was likely her humiliating ex-

captures the eye. At Lawrenceville, we too often venerate easily digestible thoughts and opinions, and for good reason—supporting a popular stance that demands less effort. Despite our over-acceptance and subsequent encouragement of agreeable stances, Lawrenceville does offer spaces to engage in discussion for the sake of progress and productive reckoning: the student-run Let's Talk About and Lunch and Dialogue exploration series, events held by the Religious Life Council and affinity groups, Open StuCo meetings, and FOCUS groups all provide a space for students to voice their thoughts. However, these spaces for messy and honest discussions are often attended by a self-selected group of students: like the rest of Lawrenceville's club culture, scheduled meetings attract those who already hold strong opinions because of their lived experience with the topics. Despite student leaders' best intentions, majority perspectives often become unanimous in club-led Explorations and discussions because of the difficulties in holding a minority opinion against vocal peers—an echo chamber makes for unproductive conversation. Even when a different perspective, perhaps essential to fully understanding a topic, is heard, the din of assent and reinforcement in such a space can drown out the alternate viewpoint since strong, specialized language overpowers an attempt at discourse. On the occasions when minority voices do become part of the conversation, exchanges at Lawrenceville get measured in terms of the

speakers' facility with language, a yardstick of judgment that isn't conducive to true diversity of thought. Our responsibility as listeners is to be aware of our bias toward appealing arguments, and make possible an entrance into a conversation. If we only lend credence to the loudest, most experienced, and eloquent voices, then those with valuable opinions who lack the confidence to contribute will always feel like passive observers to discourse—because ultimately, in an environment where only the most brazen voices are heard, peripheral and unnoticed is what those students' contributions are.

If club culture, with its emphasis on uniformity of thought, doesn't cultivate balanced discussions, perhaps Lawrentians should embrace the spontaneous conversations that arise in their day-to-day lives: the duty desk, the lunch table, and the common room all offer as many opportunities for productive exchanges as the Harkness table, with the added benefit of authenticity instead of performative speech intended to merit rewards, whether for a grade or to impress a group. While Lawrenceville encourages a diversity of thought, not all thought needs to emerge from the classrooms of Lawrenceville; perhaps tapping into our innate curiosity and thirst for discussion is the way to create room for genuinely insightful discourse.

This Editorial represents the majority view of The Lawrence, Vol. CXLIII.



Sonia Singhal '24 //THE LAWRENCE
change with Holt that finally forced Harris to visit the border in late June. In other words, it essentially took three months and an embarrassing interview for her to finally take responsibility for the most basic tasks of government. While this could have been a moment of self-reflection to improve her performance, the interview moved the needle in the wrong direction, as White House officials—including members of her own staff—observed that Harris went into a virtual "bunker" for about a year, choosing to dodge interviews. According to her aides, Harris' goal

was to avoid making mistakes, and avoid letting President Biden down by extension. However, in retrospect, this only damaged her public appeal even further, as critics labeled her as a coward, and the ridicule regarding her irrelevance in the Biden Administration only grew louder.

In the time since the border dilemma, Harris has unfortunately failed to find her niche in the Biden Administration: She is yet to accomplish anything meaningful while in office. However, in total fairness, identity, both regarding the office and its Vice Presidents, has been an issue that has plagued American Vice Presidents since the nation's founding. In fact, the first person to hold the office, John Adams, was notorious for his criticism of his own position. In a letter to his wife, he further illustrated his hatred of his position, and described the role of Vice President as being "the most insignificant office that ever the invention of man contrived or his imagination conceived."

Adams' words, although dramatic, do in fact explain the frustration felt by so many Vice Presidents over the course of U.S. history. From John Garner, who summed up his purpose as FDR's second in command as being "a spare tire of the government" to Thomas Marshall, who claimed to have encouraged White House tourists to throw peanuts at him in an attempt to draw attention, the situation of U.S. Vice Presidents suffering from feelings of uselessness is an issue as old as the United States itself.

Yet what distinguishes Harris from her predecessors and makes her overall failure evident is her—in some instances—unprecedented unpopularity. In November 2021, her approval rating plummeted to a startling 28 percent, a historic low for

any modern U.S. Vice President. Disapproval among American voters stuck, as a poll conducted by NBC News last June found her net approval rating to be -17, the lowest number ever recorded by the poll. As Harris' disapproval skyrockets, Republicans, as well as some Democrats, are claiming that Harris may indeed be the least popular Vice President in U.S. history. Although that may be a stretch, simply because executive branch approval ratings have only existed since about 1937, it is without a doubt that Kamala Harris' approval statistics are concerning, especially with 2024 right around the corner.

Last November, *The Economist* predicted that 2024 will be "the biggest election year in history," with the U.S. Presidential Election certainly its crown jewel. 2024 is already on course to be a Biden-Trump rematch: while Trump faces "competition" in Nikki Haley and Ron DeSantis in the upcoming primaries, polling numbers suggest the only true roadblock between Trump and the Republican nomination are his own legal charges. On October 31, 2024, Halloween will coincide with the climax of the upcoming election campaign, and, to quote *The Onion* once again, Harris will be seeking to avoid a repeat of a miserable 2023 when she was parodied as "Kamala Harris Wears Sad Little Bat Headband Alone At Desk." In Harris' attempt to avoid causing trouble for the Biden Administration, she instead failed to accomplish anything meaningful, and as of the present, is in danger of falling short of achieving her most prominent responsibility as Vice President—to help President Biden attain reelection. While Harris proved to be an asset in 2020, reversing her decline is necessary to avoid her worst fear—becoming a liability—in 2024.

On the Recent School Meeting

ARYANA IYER '27

This Monday, January 8, the Lawrenceville community gathered to listen to alumni Jane Ferguson '04 and David Ottaway '57 P '86 '91 GP '24 discuss the Israel-Hamas war. Students learned about the region's history, the war's impact on civilians, and the importance for humanitarian causes, encompassing many different experiences of many groups in the region.

It was an rewarding experience to hear from two people who have reported extensively in the region, during many past conflicts. Oftentimes, we students get our news from outside and unreliable sources, but Monday's school meeting was a chance to listen to unique perspectives, allowing us to unpack the complexity of this war from inside sources that give first hand accounts and make the conflict feel more real. The speakers outlined the geopolitics of the region beginning in 1917 as well as the modern-day politics of Israel and Palestine themselves. Students got an opportunity to take a break from the daily stress and learn about the outside world that needs attention. But along with important fundamental information, the speakers also embedded their personal experiences to mix in different standpoints with the heavy

facts thrown at us. The timing of the school meeting aligns with New Jersey's recently updated stance on the war. New Jersey citizens have been demanding congressmen support a cease-fire in Israel and Gaza. It only makes sense that we as a community should delve deeper into the matter and keep ourselves informed.

While the speakers did a great job of unpacking the



Sonia Singhal '24 / THE LAWRENCE

conflict, the school meeting could have facilitated more interaction between students and speakers. For teenagers, it is a difficult task to sit for over an hour and a half to listen to a conversation.

Though there was time for questions, not every voice

got to be heard as time only permitted a few students to share. Furthermore, students did not get a chance to unpack the school meeting because of the cancellation of advisory meetings due to time restraints. Giving students the opportunity to converse with the guest speakers and to share their feelings and knowledge on the topic is vital for discussions that educate our student body. Having this Harkness style meeting could have encouraged students to be more engaged while still addressing the situation in a serious and insightful manner. Meeting in advisory groups would have offered such an opportunity, allowing students to unpack the heavy information and begin to be aware of the cause at hand. Even as a II Former experiencing a school meeting like this for the first time, I understand the importance of having this meeting be mandatory. It is important that everyone is informed and globally aware. People in the Lawrenceville community are affected by this conflict, whether directly or not, and that calls for our support and our being informed on the issue. Lawrenceville is a school that prides itself on sympathy, compassion, and willingness to ally in needed times, and the administration organizing the school meeting proved so.

Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

I am writing to express a grievance regarding the prohibition of earbuds in the Loucks Field House Power-Rack room—a new policy established at the beginning of this year.

The primary downside of this policy is that, in order to listen to music within the room, students must share a communal speaker, and everyone engaging in barbell exercises must listen to the music preferences of a single student. An inherent problem arises from the very diverse music tastes among the student body with preferences ranging from rap, pop, country, classical, and many other genres.

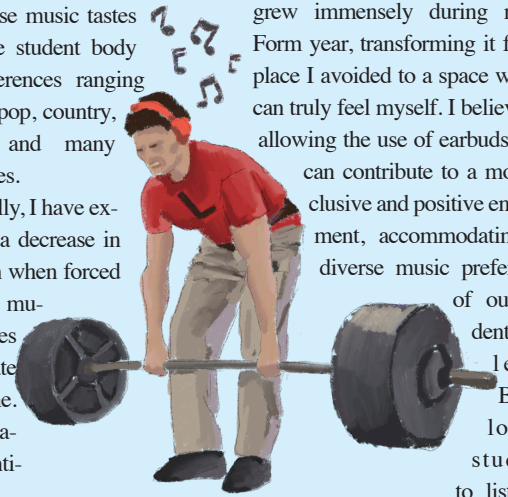
Personally, I have experienced a decrease in motivation when forced to listen to music that does not resonate with me. This negative sentiment is not

unique to my experience: many students hold a deep dissatisfaction with the current policy. As expressed by numerous athletes, the restrictive nature of the policy hinders the overall workout experience for many students and has little justification for its enforcement. As for the policy acting as a safety measure, the current environment of loud music has more adverse effects on proper communication, as the music is often much louder

than what is played through earbuds.

Current research published in the *Journal of Functional Morphology and Kinesiology* indicates that exercising to non-preferred music may adversely affect performance, while listening to preferred music can enhance motivation and exercise volume. These factors are critical to exercising in the weight room, as improving athletic performance is the primary goal of many students.

My passion for the weight room grew immensely during my II Form year, transforming it from a place I avoided to a space where I can truly feel myself. I believe that allowing the use of earbuds again can contribute to a more inclusive and positive environment, accommodating the diverse music preferences of our student athletes. By allowing students to listen to their preferred music, we can



Karina Stakh '27 / THE LAWRENCE

celebrate our individuality in the pursuit of athletic excellence.

I urge anyone reading this letter to talk to members of the athletic department about reconsidering and, ideally, revising the current policy. This change has the potential to make the weight room a more welcoming and enjoyable space for all students.

- ANTHONY WOO '26

Breaking the Silence

Why We Must Discuss the Israel-Hamas War

SAHANA LÖWY '26

On October 7, the terrorist group Hamas launched an attack on Israel which, according to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, was the deadliest terrorist attack by deaths per capita since data collection began in 1970. The unfolding conflict between Hamas and Israel is responsible for the greatest number of both Palestinian and Israeli fatalities in decades. The conflict in the Middle East casts a global shadow, influencing communities far beyond its geographical boundaries. Across the globe, people have been driven to protest, university campuses have been roiled by controversy, and hate crimes against all parties have increased exponentially. Despite our privilege of staying sheltered in the Lawrenceville bubble, we are not exempt from these shockwaves.

I remember waking up on October

Lawrenceville was home and yet, out of fear, I couldn't bring myself to speak up. But silence is dangerous. Silence is what allows ignorance and prejudice to prevail.

7 to an overwhelming influx of messages. I sat on my bed for what felt like forever—poring over fatality lists, studying articles, contacting my family. I read messages confirming the safety of my family. I read messages from friends asking about my own safety. The worst kind of messages, though, were the ones I sent: asking after friends, family, and even strangers who were in Israel. In a sense, the tragedy brought me closer to my people, scattered across the world. Then, I put down my phone and got ready for school. I didn't mention it, didn't say anything out loud, acted as if nothing had happened. I felt isolated in my own community. Lawrenceville was home and yet, out of fear, I couldn't bring myself to speak up. But silence is dangerous. Silence is what allows ignorance and prejudice to prevail.

As I was living through this nightmare, so were millions of others worldwide. Like two sides of the same coin, another student at Lawrenceville shared my experience. Clara Khabbaz '26, a Palestinian-American, expressed anguish at the current state of affairs in the Middle East. She recognized "immense suffering and pain on both sides of this war," highlighting the destruction felt by both sides. Like me, her first instinct when she first read the news was to call her family. They shared her sense of overwhelming hopelessness and were concerned by the news. She too felt isolated,

unsure of what coming to school would be like. Did people know what had happened? Did they share her reaction?

According to the Anti-Defamation League and the Council on American-Islamic Relations, there has been a dramatic spike in reported incidents of antisemitic, anti-Arab and anti-Muslim bias. I heard about incidents of anti-semitism everywhere. The Jewish school in Toronto where so many of my summer camp friends went to school was closed after numerous bomb threats. Antisemitic incidents in the US increased by 337 percent in the two months following October 7. The rise of hate towards both sides was staggering. Khabbaz recounted her own experience with microaggressions, saying "when people learn I'm Palestinian-American, they give me a look...denying my cultural heritage." These forms of discrimination are prevalent, yet hard to root out because they live in the minds of some of the world's most educated people. Even at Lawrenceville, where we have the privilege of a world-class education, Khabbaz attested to the offensive language our own students use when referencing stereotypes surrounding Arab, Muslim, and Palestinian people.

Educational institutions across America are faring worse fates. Amid what the Biden administration has described as an "alarming rise" of antisemitism on college campuses, Jew-

ish students feel more vulnerable than ever. As protests and rallies on both sides heat up, injuries have become more and more frequent. Jewish students at Cooper Union in New York City sheltered in a locked library as demonstrators banged on the glass walls of the building. And anonymous posters flooded a Cornell message board with threats, such as "If you see a Jewish 'person' on campus follow them home and slit their throats." Universities are boiling over with hate and it's our responsibility to make sure the same fate does not befall Lawrenceville.

We've seen efforts from the Lawrenceville administration to educate our population. A series of speakers has begun this process, and the response has been positive. Khabbaz expressed "appreciation (for) the school's steps to educate the community about the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict so that we can have well-informed discussions." Lawrenceville is a diverse school with representation from so many different communities that we must find ways to let each other feel safe, heard, and understood. For Khabbaz, the South West Asia and North Africa (SWANA) affinity group is a space where she feels heard. For others it may be the Jewish Student Organization (JSO).

The fear and isolation that members of our community felt is unacceptable. If we allow silence and ignorance

to prevail, we remain in a dark echo chamber, letting our own thoughts fester without listening to others' feelings. The pursuit of knowledge is the flame that will illuminate our dark room which is why we must maintain open dialogue and empathy. It is important to have spaces in which we can freely discuss our fears and concerns so that they can be understood. When we are afraid to talk about controversial topics, our thoughts stagnate, keeping us from the truth and from finding community. Instead of fearing these subjects, silencing them, and avoiding others we should talk and learn from each other. Only then can we begin to unravel the truth and find community. The decision our administration made to not only acknowledge what is happening in our world but also bring in experts to educate us has given students the opportunity to have discussions guided by knowledge and empathy. It is now up to us as students to run with what we have been given and listen to one another.

The way to move forward is to come together as a community. If two students from supposedly opposing sides can come together to write an article, then the rest of the community can, too. We must acknowledge that the suffering on both sides is something that unites us, not divides us. As a community, we must stand together against hate and division.

Outside the Bubble

Third Batch of Epstein Documents Unsealed

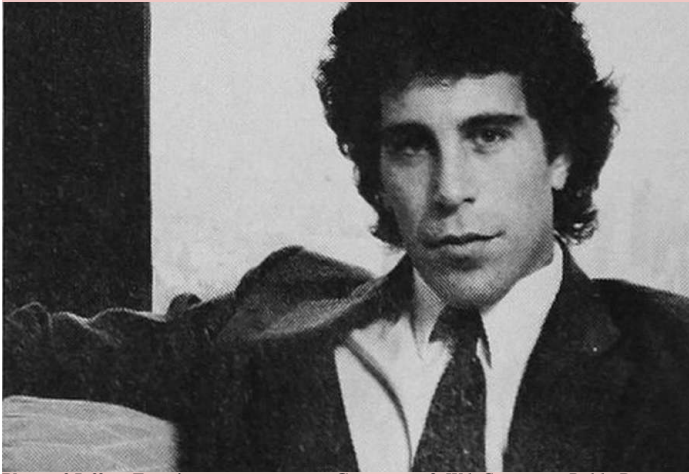


Photo of Jeffrey Epstein

Courtesy of WikiCommons, Public Domain, JeffreyEpstein

HELEN CHANG '26

The third batch of unsealed court documents from Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell's sex abuse lawsuit were released on January 5—revealing a longer list of high profile participants and disturbing details in regards to the trafficking scandal. Charged in 2019, American financier Jeffrey Epstein and his partner-in-crime Ghislaine Maxwell was accused of sexually assaulting a vast network of girls as young as 11 years old, with many of his victims stepping forward to testify in court on Epstein's sexual abuse. The lawsuit these court records are associated with was brought against Epstein and Maxwell by Virginia Giuffre, one of their victims. The docu-

ments released are expected to include the names of almost 200 prominent business people, politicians, Hollywood stars, and other public figures who were involved in the trafficking situation. Some released names (whose specific roles in the Epstein scandal are still unconfirmed) include Duke of York Prince Andrew, former President Donald Trump, and former president Bill Clinton. While Epstein allegedly died by suicide in jail in 2020, various conspiracy theories continue to circulate regarding his death and an investigation is still being held into what really happened on Little Saint James Island, Epstein's private island.

SCOTUS set to rule on Trump's eligibility for Federal office



Photo of Donald Trump

Courtesy of Trump White House Archived

ELLEN JORDAN '26

Although the infamous January 6 riot—in which a mob of then-President Donald Trump supporters stormed the United States Capitol Building—occurred three years ago, its legacy continues to haunt Trump and by extension his quest to return to the Oval Office in 2024. Last December, the Colorado Supreme Court prohibited Trump from appearing as a candidate on the state Republican Primary ballot due to his actions leading

up to the riot. Yet the latest twist in the story arrives via the U.S. capital: last Friday on January 5, the U.S. Supreme Court announced it will review the Colorado Supreme Court's decision and reevaluate whether Trump is eligible to run for federal office. If the Court affirms the Colorado decision, such a resolution will likely have a tremendous impact on both the upcoming Republican primaries and 2024 Presidential Election.

Lawrentians Chosen to Perform at Choral Directors Convention

ANGEL XIN '26

On October 19, 2023, IV Formers Ryan Ding and Sonia Lackey were selected to represent Lawrenceville at the annual American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) Eastern Regional convention in Providence, Rhode Island, spanning from February 28 to March 2 this year. The convention provides experienced choral directors the opportunity to network and students interested in furthering their singing career the chance to work with top-tier directors.

Lackey, who sings with the Princeton Girls Choir, auditioned with the help of her assistant director Maddie Meyer. As part of her audition, Meyer sent the ACDA a video of Lackey performing different scales and a section of a larger piece. Ding's audition for the convention was sponsored by Lawrenceville Music Teacher Robert Palmer. Ding expressed his surprise at "how competitive the ACDA was and really glad to be offered this opportunity."

However, Lackey notes that "the audition is just the beginning of the hard work to come." Selected members are tasked with memorizing and performing four to five pieces of complete music before the convention. Chosen students who fail to complete their assignments are at risk of removal from the convention. Ding, who has been working closely with Palmer to perfect his performance for February, similarly

described his successful auditioning as "just the beginning."

Lackey is extremely excited for what the experience would offer. She is looking forward to working with some of the best choral directors in the nation and sees the upcoming event as an opportunity for her to "interact with unfamiliar singers and voices." It seemed almost "magical" to her that a group of complete strangers could be capable of coming together and "orchestrating such a refined sound." Ding is also thrilled "to see how a semi-professional

vention, Lackey hopes to gain further insight on current happenings within the larger choral community and connect with singers and directors who can help her improve her original music. "My knowledge on composing and passion for it comes from singing in a choir," she said. Specifically, Lackey's experience with composition is a culmination of her experience singing in the Princeton Girls Choir, playing the piano, and taking music theory courses at the School. Like Lackey, Ding also believes that

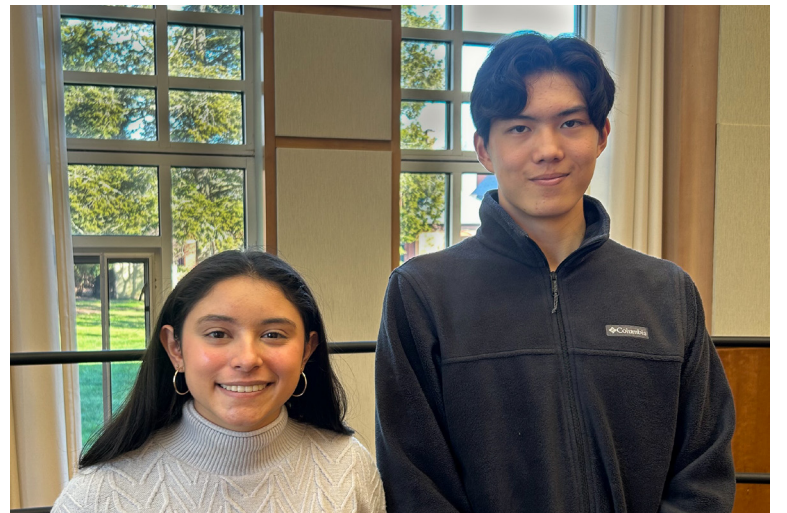


Photo of Sonia and Ryan

Robert Palmer / THE LAWRENCE

choir operates." The ACDA will be his first experience singing in an out-of-school choir.

Through participating in this con-

participating in "ACDA will help [him] mature as a singer" and "propel [him] to further pursue [his] passion for music."

Checking In with StuCo

SOPHIE CHENG '25
& CHARLES POTTER '25

During last spring's student council election season, the current students on the Student Council shared their plans for improving different aspects of campus and community life. This Fall and Winter Term, the Student Council has been planning and implementing new initiatives to follow through on their objectives and act as a liaison between the student body and the administration.

School President Bryce Langdon '24 describes one of his central goals as improving student wellness by fostering school culture and spirit. Developing this feeling of togetherness on campus is "a big focus for the Student Council in a post-pandemic era for the School," he said. Langdon also mentioned "establishing better connections between students and alumni through networking opportunities" and promoting "transparency—ensuring that students hear the full story" as his other primary objectives for the year.

So far, Langdon has worked to improve student wellbeing by "establishing the tenth member of the Student Council, a Wellness Representative," a role undertaken by Cassie Dillard '24. Through collaborative efforts such as "getting more seating areas around campus and eliminating announcements at Smeeting to highlight student performances," Langdon and the rest of the Council hope to "achieve greater student satisfaction." To improve transparency between the student body and the administration, Langdon has been "sending out monthly emails to students and faculty to give updates on current and future initiatives of the Council." Later this year, Lawrentians can look forward to an inaugural Career Fair and potential progress being made on visitation policies and the disciplinary process. "I know we will be working extremely hard until we graduate to amplify stu-

dent voices and enact change that our peers want to see," he said.

As the Community Service Representative, Liza Strong '24 has been working alongside House Community Service Representatives, team captains, and Director of Community Service Elizabeth Ferguson to achieve her goal of "implementing community service initiatives in many campus communities." In the Circle and the Crescent, Strong has aided Houses in forming "a series of spirited fundraisers," and helped plan "one-time events in which athletes can teach local children how to play their sport." In the Fall Term, she also oversaw the planning of Halloween Party, where young students from nearby schools visited campus for a day of Halloween-themed events, in addition to supporting students on their individual initiatives such as the shoe

the Circle and Crescent divide." Additionally, Lim has "spoken with the administration and Prefects of the Circle and Crescent about school culture, House culture, and community formations." Another goal Lim has been working toward is highlighting student culture at Lawrenceville, which she has done so far through various methods including working alongside Senior Stories "to program themes that correlate with different cultural months."

Vice President of Honor Daphne Volpp '24 has been working diligently to "create a disciplinary system that feels accessible" and help "students know where they stand and feel prepared" when they attend a Disciplinary Council. She has also worked on adding an Honor Portal to Lawrenceville's Veracross, giving students,



Photo of Student Council

Courtesy of The Lawrenceville School

faculty, and parents access to information about the Honor Council and a flow chart of the disciplinary process.

This year, the Student Council has spearheaded a number of initiatives aiming to improve student wellbeing and redefine campus culture. Overall, they hope to continue maintaining transparency between the Student Council, the administration, and the student body on their goals.

Through participating in this con-

Through participating in this con-

The Art of Reflecting on 2023

The Year of the Girl: How Femininity Shaped Popular Culture

CELESTINE SUTTER '27

From *Barbie* to Taylor Swift's "Eras Tour," 2023 saw the mainstream revival of "girl culture." In a post-pandemic world, the Barbie movie brought new and old audiences back to theaters with almost \$1.5 billion in box office revenue, paralleling the 4.3 million "Eras Tour" tickets sold across America, pushing Swift to billionaire status. Femininity took 2023's pop culture by storm in music, fashion, and film. All of this begs the question: How do we reflect on the "Year of the Girl?"

Unsurprisingly, social media outlets like Pinterest and TikTok played a compelling role in the recent popularization of hyper-femininity. Various trends and influencers throughout the year cemented the feminine aesthetic as desirable and stylish. TikTok sounds that communicate positive feelings of womanhood proliferated the internet. Samples like the song "I Am Woman" by Emmy Meli, along with soundbites explaining how "we were girls together," create opportunities for

content creators to celebrate (and poke fun at) feminine culture. In an age in which social media content wields great influential power, positive messages of self-love and generosity created a healthier online environment

but also for its thought-provoking message of female empowerment, specifically, that women do not have to become more masculine to be powerful. Instead, women can also find power in pink and be formidable

High fashion and streetwear alike often channeled the little girl clothes women universally remember as a part of their childhood, and those clothes that we grew out of came back with stronger force and new identity. After

female musicians came out in the past year: Lana Del Rey's *Did You Know That There's a Tunnel Under Ocean Boulevard*, Taylor Swift's *1989 (Taylor's Version)* and *Speak Now (Taylor's Version)*, Olivia Rodrigo's *GUTS*, and SZA's *SOS*, which she released December of 2022. Older music, such as "Just a Girl" by No Doubt, also resurfaced, reaching astronomical levels of popularity and feminine relatability. With common themes of love, struggles, and the fun of girlhood, much of the popular music of 2023 was geared toward girls.

The cuteness and community of this movement resonated with millions of women, as nostalgia of all types usually does. But also, the openly girly feminism of 2023 juxtaposed with the girl boss-entrepreneur-focused feminism of the 2010s in a way many found refreshing and real, which is why pop culture and art could not get away from the appeal of feminine culture. At the dawn of 2024, however, instead of purely relating to childhood, women can move on to finding love, appreciating the struggles, and experiencing the fun of adulthood in conjunction with girlhood. The "Year of the Girl" just might grow into the "Year of the Woman."



Anna Bao '27 / THE LAWRENCE

for girls and arguably everyone in 2023.

Additionally, this wave of getting in touch with one's inner girl nicely complemented the backdrop of feminism, one that Barbie helped to bring attention to once more in 2023. Barbie reached its Golden Globe success not only for its playful plot, exceptional casting, and catchy songs

and feminine simultaneously. As Billie Eilish's cathartic "What Was I Made For?" plays, feelings of unity and even consolation reach the hearts of its listeners.

As embracing girlhood became more than a fad, new fashion followed suit; the coquette aesthetic, equipped with Mary Jane shoes, bows, and pleated skirts soon became a staple.

all, nothing quite evokes the feeling of a romanticized adolescent and adult life like lace and a ballet pink bow, right?

Not only did women's fashion reflect the hyper-feminine zeitgeist, but also the music industry and TikTok's fascination with music that captures the experience of growing up a girl. Many notable albums of

Tracking the Trends

SIMI RATH '26

As we welcome the new year, many of us find ourselves reflecting on 2023. All of us have witnessed the rise and fall of countless trends, from the resurgence of UGG boots to thinking about the Roman Empire (perhaps multiple times per day). So, in honor of this past year, I have analyzed and reviewed the highlights and lowlights of the trends, specifically music and fashion related, delivered to us over the last 365 days.



Aileen Ryu '25 / THE LAWRENCE

Fashion

The majority of 2023 fashion trends were throwbacks, noting the revival of Y2K and early 00s streetwear styles, from low-rise jeans to trucker hats. Even further back into the past, we see the resurgence of the Adidas Samba since its original debut in 1949, clinching the prestigious title of 2023 Shoe of the Year from the FN Awards Association. Unfortunately, the description of "throwback" also holds true to the expectations for the modeling industry, as the regression to archaic ideals and beauty standards disproportionately excluded models of diverse body types. In the Spring 2024 Preview show, taking place this past September and October, a shockingly low percentage, only 0.9 percent of the models were plus size, while 3.9 percent were midsize. However, 2023 marked

a success for racial inclusivity in modeling, highlighting the power of showcasing different types of beauty. When discussing the various trends of 2023, I cannot help but shine the spotlight on SHEIN—a true epicenter for contemporary fashion. Its meteoric rise, with the website's astounding three billion-plus visits this year, not only crowned it as the number one apparel website of 2023 but also revealed insights into the modern popularity of fast fashion. As several fast fashion giants inch closer to SHEIN's trajectory, the industry witnesses the horrific impact of rapid production cycles, promoting a throwaway culture that has become synonymous with the rise of these convenient yet destructive shopping habits. On average, 95 people globally per second peruse SHEIN's virtual aisles is a stark reminder of current consumers' unrelenting appetite for trend turnover.

Film and Media



Barbie Movie Poster

Courtesy of Printerval



The Last of Us Poster

Courtesy of Printerval

Undoubtedly, 2023 emerged as a stellar year for television, bringing in plenty of shows and movies that not only dominated cultural trends but also left a mark on music, fashion, and, of course, TikTok. A standout favorite of mine is Neil Druckman's *The Last of Us*, a gripping series featuring the talented Pedro Pascal and Bella Ramsey, both familiar faces from the iconic *Game of Thrones* series. Set in a post-apocalyptic 2023, the plot unfolds around a young girl and her grieving father, delivering a potent blend of cinematographic brilliance and emotionally charged storytelling. The exploration of family and grief in the series struck a chord with me, making

it a must-watch recommendation. Meanwhile, 2023 saw the fourth and final season of *Succession*, leaving viewers with a bittersweet aftertaste as the series concluded.

As someone who typically gravitates toward shows over movies, I, very unexpectedly, found myself in theaters quite frequently over the past year. Among the best cinematic experiences of 2023 were the vastly different films *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer*, both of which offered unique narratives and thought-provoking themes. While many might be eager to compare the two, the simultaneous release date doesn't equal an apples-to-apples comparison. Each film opened up its own set of discussions and

perspectives and left me feeling empowered after viewing them. It is safe to say that I enjoyed the viewing journey more in *Oppenheimer*, but of course, *Barbie* was more than "Ken-ough" to satisfy a wide variety of moviegoers. I am particularly surprised by how resonant and relatable much of the content in *Barbie* was for not only myself but also for my brother (who grudgingly joined me in the theater this past July). Recently, the popularity of the newer film *Saltburn* made it a must-watch, and I am surprised to say that, despite experiencing some mild discomfort, it kept me intrigued throughout its two-hour and seven-minute entirety.

Running Strong: Lawrenceville's Girls' Indoor Track and Field 4x400 Meter Relay Team

MIRA PONNAMBALAM '26

After the December 2023 New Balance Nationals, the Girls' Indoor Track and Field 4x400 Meter Relay Team ranked second in the nation and first in the state of New Jersey. The group is made up of Lexie Koch '25, Rhianna Scott '25, Sofia Swindell '25, and Jael Gaines '26.

Regarding the team's ranking, Koch stated, "We worked really hard. It was exciting to see how we performed, knowing we're just going to keep getting better." The ranking did not just provide the team a sense of accomplishment, though—instead of dwelling on the accomplishment, the team still chose to look for ways to improve. "Seeing those results kind of motivates me. It shows me we can accomplish what we want to accomplish. I'm sure we're going to run better this season," added Swindell.

According to Coach Derrhyl Duncan, this goal-oriented nature makes the relay team so successful. "They have huge goals for the year, for the season, and beyond. They go to war every single day at practice. No matter how much success they



Girls' Varsity 4x400 Meter Relay Team

have or how many accolades they get, it never gets to their heads. They enjoy the moment then eagerly get back to work" said Coach Duncan. The team aims to win gold at nationals this year while also improving their running as much as possible. Aside from dedication and hard work, Koch emphasized the importance of teamwork. "I'm looking forward to getting better and better and performing the best

we can. I think we can do that by leaning on each other." she said.

As a relay team, Gaines, Koch, Scott, and Swindell have bonded, helping them rely on each other. "It might be surprising to know that we have fun," commented Duncan. "What sets the team apart is how everyone encourages each other. They're each other's biggest fans."

The 4x400 presents a unique set of challenges. According to

Courtesy of *The Lawrenceville School*

Swindell, "The 4x400 is the most hyped-up event for indoor track, perceived as seen as one of the hardest events in track." Also, the Lawrenceville team does not run the 4x400 as frequently as other events. While the team participates in most events almost every week, they only participate in the 4x400 a few times a season when they are looking to achieve a certain goal. "It's always the last event,

so that's something I really love about it. It really brings the team together. You're kind of bonding through the pain," noted Swindell.

Before the New Balance Nationals even started, the team spent weeks practicing since the season began in November. Duncan stated that "I try to create an environment at practice that would mirror the experience of a big meet. We always say that practice should be the hard part." Rather than running the 4x400 repeatedly, the team trains by running a mix of endurance-based and speed-based drills. They also practice handoffs the day before meets.

Aside from the physical preparation, running also takes a good amount of mental resolve. "For me, keeping calm before the race is hard. It's very exciting and you only have a little time to run. That can be a bit nerve-racking," mentioned Koch. "We kind of get ready together and get pumped up together. We run for ourselves and for each other, which is nice."

As the relay team celebrates this remarkable victory, the Lawrenceville community eagerly anticipates their continued success.

Pizza and Connection at TJ's Pizza & Pasta

LUKE PURICELLI '25 & BUNNY HENAULT-BASSETT '26

TJ's Pizza & Pasta, commonly abbreviated as TJ's, is a casual Italian restaurant on Main Street right across from Lawrenceville. For as long as members of the Lawrenceville community have known, TJ's has been a social and grub hub for Lawrenceville students.

Part of TJ's allure as a great place to grab a bite is its convenience for the school community. Most students appreciate spending time away from campus to hang out with friends, and TJ's is the perfect place for that. III Formers Finn Morgan and Megan Widlar, who both dine at TJ's once a week with friends, believe the establishment is a spectacular place just to hang out.

Likewise, Matt Zerm '26, who "usually go[es] once a week, but would go more if [he] had that luxury," claims that people are often eager to go to TJ's not only for the food, but for a laid-back atmosphere to hangout with friends.

TJ's is known for its classic Italian items and great pizza. The restaurant serves a unique penne pizza—penne alla vodka

pasta baked into a pizza slice. It might sound odd, but trust Lawrentians when they say it is great! Walker Carrington '25 emphasizes that "[he] love[s] the penne pasta pizza. It's basically pizza and pasta in one, which can't go wrong."

However, the TJ's chefs argue that the panini is their most underrated item. Widlar recommends the "curly fries or any of the ice creams." According to her, no one can refuse the nicely flavored and very crispy fries, or resist the multitude of ice creams offered at TJ's. The TJ's employees state that the menu's most popular items are chicken fingers and pepperoni pizza—sacred classics to the Lawrenceville community.

Over the years, it has become tradition to congregate in TJ's after annual school events. Since the environment is very welcoming to students, on nights when there are no major commitments, TJ's is seen as a warm place to socialize. Some of the most popular nights of the year to hangout at TJ's are Homecoming and the Halloween dance. Daniello, a staff member of TJ's for eight years, claimed his favorite season at TJ's is



Staff at TJ's Pizza and Pasta

"when the students come during Halloween." He greatly enjoys when students come in after the annual Halloween dance, often in costumes, creating a lively and boisterous after-party.

Daniello remarks that "Lawrenceville is a big part of TJ's. Most of the customers are Lawrenceville students." He and the other TJ's staff make the

pizzeria much more than just a restaurant for the Lawrenceville community. Their customer service is also excellent, with quick turnover and frequent discounts.

A current Lawrenceville parent from the Class of '83 recounts frequenting TJ's when he was a student, recalling their amazing Philly cheese steak, which was formerly their most

Sonia Shum '27 / THE LAWRENCE

iconic dish. TJ's, decorated with historical photos of Main Street, has long been a staple of Lawrence Township and of The Lawrenceville School. If you're ever in the mood for a quick, tasty bite to eat or a place to spend time with your friends, you will be sure to find many Lawrentians doing the same at TJ's Pizza and Pasta.

Learning Across the Globe: Lawrenceville's 2024 Harkness Travel Programming

MIA MASSERIO '25 & HELEN CHANG '26

During the spring and summer breaks, the Lawrenceville School coordinates trips all over the world for students with special focuses such as cultural appreciation, service learning, history, philosophy or STEM. Students have the opportunity to immerse themselves in cultures and communities around the world through these unique travel programs.

Katie Axelsen '24 will be traveling to Kenya where students will learn about the effects of ecotourism on the environment and indigenous communities. The students will visit animal sanctuaries and learn from native people about coexisting with animals and the natural environment. Axelsen was drawn to this trip in particular due to its focus on ecotourism's effects on the local people, and especially since she is already "learning about poverty within Kenya through [her] poverty class." She would also like to bond with other students on the trip while exploring a new country. In preparation for the trip, Axelsen is making sure she has access to the gear she needs by buying "modest clothing that will suit the environment."

On the other hand, Andrew Yang '26 will be traveling on the STEM-oriented trip to Italy. Students will travel to cities of Bologna, Venice, and Verona with a focus on learning about the Italian car industry

and applied physics, engineering, and design. Yang was particularly drawn to this trip as he wanted to learn about "Italian engineering and why they're so successful." With factory visits to Lamborghini and Ducati, he and fellow students will learn about what makes Italian motor vehicles so special compared to other brands. In addition, Yang is excited to immerse himself in Italian culture. As a returning visitor to Italy, he is excited to challenge himself to learn and explore with his peers. He is looking forward to traveling with "people [he] know[s] and new people from Lawrenceville" that he hasn't gotten to know yet. In preparation to travel together to Italy, Yang's group "is doing short introductions and writing paragraphs" to familiarize themselves with their peers. Yang is also doing his own research and talking to his Italian friends as he looks forward to the trip.

Students interested in the environment, specifically climate change, will visit Iceland to explore its evolving landscapes firsthand. They will be able to see the effects of climate change while learning about how people in Iceland have adapted to the changing landscape and brainstorm together about the ways this knowledge can be applied at home. Anne Clifford-Levy '26 prepares for the trip by "reading more about Iceland" as she has never been there and wants to discover more about

their culture. Like other students awaiting their Harkness trip, she will make sure she has the "right clothing, her passport, and other essentials." Clifford-Levy looks forward to taking this trip in which travel intertwines with education.

Neel Das '26 will travel to Japan in the upcoming summer for the first time with his peers,

where they will learn Japanese history and culture throughout time, as well as touch on Japan's involvement in World War II. Neel looks forward to this destination as his "dad lived in Japan for five years," so he hopes to experience culture related to his heritage, including the societal differences. In addition, he looks forward to

eating Japanese food. Neel enjoys traveling and is excited to make connections with his Lawrenceville peers during his travels.

Through the diverse Harkness programs, students can choose to immerse themselves in a specific field and develop a passion for learning about and connecting with a new culture.



2023 Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina trip

Jackie Williams '24 / THE LAWRENCE



2023 Bosnia and Herzegovina trip student photo

Jackie Williams '24 / THE LAWRENCE



2023 Ducati factory Italy trip

Garrett Heffern '24 / THE LAWRENCE



2023 Italy trip

Garrett Heffern '24 / THE LAWRENCE



2023 Scotland trip student photo

Claire Jiang '24 / THE LAWRENCE

The Edmonton Oiler's Incredible Rebound

Looks Like The Oilers Aren't Done Yet

KEVIN CHUNG '25

In the race for this year's National Hockey League's (NHL) Stanley Cup Trophy, the Edmonton Oilers, who boast arguably the two best skaters in the league, faced a rocky start to this competitive 2023-24 season, posting a record of two wins, eight losses, and one overtime loss (2-8-1) record. However, the Oilers seem to have gotten back on track through savvy upper management decisions en route to securing vital wins to reposition themselves in the playoff picture. Let's break it down:

Early in the season, the team struggled with severe defensive deficiencies and mediocre goaltending under head coach Jay Woodcroft. With both of the Oilers goaltenders, Jack Campbell and Stuart Skinner, ranking amongst the bottom of the league for the goalie position, the puck seemed to find the Oilers' net every game. With Darnell Nurse and Evan Bouchard, key defensive powerhouses, performing below their usual standard, the "Cup or bust" mentality seemed to be slipping out of the team's reach.

In response, general manager Ken Holland decided to replace head coach Jay Woodcroft with Kris Knoblauch, as well as bringing in legendary former Oilers defenseman Paul Coffey as their new defensive coordinator. Coupled with these management changes, the Oilers made tactical decisions: Skinner replaced Calvin Pickard as starting goalie, with the former moving to the

backup. Overall, Knoblauch desired to keep the team chemistry as it was when Woodcroft left.

Despite initial skepticism, these adjustments proved pivotal in

55 points scored being good for the fifth-most in the league. His unique skating ability and speed, coupled with his unmatched game sense not only make him an offensive threat

significant goals.

The Oilers' Defense has not lacked success either. Bouchard and veteran Mattias Ekholm are tearing up the record sheets, as they are currently

To top it all off, Skinner has shown incredible improvement and now has two shutouts and an above 90 percent save average.

With all these improvements coming together to produce one juggernaut of a team, the current Oilers roster looks to be back on track to win the franchise's fifth Stanley Cup.

However, the season is far from over. The Oilers must consistently demonstrate this incredible team dynamic throughout the season's 82 games to become a solid option for fans. With powerhouses in the Pacific Division, such as the Los Angeles Kings, Vancouver Canucks, and the Vegas Golden Knights, the Oilers' competition is more fierce than ever. Is there a chance of making the playoffs? Definitely. If the team plays the way they have been as of late, then the Oilers seem destined to win this year's Stanley Cup. However, if the Oilers regress, even for just a couple of games, their chances will quickly diminish, along with the chances of Draisaitl and McDavid resigning with the Oilers at season's end.

If the Oilers manage to keep up with their pace of having an 8-2 record in the past 10 games, they will definitely at least make the wild card position of the Pacific division. However, it is still possible for the Oilers to place higher in the rankings and have a higher seed coming into the playoffs. Will the Oilers win another elusive Stanley Cup? All of a sudden, the possibility is not too far fetched.



Edmonton Oilers Star Leon Draisaitl

Courtesy of Canuckeers Flickr Page

transforming the Oilers' season. The team, led by stars Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl, has staged a remarkable comeback, breaking numerous team records along the way. With a 16-3 record in their last 19 games, including two separate streaks of eight consecutive wins, the Oilers have surged back into the playoff picture and are currently comfortably sitting in the wildcard spot.

McDavid has more than recovered from his upper body injury, with his

but also take defensive attention away from his teammates, making everyone on the Oilers offense more dangerous. Additionally, aiding McDavid on offense, his wingman Draisaitl uses his incredible ability to score the puck regardless of the conditions to increase the team's chances of winning. To add to the offensive firepower, Zach Hyman has become a reliable goal scorer for the Oilers, scoring two hat tricks this season in addition to numerous other

the highest-ranked defensive pair in the entire NHL in five different categories, with Ekholm specifically being the third highest-scoring defenseman in the league. Darnell Nurse, the team's nine-million-dollar investment, embraced his role as a defensive player, ensuring the puck stayed away from the Oilers' zone. The third defensive pairing of Brett Kulak and Vincent Desharnais has upped their game and is stopping pucks from getting close to the net.

Board Picks

Name Role	Nichole Jin News Editor	Jackie Williams Features Editor	Sofia Carlisi Arts Editor	Garret Heffern Opinions Editor	Arya Vishwakarma Opinions Editor (Board Picks Debutant)	Luke Park Executive Editor
Do you get scared when you fly through clouds? (some people do they feel like we're hurting them)	I get scared even when I walk through them	No, the bumps make the ride more fun	only cumulonimbus ones	That's like being scared of rain...when you're in your house.	do you get scared when you drive through fog? on a dark night? no? better start looking behind you then	I don't care for the clouds I care about turbulence
Do you splash in puddles?	No. I drink them	YES	no i'd melt	I'm too often in Dress Code	slipping and falling (for you) does make quite a splash, yes	I dabble
What's the coolest shaped cloud you've ever seen (I want details people)?	Dinosaur chicken nugget	The Tooth Fairy's castle	ur mom	Why so many cloud questions?	the sighs of relief after Winter calc finals billowed like little fairies exorcised from nostrils	I saw a cloud that kinda looked like Sonic the Hedgehog
what shape does this cloud look like to you?	Is there supposed to be a photo attached	a castle	adrian's haircut	A sandal	the graceful arch of garrett's eyebrow when my editorial is 2 days 11 hours and 45 minutes late	Looks like a dolphin brain
anything else that's funny?	Every day I see at least one cloud shaped like sofia bonilla's side profile	My motivation right now	climate change	Christian Chan's article	garrett never taking his winter jacket off indoors no matter the duration or intensity of the activity.	My wonderful beautifully deteriorating life
Name Role	Arisa Okamura Web Editor	Will Wang Features Editor	Claire Jiang Editor in Chief	Sabrina Ottaway Board Copy Editor Board	Aki Li Copy Editor	Bryan Boanoh Sports Editor
Favorite state of matter? Why?	Rydberg polaron, no matter how many times I read the explanation it makes no sense	Solid - because I got ice in my veins.	antimatter	gas	Water because I love drinking tea	South Dakota
If you were a cloud what type of cloud would you be?	Hybrid Cloud	The one that Ms. Seo talked about last spring.	turtle-shaped	columbinibus	A purple one	Adobe Creative
What stage of the water cycle describes your energy?	Lake	Runoff because I'm about runoff away from Lawrenceville.	sublimation, 'cause I'm sublime	drought	Clouds right before it rains	Precipitation
anything else that's funny?	That its already week two of 2024	The cloud to the right looks like a really bad drawn cloud.	impulse!	*board sounds*	the current political and economic state of the world	Nothing's funny