

## En Garde! Lawrenceville Fencing at the Cetrulo and Santelli



Photo of Fencing Tournament

Cindy Shum '24 / THE LAWRENCE

ANGEL XIN '26

On January 20 and 21, Lawrenceville's Boys' and Girls' Varsity Fencing teams achieved incredible results during their respective meets at the Cetrulo and Santelli Fencing Tournaments. The tournaments, which took place at Drew University across the span of two days, are the largest high school fencing tournaments in the United States. Both teams surpassed their past records, with the Girls' team placing second and the Boys' team placing seventh overall.

The 2023-24 season marks Cindy Shum's '24 second and last time participating in the Santelli Tournament, a girls-only event. "The tournament was canceled during my [II and III Form] years due to COVID," Shum explained. Despite being a very experienced fencer, Shum still felt that the event was "a little nerve-wracking," mainly due to the lengthy duration of the tournament. Shum was also amazed by the supportive environment that the Lawrenceville fencing teams cultivated. "We were very loud and vocal about cheering each other on," she said, "which really boosted the morale."

Sophia Abi-Atme '26, a new addition to the Girls' Foil team this year, expresses a similar sentiment, describing the tournament as "extremely uplifting." In particular, Abi-Atme

emphasized that the "positive and contagious energy on the bus ride back [to campus]" reinforced her sense of belonging within not only the team but the School as a whole. In particular, she thanked Rachel Deoki '25, an experienced foil fencer, for "showing [her] the ropes both during practice and at [her] first meet." While she has not given much thought to fencing beyond high school, Abi-Atme aims to just "work as hard as possible and see what happens next."

Ella Kennedy '24, captain of the Girls' Épée team, also noted the general atmosphere of positivity at Drew University. "Everyone was passionate about fencing and we were not under the pressure to win or lose," Kennedy said, "we had so much fun." She described the general spirit of the tournament as "vibrant, bustling, and fun."

Reflecting on the fencing season so far, Kennedy noted that she has especially enjoyed "building relationships with new fencers and watching [them] grow as both athletes and Lawrentians." However, given the scale of the tournament and their stellar performance, Shum was "disappointed by the lack of recognition given to the fencing team" at the School. Looking towards the future, she hopes that this win will "reshape the narrative surrounding fencing," including the

"classic stereotype of fencing being a less intensive sport."

The Boys' team participated in the Cetrulo Tournament. Captain of the Boys' Foil team William Wang '24 explained that, "unlike dual meets, [the Cetrulo tournament] is designed in a round robin style." The format of the competition allowed him to "revise [his] fencing strategies from bout to bout" and truly "improve from round to round." Wang is extremely proud of the boys' performance: "We started off from a low ranking, made it to the first pool, and placed fourth overall in the foil category," he said, describing the experience as "intense but demanding."

Alex Mo '26, a member of the Boys' Saber team, described the experience as a "rollercoaster." Although their opponents were "incredibly competitive, nationally ranked fencers," the boys still managed to sort into the first pool. Mo attributes the team's success to Rich Beischer, the main coach for the Saber team, for "giving amazing pep talks and always being supportive." This current season marks Mo's second season with the team, which gave him "a stronger sense of belonging" and "drove [him] to work harder."

Like Shum and Kennedy, Mo and Wang feel thankful to be a part of the fencing program. "We are a historically successful and motivated team, which is showcased by the Cetrulo tournament," Wang concluded.

## Outside the Bubble Vince McMahon Accused of Trafficking Former Employee

**CONTENT WARNING: THIS ARTICLE CONTAINS INFORMATION ON SEXUAL ASSAULT AND TRAFFICKING.**

SOPHIE CHENG '25  
NEWS ASSOCIATE

Vince McMahon has officially stepped down from his position as the Executive Chairman of TKO Group Holdings, an organization that emerged as a result of the merger between World Wrestling Entertainment Inc. (WWE) and Zuffa, the parent company of the Ultimate Fighting Championship. McMahon resigned after facing sexual assault and trafficking accusations from Janel Grant, a former WWE employee. According to CNN, Grant spoke out about the "extreme cruelty and degradation" she underwent,

including horrifying and traumatic accounts of non-consensual acts that led her to "disassociate and become numb to reality in order to survive." Additionally, the lawsuit alleges that TKO was well-aware of McMahon's behavior, choosing to turn a blind eye to the situation instead of addressing it. Other investigations are also being conducted into McMahon regarding previous sexual assault allegations, which he has paid over \$15 million in secret settlements to conceal. Grant's hope for this lawsuit is to prevent McMahon from continuing to victimize other women.

## Belarus Adopts New Military Doctrine

SAMUEL WANG '26

Belarus has recently introduced a new military doctrine that will potentially allow for the deployment of nuclear weapons to serve as deterrence against aggression from foreign countries. This doctrine, announced by Defense Minister Viktor Khrenin on January 20, aims to protect Belarus and its allies in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the European Union, including Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan. Khrenin considers this policy a

response to regional security threats like Russia's War with Ukraine, though Belarus claims not to perceive any nation as its enemy. Experts have also told CNN that Belarus and the CSTO may be at risk of invasion by Russia if the doctrine manages to cut them off from NATO allies. This doctrine, however, is still pending approval from the All-Belarusian People's Assembly. Meanwhile, neighboring Baltic states are reinforcing the borders they share with Belarus and Russia, reflecting the rising tensions of the region.

## US Warned Iran of Potential Deadly Terror Attack

VARUN VENKATARAMAN '26

According to United States government officials, on January 3, the U.S. gave warning to Iran of a potential ISIS terrorist attack before blasts rocked the gravesite of slain Iranian military general Qasem Soleimani. The attack claimed the lives of 84 Iranian ci-

vilians and injured an additional 284, marking the deadliest terrorist attack in Iran since 1979. On January 4, ISIS officially claimed responsibility for the blasts, and approximately 35 suspects were arrested across the country according to the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence.





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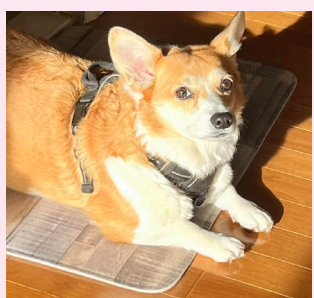
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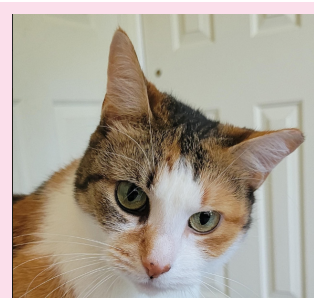
### CORRECTIONS

Corrections: In the January 26th Issue of The Lawrence, we neglected to mention that the editorial reflected the majority view of the board. Online editions of The Lawrence have been amended accordingly. Readers who notice errors should contact [lpark24@lawrenceville.org](mailto:lpark24@lawrenceville.org).

**Dog of the Week**  
**Mila**  
Angela Yang '25



**Cat Of The Week**  
**Yara**  
William Huang '24



## Editorial

### Sustainable Living, Beyond The Council

As high school students, we belong to a generation that grew up hearing the same doomsday narrative about climate change, and no new statistic or upward-trending graph will shock us. We have grown so numb to hearing about rising temperatures, dying ecosystems, and elevating sea levels that "climate change" is just a buzzword to us, thrown around when New Jersey doesn't see snow until mid-January. Our society and our environment are at odds on sustainability, a disconnect that is especially present at Lawrenceville. We eat in catered dining halls, never seeing how much food goes uneaten everyday. We do not take out the trash, so we do not understand how much waste and what kind of garbage we produce. Students who work at the Big Red Farm will often complain that entire bags of perfectly recyclable materials are ruined because one person threw a bag of food or an unfinished cup of coffee into the recycling bin. We don't see the environmental impact of our actions across campus and beyond, so we do not feel the need to change our lifestyles.

Despite the lack of engagement from the student body regarding sustainability, numerous campus organizations have done a commendable job of bringing attention to the matter. From the Trashion Show to a house recycling competition, the Sustainability Council has lined up a number of events for Sustainuary: a screening of The Lorax, a lights-off dinner for Valentine's Day, the house recycling competition, the Trashion Show, an Open Mic night, an Artist Workshop, and more. These events garner mass participation of the student body—impressive feats as any club or council leader at Lawrenceville can attest to the difficulties of attracting busy students to attend events for which they don't hold leadership roles. It is even more difficult that the timing of Sustainuary itself, two months in the shadow of the holiday season notorious for low student

morale, can often make engaging the student body for such a long period even more difficult. Despite these challenges, the Sustainability Council has also hosted well-intentioned, impactful events in the past. The House Recycling Competition, for instance, called for Circle and Crescent houses to submit photos of students recycling, using reusable utensils, and decorating recycling bins, encouraging all houses to shift away from single-use plastic.

However, a common phenomenon seen with Lawrenceville events is when they are catered towards entertainment and gardening attendance, the true concern behind the cause might be lost. Even with the Sustainuary Council's best efforts, students' lack of motivation will result in the environmental benefits of these events becoming short lived. While it is easy for a house to have one sustainable feed for house points, it is an entirely different beast to enforce reusable utensils for every feed of the year. In fact, the general trend with sustainability at Lawrenceville follows a pattern: if we students stand to gain something from being sustainable—house points, recognition, or a Starbucks gift card—then we are more than willing to participate in SusCo's events. Otherwise, few go out of their way to recycle, turn off the lights, or bring their own water bottles to Starbucks.

Despite our general consensus that climate change is a pressing issue, few Lawrentians care enough about sustainability to sacrifice time and effort to pursue sustainable habits. Instead of keeping their outfits, most Houses, quite ironically, throw out their recycled outfits immediately after their showcase at School Meeting. In the process of tailoring events to a larger student body audience, we unfortunately adopt the mindset of an audience merely watching others live sustainably.

But what if we rejected this passive mindset? What if aspects of sustainable living were not once-a-year, earn-house-points events but rather a

part of everyday Lawrenceville life? Certain rules exist, such as mandating reusable plates and utensils for all house feeds, that would be easy to implement and barely impact our lives. From turning our phones in for study hall to Wi-Fi cut-offs at midnight, Lawrenceville already enforces a variety of rules intended to improve our productivity, sleeping habits, and mental health—sustainable living could be just one more thing added to the list. Get 50 cents off at the Bathhouse if you bring your own cup, ban single-use plastic at feeds, or reform detention from punitive to productive: one detention a month, students could recycle at the Big Red Farm instead of sitting silently in the Heely Room. If Lawrenceville pursued campus sustainability with the same intent and vigor it organized other aspects of student life and took more of the responsibility for sustainability off the shoulders of the Sustainability Council, sustainability on campus would be integrated into student lives without the need for external motives such as food, house points, or entertainment.

Sustainable action hinges on giving up convenience. The easier it is to do something—using a plastic fork, buying from Shein, throwing out a dirty cup into whatever trashcan you see first—the worse it is for the planet. Convenience is the reason so few Lawrenceville students are involved with sustainability. Struggling to balance our already-busy lives, most Lawrentians simply do not have time to care about the environmental impact of our actions when we're struggling to finish an essay or hosting three different club events at the same time. Yet, if Lawrenceville incorporated sustainability into our lives instead of making it optional, the impact we could make would benefit the world.

*This editorial represents the majority view of The Lawrence, CXLIII.*

## Reflections on Repetition: Our New Academic Schedule

**SOPHIE BILANIN '26**

In the midst of a grueling Lawrenceville Winter Term, it may seem impossible to look ahead; however, next year's academic schedule is nothing if not attention-grabbing. The approaching schedule may seem familiar to our seniors who are starting to plan their upcoming college courses. Without an official announcement, whispers abound of block periods, early class starts, and no-class Saturdays. Initial reactions to such great change seem to have passed over the student body, and as of now, no common consensus exists.

A recent parent seminar first revealed the 2024-25 Class Rotation Schedule, which was then announced at house meetings and released to house academic representatives. While unclear how much of the student body has seen the new schedule, they are certainly in for a drastic change. Classes will all be 80 minutes long, and the academic day will span from 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM. A, B, and C periods meet one day, and D, E, and F meet the next. Six days make up one

"cycle," and without many Saturday classes, each daily schedule in the cycle will not be tied to a specific day of the week. Between the second and third periods each day is an hour and a half break for lunch and "community," which includes house time, club meeting slots, or space for School Meeting.

The new schedule is easy to criticize. Earlier class starts mean less sleep, an already constant uphill battle for Lawrentians. Eighty-minute class periods will be inevitably painful for the short attention spans of teenagers, reducing class productivity. This added time to daily periods also seems unnecessary for the lower level courses. It can even be argued that these practically identical days are bound to suck students into the monotonous cycle of campus life. Although imperfect, at least the current schedule offers a variety of start and end times that don't let you forget whether



Sonia Singhal '24 / THE LAWRENCE

today is tomorrow or yesterday.

As a sophomore taking six classes with

no free periods, committed to two hours of athletics every day after school, serving on the board of three publications, and running a club, it comes as no surprise that I have no free time. Life at Lawrenceville, especially for boarders, easily slips into a continuous loop of waking up, going to class, going to sports, doing homework, going to sleep, and repeat. Time spent with friends is limited to meals and greeting each other as we pass in the halls. Days melt together, and the simple joys common in everyday life outside of Lawrenceville are lost.

The upcoming schedule will only escalate this phenomenon. Classes start and end at the exact same time every single day. Each period will start and end at the exact same time-of-day every day. The Lawrentians' dreaded lab period will become a constant reality. Exhausted students will watch the seconds tick by for eighty minutes, then drag themselves to

the next period, and the next. Every class over an hour long will drain the vigor from already overworked students. Lawrenceville already has a tendency to replace student drive and passion with work, sports, and the demand for filler on college resumes, and the new schedule will only exacerbate it.

I don't mean to say that there are no benefits to the new schedule. I love the School, its rigorous academics, and the brilliant friends I have made here. Extended lunch periods and daily consults support this community aspect of Lawrenceville, allowing more opportunities to socialize with peers and communicate with teachers. In addition, having only three classes per day might mean less nightly homework and more time dedicated to extracurriculars. However, I maintain that we students need variety, sleep, and an administration that listens to our specific concerns rather than replacing a schedule that satisfies most of the student body with one that traps us in the never-ending drone of eighty-minute periods and early class starts.



## The 2024 U.S. Presidential Election is on the horizon. Now is the time to help Ukraine.

ELLEN JORDAN '26  
NEWS ASSOCIATE

Soldiers crammed into muddy trenches.

The exchange of frontal assaults, machine guns, and shellfire all to gain minimal territory.

No, this isn't a recount of the Battle of the Somme, though it is a picture that eerily resembles battlegrounds of the First World War.

It's a description of Avdiivka, Ukraine.

Almost two years after Russia's invasion, the war has entered perhaps its most bloody phase yet. In the past months, neither Ukraine nor Russia have made significant territorial gains, and both sides have switched tactics. Along with the introduction of trench warfare, both Ukraine and Russia have turned to the use of missiles and drones. For Russia, this has meant attacking Ukrainian cities from the air in an attempt to damage key infrastructure and Ukrainians' morale.

In early January, the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, claimed that the Russian military had fired over 500 missiles and drones in the span of just five days. Although Ukraine has simultaneously responded with missile attacks on Russian cities as well as the implementation of guerrilla warfare, the Ukrainian military is in troubling shape. Its long-awaited counteroffensive failed, and Ukrainian battalions have reported that their artillery firing has been reduced by an estimated 90 percent compared to last summer.

"This is perhaps the bleakest time for Ukraine's military," Eric Schmidt, a national security correspondent for The New York Times, recently proclaimed—a declaration which spells warning signs for the Ukrainian war effort.

Yet one event taking place across the Atlantic, thousands of miles from Kyiv will profoundly impact the war—the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election.

Even though the Republican primaries have just gotten underway, it already appears fated that former President Donald Trump will once again clinch the nomination. In spite of the numerous legal charges that stand in the way of his reconquest of the White House, it is clear that he is still the face of the Republican Party. Following the conclusion of the Iowa Caucus, it became increasingly apparent that challenger Nikki Haley currently stands little chance in dethroning Trump, who walked away from the 2024 Iowa Caucus with 20 delegates – more than all his competitors combined. Thus, voters can already expect that the 2024 election will indeed be a repeat of 2020—a Biden-Trump rematch.

However, the current political state of the United States is far different than that of 2020. For starters, voting

turnout for the upcoming Presidential election is expected to be lower than the tremendous turnout that took place back in 2020, during which over 75 percent of eligible voters went to the polls. The reasoning behind this prediction is the dissatisfaction projected towards both of the candidates. Most Americans do not want a Biden-Trump rematch. And indeed it was increased voter turnout, especially among younger Americans, that played a crucial role in Biden's toppling of Trump in 2020. Further, the current U.S. president's approval ratings have recently sunk to an all-time low: at the moment, just 33 percent of Americans approve of Biden as opposed to 55 percent in 2021. The combination of a projected decrease in voter turnout and low approval ratings demonstrate just how tight the election is poised to be. Yet it won't just be Americans glued to their television screens come Election Day: Zelenskyy and Putin will also be watching closely.

If Trump were to return to the Oval Office next January, the Ukrainian war effort would be placed in an even more concerning situation, as on numerous occasions, in addition to failing to pledge public support to Ukraine since the Russian invasion back in 2021, the

In March 2019, special counsel Robert Mueller was appointed to investigate allegations of Russian influence in the 2016 election. Although his investigation ultimately found no evidence for collusion, Mueller's report concluded that "a Russian entity carried out a social media campaign that favored presidential candidate Donald J. Trump and disparaged presidential candidate Hillary Clinton" and "a Russian intelligence service conducted computer-intrusion operations [against the Clinton campaign]."

Regarding his relationship with Putin over the war in Ukraine, Trump has declined to call Putin a war criminal, going as far as to proclaim that he would end the conflict in "24 hours" without disclosing in which side's favor.

And do not forget that Trump has threatened to cut off Ukraine from aid in the past. Indeed, the former President's relationship with Ukraine was front-and-center when he was impeached by the House on charges of abuse, power, and obstruction in 2019. The scandal first began to unravel when an anonymous whistleblower reported that Trump had held a phone call with Zelenskyy, during which Trump threatened to withhold over \$400 million in congressionally-approved aid unless Zelenskyy agreed to investigate Biden and his son, Hunter.

From Trump's relations with Putin, his negative stance on—as well as previous interference in—the U.S. supplying Ukraine aid, the message is clear: the time to provide Ukrainian aid is running out, should Trump be victorious

come November. Due to this risk, it is imperative that the U.S. place Ukraine in a more adequate position to defend itself prior to the expiration of Biden's first term. Although the war in Ukraine has recently been sidelined by conflicts in the Middle East, it is still of colossal importance to Americans. A Russian victory would be catastrophic not just for Ukrainians, but for all democracies. At the core of this conflict, Ukraine struggles against dictatorship and totalitarianism, the very principles that Americans proudly stand against. For the U.S. to act consistently with its values, it must continue to stand with Ukraine in its fight against tyranny.

Bloodshed will not cease should Putin be victorious. The realities of civilian atrocities ranging from the massacre in Bucha to the wholesale destruction of Mariupol should give pause to anyone believing that Russia would act benignly following a military victory over Ukraine. It is acts of barbarity such as these that further illustrate the true brutality of the Russian army, and suggest that the U.S. election is not just important to American voters, but possesses the ability to shape the global landscape for decades to come.

## Letter to the Editor

A response to "E Pluribus, None? A Recent History of the Republican Party" published on October 27, 2023

To the Editor:

It seems that former President Barack Obama's terms in the Oval Office caused a radical shift within the Republican Party from general conservatism to right wing populism. Ellen Jordan '26 argued in *E Pluribus, None?* that this radical shift was a response to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), more commonly known as Obamacare. According to Jordan, Republicans viewed Obamacare as a sign that the Democratic Party was more willing than ever to increase government spending. She also claimed that this belief caused fiscally-conservative Republicans, who believed that government spending and intervention is harmful, to double down on their fiscal-conservatism. The modern Republican Party, however, follows a cult-of-personality more than any concrete principles; Jordan noted this "new identity" in her article, but it's important to acknowledge that the political analysis she used in her article is no longer applicable to a transformed Party.

The Republican Party of today is Donald Trump; Trump is the Republican Party.

It doesn't matter how absurd Trump is, his followers will forever follow him, something that has been demonstrated not a few times. Trump can make the most absurd conspiracy theories and the most blatantly obvious lies become the truth to some.

To understand this shift, it's important to recognize the Republican Party's push away from fiscal-conservatism and towards right-wing populism: Trump has morphed the Republican Party into a cult-of-personality.

Sure, certain Republicans still declare their commitment to a smaller government by decreasing social securities and lowering taxes, two ways to facilitate trickle-down economics. However, trickle-down economics simply doesn't work. Trump's tax cuts saw the bulk of the benefits going to the wealthy; as the NYT Editorial Board put it, "the idea that the tax cuts were going to line workers' pockets was always a mirage."

There are certainly Republicans who swore against Obamacare because of their resolute belief in fiscal-conservatism (for example, then-Speaker of the House Paul Ryan in 2016), but Trump and the ensuing tsunami of Trump-like politi-

cians are not part of this bloc; the most influential donors to the Republican Party espouse entirely different cultural values than a belief in limited government.

Trump's platform was never tax cuts; it was just limiting immigration and "draining the swamp" by ridding Washington of corrupt politicians. Right-wing populists brand themselves as not-your-typical-politician. Trump's own campaign website introduces him as someone who "could not sit by and watch career politicians continue bleeding this country dry." He professed to voters that, in contrast to politicians who listen only to the elites, he would value the average American's opinion.

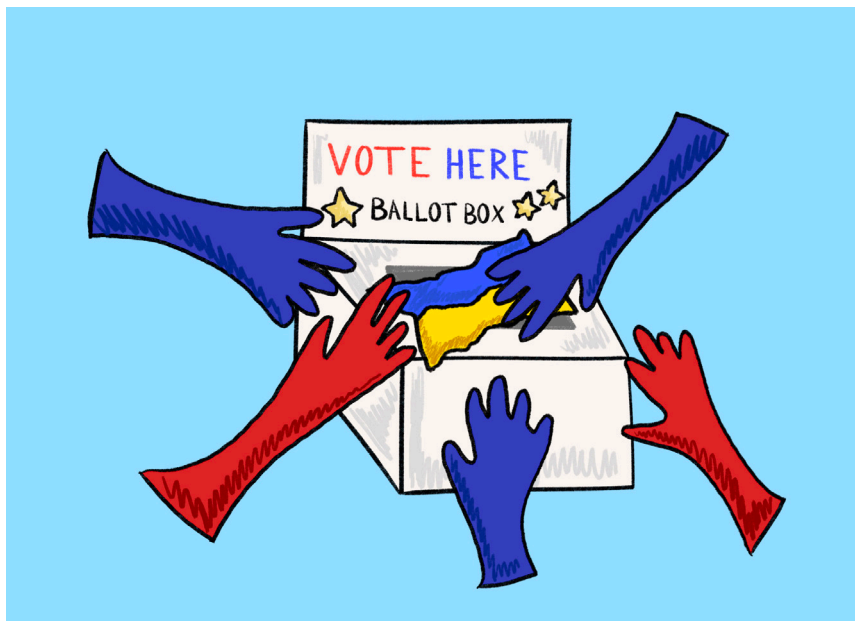
Thus, Trump and his followers rallied against Obamacare because it was "Obama"-care, because Obama represented the establishment and Trump's political rivals. "Obamacare" is itself a Republican-coined term; only a third of Americans understand that Obamacare is the ACA. In fact, a columnist argued in an article for The Miami Herald that this partisan labeling is "a trap set by...conservatives and the healthcare industry," and not a mere semantic difference. Perhaps Republican voters oppose not the ACA but only "Obamacare" and what it represents.

Obamacare certainly is a policy that many Trump supporters rely on. According to the Pew Research Center, more than 60 percent of voters support some form of nationalized healthcare, including over a third of Republican voters. Some polls, like one conducted by Reuters, report higher numbers, predicting that over 50 percent of Republican voters support Medicare for All (a program that, if legislated, is even more "radical" than Obamacare).

All this is to say the hatred for Obamacare, as American economist Paul Krugman pointed out in an article for the NYT, is "deep" and "unreasonable"—a product of today's Trumpian politics. Since Trump exerts near-complete control over his party, the Republican Party has indeed become very different from its fiscal-oriented past.

And so it is impossible to use the political analysis of yesteryear, which Jordan may have assumed applicable to today, when discussing the motivations of the modern Republican Party.

- ERIC CHEN '27



Phoebe Rayner '27 / THE LAWRENCE

former President has been critical of supplying aid to Ukraine.

"The good old USA 'suckers' are paying a VAST majority of the NATO bill, & outside money, going to Ukraine. VERY UNFAIR!" Trump wrote last October on his personal social media platform, Truth Social. Throughout his time in office, Trump expressed an "America First" philosophy. This philosophy seems to spur his criticism of Ukrainian aid, as he believes that America should focus on more domestic issues, such as the crisis at the southern border. It should also be remembered that during his time as President, Trump reportedly discussed pulling the U.S. out of NATO altogether. Because of this, it is probable that if elected, Trump will cut U.S. aid towards the war effort—aid that is currently keeping the Ukrainian military afloat. Yet, an additional indication of the former President's outlook on the war in Ukraine is in fact his own personal relationship with Putin.

Even before his victory in 2016, Trump often was in full praise of Putin, yet their relationship became increasingly controversial upon the initiation of the Mueller Investigation.



## Celebrating our Artistic Souls at the Student Art Exhibition

DOROTHY LEE '26  
NEWS ASSOCIATE

On Friday, January 26, the Hutchins Galleries hosted a reception for the Student Art Exhibition, which was part of the Big Red Gala event. The artwork on display was submitted primarily by Lawrenceville students enrolled in the School's visual arts courses. In addition to the Hutchins exhibition, the reception included a Film Festival, premiering two film class projects, "Big Red Mirror" and "Dreamscapes."

Viewed in the Gruss Center for Arts and Design (GCAD) Amphitheater, "Big Red Mirror" explored "how the dark side of human nature intersects with the streamers of modern life," according to Film Teacher Gil Domb P'17. The student producers of the film were inspired by the Netflix show *Black Mirror*, a British dystopian anthology series first released in 2016. "Dreamscapes" was broadcasted in a viewing room inside the Galleries. The film "celebrates the boundless nature of imagination," Domb explained, "featuring stories of students who experience vivid dreams and figments of imagination."

Alongside the artwork displayed on the walls, the reception showcased student talent through live performances. Mimie Pinpakornkul '25, who also had three of her paintings hung up at the gallery, played the Burmese harp during the reception, noting



Photo of Art Exhibition  
MyAnh Hisaeda '24 / THE LAWRENCE

that the event had "a nice atmosphere."

Pinpakornkul's paintings are a part of the portfolio she has been compiling for her Advanced Studio Art class. Her project centers on a "sustained investigation" of the relationship between fire and smoke within Buddhist and Thai traditions. Inspired by the painting technique *chiaroscuro*, which highlights the use of strong contrasts between light and dark, Pinpakornkul has created acrylic works with dark backgrounds and subjects illuminated by flame.

She described her third painting as "a very ambitious piece." It depicted the annual Thai festival *Loy Krathong*, where floating lanterns are released as offerings in bodies of water. "I chose to paint a trail of [lanterns] in a dark background," Pinpakornkul said, "so that you would see a trail of lights along the way, coming closer to you—and then to the right, somebody is putting that floating lantern into the water."

In her next piece, she hopes to depict a different aspect of the flame, explaining, "I've focused on the external parts of the flame, but then I was thinking, what if there was an internal flame?" Pinpakornkul hopes to connect this painting to the idea of "an internal life force" in Buddhist culture. "And I really wanted to represent that with a flame," she added.

Overall, she described her project as "stressful [yet] rewarding," as the process has allowed her to "keep on improving" as an artist. "It was really interesting," she reflected, "because I [have never] painted in acrylic this much."

Pinpakornkul felt "really special" that her artwork was being showcased in the Galleries. "It was really fun to see artists in the community, like some of my classmates in Advanced Studio, get their art recognized," she said. She noted that the Hutchins Galleries often appears "separated" from the rest of the campus, and is rarely visited by students outside of school-wide events. In the future, she hopes that Lawrenceville artists will "see their work appreciated by the community" on a more frequent basis.

## ROTTA: Mark Morris Dance Company

ETHAN ZHU '26  
NEWS ASSOCIATE

This past Saturday, January 27, the Reach Out To The Arts (ROTTA) program, led by Director of Theatre Matt Campbell and Art Teacher Chloe Kalna, brought a group of students to the McCarter Theater in Princeton to watch a performance by the Mark Morris Dance Group (MMDG). Dubbed the "preeminent modern dance organization of our time" by renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma, MMDG is an international modern dance company based in Brooklyn, New York. The students on the ROTTA trip had the opportunity to watch the dance group perform alongside the company's talented musicians.

Mihajlo Gajic '26, one of the students who attended the trip, noted that the performance was "unlike anything else [he] had ever seen before." "I expected something closer to what our dance series looked like," he said, "The dance group completely defied that, but it was just amazing." Gajic signed up for the trip after enjoying the Lawrenceville School Dance Company's (LSDC) Winter Dance Series, recalling that he "wanted to see how these professionals and how it might be a little different from what [LSDC and other dance troupes] did" at Lawrenceville.

The performance was divided into two halves, the first of which was accompanied by a voiceover in addition to the music. Gajic noted that the voiceover had completely surprised him at first, but he found it "super funny" and



Morris Dancers Performing

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was soon "laughing [his] face off." The second half, however, left a deeper impression on him. A pianist from MMDG played live for the dancers, which Gajic was very impressed by. "I play the piano myself, and I can imagine how hard it is on both sides having to keep in time," he said, "When you are both dependent on each other, if one side messes up, so does the other; their ability to flawlessly avoid that was really inspiring."

Jane Shindnes '26, another trip attendee, shared a different experience. "I grew up doing classical ballet, so I have always identified [with] dance as a form of communication in place of words," she said, "The Mark Morris dance group, however, made dance into a form [of expression] with words." Shindnes felt that the first half of the performance, when the dancers were accompanied by a voiceover, was especially unique, noting that it was "quite different to see such a

stereotypically serious artform be turned into a comedic act." "If you go to any dance show, you [would] expect very precise choreography, a very serious topic, or a solid message, but they were just having fun with it," she added.

Though the first half was deeply intriguing to Shindnes, she felt that her favorite part of the show was in the second half. "Dancers were all walking in different directions, but there would be one person outside of the walking group who would be doing their own flowy movement," she said, "I loved the contrast, and the dance itself was very captivating."

Both Gajic and Shindnes loved the performance, especially considering its many surprises. "This definitely broadened the boundaries of what I think of when I imagine dance and dance groups," Gajic said. Shindnes agreed. "I [had] never seen a dance performance outside of ballet, so this totally expanded my horizons in terms of performing arts," she added.

## Dance, Beethoven, and the Axolotl: The Big Red Gala



Big Red Gala Fashion Show

Grace Chu '24 / THE LAWRENCE

ELLEN JORDAN '26  
NEWS ASSOCIATE

In spite of the snowy weather that has recently engulfed Lawrenceville's campus, members of the community were able to enjoy a night filled with dance, music, and style at the Big Red Gala in the Gruss Center for Art and Design (GCAD).

A Career in the Arts Panel took place before the Gala, in which Lawrenceville students had the opportunity to hear from Lawrenceville alumni who work in the arts industry. Following the conclusion of the panel, visitors could either stay in GCAD to watch a

Student Film Festival or migrate to the Hutchins Gallery, where a Student Art Exhibition was being held.

The School's Dresden Quartet—Anabel Guerreiro '24, Angela Yang '25, Arisa Okamura '25, and Arya Vishwakarma '25—played a mixture of Beethoven and Borodin pieces for the Exhibition visitors. It was the Quartet's first performance with Guerreiro, a new member. "We had a great time since a lot of people stopped by, which is really nice because that doesn't happen often with classical [music] performances," Okamura said.

Though the Quartet typically has a

couple of months to prepare for performances, that wasn't the case for their most recent showcase. In fact, members of the ensemble only started rehearsing for the Gala two weeks prior to their performance. However, it was not just the limited preparation period that proved an obstacle for the group. "It was a new piece for all of us, so it was important that we practiced a lot on our own individually and as much as possible together," Okamura explained.

Despite the setbacks, Okamura was delighted to have had the opportunity to play at the Gallery, and was satisfied with the Quartet's performance. "[The Gala] was just a really nice opportunity to play music for people that wouldn't have stopped by otherwise," she reflected.

The final event of the night was the highly-anticipated annual House Fashion Show in GCAD, hosted by Student Council (StuCo), during which volunteers from Circle and Crescent houses modeled different outfits.

Prior to the fashion show, V Formers Ally Calderon, Aoife Kilfeather,

Ava Jahn, Maansi Sharan, and Maddy Widener performed a dance for the audience.

The fashion show itself featured a medley of different outfits and styles, which ranged from House color-inspired attire to an inflatable axolotl costume sported by Stanley House model Nitza Kahlon '25.

For Na'imah Ford '25, who represented Stephens House during the show, her costume designer inspired her to model. "Truthfully, it was the fact that Lucia Chen '26 was designing the clothes that pushed me to model, since she's proven consistently that she has unsurpassed taste in fashion," Ford said.

Ford's outfit featured clothing from both her and Chen's closets, and the accessories she sported—silver chains and a belt—paid homage to Chen's fashion preferences. Furthermore, Stephens House aimed to incorporate this month's School-wide theme of sustainability into Ford's outfit. "We had sustainability in mind when putting together our outfit, so we all used clothing that already was in our closets as opposed to buying new material,"

she elaborated.

Though Ford loved her outfit, she acknowledged that she felt anxious to be participating in the Show, saying, "It was absolutely terrifying walking out initially, mainly because I didn't know what to do with my face."

However, Ford still enjoyed her modeling experience thanks to the "high energy" of all of the other models backstage, who helped foster a welcoming environment during the show. "I think it was just really rewarding to see all of the creativity from both the models and designers come together, and to be a part of that," she concluded.

Following the fashion show, representatives from StuCo announced that the winning House would be announced on February 1 at School Meeting.

Overall, from the student performances to the House Fashion Show, the Gala was a hit with attendees.

"I thought the Gala was really well organized, and I truly enjoyed getting to see the wide variety of costumes that students were able to put together during the Fashion Show," Catarina Correa '26 concluded.



# Art Past Lawrenceville: Alumni Career Panel

GLORIA YU '26

On Friday, January 26, Lawrenceville hosted its first Alumni in Arts Career Panel in collaboration with the Student Council (StuCo). It was part of a series of panels aimed at connecting students to the School's vast alumni network. Featuring speakers who took on diverse careers related to the arts, the event panelists included Hillary Bunn Burchfield '06—Director of Career Services at Sotheby's Institute of Arts, Will Cary '01—Chief Operating Officer at the Barnes Foundation, Blake Espy '99—violinist in the Philadelphia Orchestra, and Dave Schragger '95—project manager at the architectural firm Studio Hillier. The panel was hosted by StuCo Arts Representative Sofia Carlisi '24.

Many of the panelists noted Lawrenceville's impact on their careers. For example, Burchfield took Drawing, Painting, and AP Studio courses, which helped her explore visual arts on a deeper scale. Similarly, Espy recalled how Lawrenceville set him up well for college, adding playfully that "the Harkness table is no joke." The exchange of ideas and perspectives at a Harkness table models the professional world, where communication plays an integral role regardless of the job.

Although the speakers all excelled in their respective paths, they agreed that a career in the arts does not come without hardships and can even be occasionally brutal. In fact, Scragger made the big switch from graphic design to architecture after discovering that he was more passionate about designing buildings and spaces. Meanwhile, Espy, the first musician in his family, mentioned how becoming comfortable with criticism and rejection is necessary to excel in the performing arts field.

In addition, Espy also emphasized the importance of seeking feedback in the musical world. As students, we have interim and final comments from teachers to constantly guide us in our studies. Yet, in the professional world, no one checks on our progress. Thus, it is crucial to actively seek advice from seniors in the field.

Espy noted that although there will sometimes be contradictory comments, one can ultimately filter out and isolate feedback that is the most suitable.

Two students who attended the panel, Liza Strong '24 and Rebecca Streeter '26, shared their thoughts and experiences on the event.

Strong recounted, "It was inspiring to hear the four panelists' challenges and successes as they carved their own paths in their respective professions." Additionally, Strong had many takeaways from the panel, stating, "I think that the most important thing that I learned was to be open to new experiences and opportunities—you never know how one experience can influence or inspire you. If you are truly passionate about something, it is crucial to believe in yourself, and persevere and work hard even in the face of opposition." Even though Strong personally does not see herself pursuing a career in the arts, she highlights, "Many careers are inherently disciplinary, so I believe that the panelists' advice will definitely be applicable to my future career."

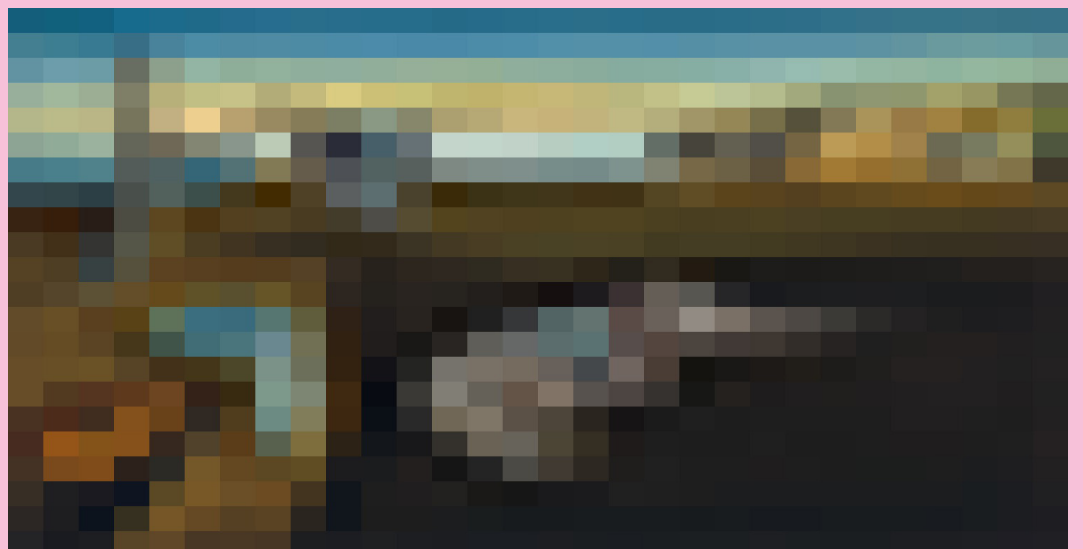
Streeter also gained new insights from the panel, noting "[the speakers] all had parallel careers to the arts, which I think was interesting because I have never really considered that as an option that is still within the art world." Streeter, a talented artist, is also attending the same pre-college art program in Chicago that Burchfield went to when she was at Lawrenceville.

Regarding the Career Panels, both Strong and Streeter commented on their appreciation for Lawrenceville's alumni network. Streeter points out how the alumni "have helped kids who sent them emails and asked them for help getting a job interview or advice on where to go from college." In fact, Cary himself has sent cold emails during his career where he did not have a pre-existing connection with the audience. Similarly, Lawrenceville graduates have sent him cold emails asking for help. Strong, sharing Streeter's gratitude for the Career Panels, concludes, "Lawrenceville alumni are always so wonderful to talk to, and I think these Career Panels are a great StuCo initiative."

## Connections by *The Lawrence*

Wilder	Man	Marilyn	Alcott
Way 2	Mao	Campbell	Pokèmon
Lakes	Archer	Kalna	Soup
Robertson	Van	One	Coke Bottle

## Pixelated Paintings *Can You Guess the Famous Artwork?*



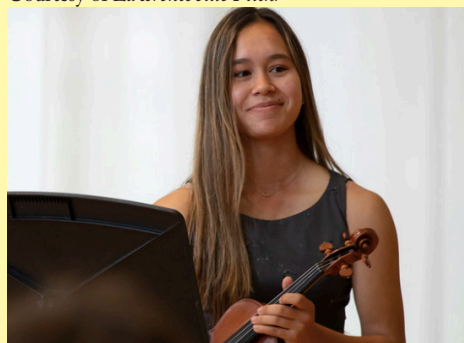
Courtesy of Erik Ingenito P'24



Courtesy of Erik Ingenito P'24

## Coming Up in the Arts

Courtesy of Lawrenceville Flickr



Midday Music



Winterfest



Spring Play Auditions



IIInd Form Shakespeare



# A Tourist's Guide to Princeton

MELINA KYRIAKOPOULOS '27  
ARTS ASSOCIATE

Princeton University students bustle down the streets, shoppers lug their bags onto their shoulders to make it to their next destination, restaurants diverse in flavor line the pathways, and creatives gather to decorate the town with festive motifs or to set up a pop-up art exhibit. This is Princeton, home to Palmer Square and the famed Ivy League university of the same name. While the main attention revolves around a gorgeous university, the town itself is not one to scoff at. Only a 10-minute drive from Lawrenceville, and filled with activities, Princeton is a common area for Lawrentians to spend their days. But what is it like for a first-time visitor? And why are students so inclined to take the drive over?

Isabelle Lee '27, a II-Former from California, visited Princeton for the first time during Fall Term. "I was actually pretty surprised," noted Lee. "I didn't know there were so many different restaurants and fun places you can go to!" She went on to elaborate, mentioning the pros of her first visits being that it was, "lively, comforting, and exciting." She visited Princeton with a small group of Lawrenceville friends, and mentioned that, "there were a lot of people, but it wasn't too... crazy...it was really comforting. It was also exciting because I was with my friends and we did fun stuff."



Princeton Main Street

Courtesy of Ken Lund

Lee's time in Princeton covered all bases from food to fun. "I remember having crepes," she exclaimed, along with trying an array of other mouthwatering dishes. Jammin' Crepes, a local cafe in Princeton, was one location she described. Serving crepes, soups, and spreads, all crafted from local ingredients, the eatery is known for their old-fashioned ambiance and tastes which always hit the spot. Another essential was a tasty drink! "We always get boba...[the shop] is called Kung Fu Tea." Lee described the drink stop as her favorite place, where her favorite drink is mango green tea. Kung Fu Tea, founded in Queens, New York, now with more than 350 storefronts, produces an array of beverages and bites which continue to impress students who visit them in Princeton. Aside

from the food, Lee remarked on the quality of shopping, naming shops like Jazams, a toy store, and a wide list of clothing boutiques.

The food and purchases were not the highlight of her trip, though. Instead the conversations with friends are what Lee remembers most fondly, observing that, "even as a boarder, [she] doesn't see her friends too often" when discussing her relationships with her peers. Between juggling school work and after-school activities, a visit to Princeton slows down the craziness in a way that comforts students while keeping them occupied.

So, when asked if she is planning on going to Princeton again, Lee sums up how many students feel; "Yes I am. Just to, once again, connect with my friends and catch up...overall, it is a perfect place."



Boys' Varsity Basketball Game

Courtesy of The Lawrenceville School

## Inside BRSN

HELEN CHANG '26

The Big Red Sports Network (BRSN) is a Lawrenceville co-curricular that allows students to report on sports teams and highlight athletic events. BRSN allows athletes to showcase their sport, share their recent accomplishments, and introduce the wider-Lawrenceville community to their sport through multimedia reporting. Antonia Comanicu '25 shares the inside scoop on what goes into making every article.

The students at BRSN are split into two groups, writers and videographers who are led by Lisa Gillard Hanson H '17 and Nicole Stock, respectively. Gillard is the Director of Public Relations and Stock is the Director of Athletics. Each writer is assigned to one or two campus sports teams. First, BRSN members reach out to coaches during the beginning of the term to gather suggestions for "some players that [the interviewer] should look out for to interview for a profile." Comanicu, the designated writer for the Varsity Fencing Team and the Varsity Wrestling Team this term, continues the process by interviewing those athletes, asking questions related to their interest in the sport. After the interview, an article is written about the player and compiled in the Big Red Sports Network

Profile. After edits from Gillard, the profiles are published on the Lawrenceville Athletics Website.

Sports are a crucial aspect of the Lawrenceville experience, and many athletes take pride in the sport they play. Comanicu believes "it is important to highlight their hard work and their achievements." Athletes of less represented sports in Lawrenceville media especially appreciate having articles written about them, as they feel seen and also spreads exposure about their sport.

With each article due roughly every two weeks, writers of BRSN are always busy writing and speaking to a variety of different athletes. Students meet twice a week, "once as a group, and once individually with Ms. Gillard," Comanicu recalled. BRSN is different from other co-curriculars because "you have to manage your own time." While this entails more flexibility for each member of BRSN, it also signifies more responsibility to make sure each writer's work is done on time. With the brief meetings, Comanicu emphasizes that "you're on your own" to plan, write and interview, each articles.

Consider joining the Big Red Sports Network Team next term! While not like other sports commitments, you'll learn a great deal about the players and sports at Lawrenceville

# Sustainability Internships

MIA MASSERIO '25

With paid internships at the Big Red Farm or through Restoration Ecology, opportunities to support Lawrenceville sustainability are very accessible to students. The Big Red Farm strives to connect students and faculty to other members of our community—plants, animals and land. Students are able to gain a deeper understanding of sustainable agriculture through summer work.

Lawrenceville offers seven positions in the Big Red Farm internship - two for students with limited time who will work four hours per week, and five for students who would like to work 12-15 hours per week. Only Lawrenceville students can fill these positions! In order to qualify for the internship, you should live relatively close to campus and have interest in farming or gardening, along with personal skills such as organization and communication. Responsibilities if selected include showing up to your respective hours and maintaining flexibility in order



2022 Big Red Farm Cohort Internship

Courtesy of The Lawrenceville School

to work with a variety of peers. The interns will plant seeds, pull weeds, care for animals, and maintain a vegetable plot, while reflecting on their experience and readings through journal entries and photos.

Shloka Chodhari '26 worked as a Big Red Farm intern last summer. Chodhari enjoyed her experience on the farm because she was able to "get one-on-

one experience by being at the farm with Ian MacDonald and Benjamin Bois" which gave her the opportunity to "accumulate so much knowledge about how the Big Red Farm is run." Many students at Lawrenceville have not visited the farm since II Form Orientation—or ever—so this would be a perfect chance to visit. Chodhari was responsible for helping out with "sustainable

farming from morning to afternoon" by completing tasks like "weeding, filling up the hog feed, chicken feed, or spending time with the trained dogs!" She suggests future interns prepare for a hot day of work and the ability to be physically active early in the morning.

Lawrenceville also offers a shorter five-day Restoration Ecology internship for students partnership with ecologists from the Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space. Land stewardship responsibilities for the interns will be invasive species removal, rare species identification, deer herd management, and other ecosystem efforts.

Tanmay Sammeta '24 participated in this program last year, where he "worked closely with stewards to survey invasive species on campus." One of his

favorite parts of the experience was getting to "explore the lesser-known areas of Lawrenceville's vast 700-acre campus." He was able to see new locations of Lawrenceville's campus and gain "a deeper appreciation for our campus' natural environment." The students saw how their efforts could contribute to a more sustainable Lawrenceville while deepening their knowledge of ecological management.

Whether or not you have experience at the Big Red Farm, if sustainability and farming piques your interest, check out the opportunities for summer paid internships and speak to Dr. Stephen Laubach if you have any questions. Past interns assure you that working on the Big Red Farm or with Restoration Ecology is an enjoyable and valuable experience!



## The Entrepreneurs of Lawrenceville

The Lawrenceville School boasts an impressive roster of alumni who have excelled in their own fields, especially when considering those who founded their own businesses. On campus, many students wonder: Why should they wait until graduation to follow their dreams? In the heart of Lawrenceville's highly academic campus, a dynamic cohort of self-starters have taken this message to heart, redefining the campus landscape with their entrepreneurial spirit. From the inception of sports podcasts to the establishment of photography studios and beyond, students at Lawrenceville are weaving a rich culture of ambition and drive. In this feature, we spotlight these exceptional students, each with a unique story of passion, perseverance, and the indomitable spirit of turning ideas into reality.

SAHANA LOWY '26

### Gavin Yoon '25

G:Y

Whether his School Meeting performance caused you to follow his Spotify or maybe you have been a longtime fan, Gavin Yoon '25 has definitely caught the attention of those on campus. As a creator and producer, Yoon curates a sonic journey that captivates audiences, contributing to the vibrant artistic landscape at Lawrenceville. He began his journey in eighth grade when a friend inspired him to sell the musical beats he created. He downloaded a program, FL Studio, started playing around with it, and as it turned out, he really enjoyed it. He went down the rabbit hole of researching different artists and producers, leading him to where he is today. His process involves listening to a lot of melodic rap music and drawing inspiration from artists like Juice WRLD, Lil Tjay, and The Kid LAROI. He either creates beats himself or uses ones from other producers before beginning the lyric-writing process, after which, he edits his music and uploads it to different platforms.

Like the other self-starters, Lawrenceville has contributed to his growth. While he does not record music at school, he does take voice lessons.

Aaron Cafaro, his voice teacher, happens to be heavily involved in music production, which allowed Yoon to learn many different skills. In fact, Cafaro helped him prepare for last week's Smeeting performance. The exhilaration of completing a song and the joy derived from people enjoying his music are the highlights of Yoon's musical endeavors. However, the journey hasn't been without challenges. Yoon navigated the hurdles of overcoming creative roadblocks and delving into the intricate realm of vocal mixing, showcasing his resilience and commitment to growth.

In the future, continuing on this path and making music would be his dream job. He plans to release a song once a month all year, so stay tuned for new music! When asked about his advice for others, Yoon opened up about his own journey. He says not to be "scared to start something new" because "the main thing is to stop caring about what other people think and do your thing and be proud of what you do." This advice applies to all walks of life, so do not be afraid to go after what you want, and maybe you will be featured in an entrepreneurship article next!

### Aarav Parekh '25

Two Brothers and Their Sports

Aarav Parekh '25 is well-known on campus for co-hosting a sports podcast that has grown from a passion project to a recognized platform. Starting four years ago with his brother, Arsh, the two hosts produce weekly episodes for their podcast, "Two Brothers and Their Sports". Their podcast not only dissects sports headlines but also features engaging interviews with notable guests. In almost four years they have released over 200 episodes and interviewed over 55 professional athletes, physicians, personalities, and more. Their podcast, listened to in over 55 countries, boasts over 60,000 downloads across numerous streaming platforms, ranking in the top five percent of podcasts based on popularity. This year, their podcast is a top-ten finalist for the Best American Football Podcast 2024.

The genesis of the podcast coincided with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, a time of uncertainty for the sports world. Aarav, then a 13-year-old, describes his goal "to provide a source of comfort for other kids his age," aiming to create an outlet for fellow students during a period when traditional sports were at a standstill. Shedding light on the podcast's behind-the-scenes, he explained how they spend a significant amount of time keeping up with sports news every day ahead of recording on Friday. They then record an unscripted conversation on Zoom for an hour and a half before editing for roughly 2.5 hours.

They also edit interviews separately as well as sending individual segments to a radio show. The process also involves creating a description for each episode before uploading said episode to various streaming services.

Reflecting on challenges of running of podcast, Aarav mentions the difficulty of finding undisturbed time for recording amidst a hectic academic schedule. However, he acknowledges the supportive environment at Lawrenceville, where word of the podcast spread quickly, and peers rallied behind his podcasting venture. Looking ahead, Aarav envisions a bright future for the podcast, aspiring to see it featured on major networks like ESPN or Fox Sports. Currently airing on Radio Nira, an Indian radio station in North Carolina, the podcast's ultimate goal is to reach a national and international audience on widely recognized platforms. Aarav dreams of interviewing athletes from around the world, enhancing the podcast's global appeal.

For aspiring student entrepreneurs, Aarav offers this advice: "Don't be scared to get started, make sure you have a plan, and let your creativity take control." His journey exemplifies the fusion of passion, consistency, and community support, showcasing the potential of student-led initiatives at Lawrenceville. In his words you must "have the passion to start and the drive to continue."



Aileen Ryu '25 / THE LAWRENCE

### Yushi Kamisaku '26

yk\_flics

You might have caught Yushi Kamisaku '26 shooting pictures at a game or maybe you've seen him on the field; either way Kamisaku is known for his prowess with a camera. He's a photographer whose lens captures not only the vibrant tapestry of athletic life within the school grounds but also extends beyond, reaching the broader canvas of external organizations. Even amidst Kamisaku's suc-

cess, few of us know the origin story of how his passion for photography flourished. Kamisaku's foray into photography began with a hand-me-down camera from his grandmother, an avid photographer. He brought his camera on a baseball spring training trip to Florida his II form fall, not thinking much of it. The photos he took impressed his teammates, prompting him to create "yk\_flics," an Instagram account

through which he shares his work. He started going to lacrosse games for photos during the spring but mostly specialized in baseball and softball. As a member of the Junior Varsity Football team, Kamisaku was invited by Coach Napoleon Sykes to take pictures at the Varsity games. That season, Kamisaku shadowed the team and his photography account snowballed from there.

Nowadays, either specific teams or the Athletics Department will reach out to him for pictures from Lawrenceville games. His process involves researching photos for the particular sport so

that he can determine his strategy and visualize where he will position himself. From there he "goes with the flow," listening to music and interacting with the players. The Lawrenceville community played a pivotal role in Kamisaku's evolution. He credits Sykes, saying that he "wouldn't be where he is today" without him. Through his work from the school, Kamisaku gained exposure, even working on projects outside of School where people have reached out asking him to come out to other games or make edits for them. Recently, Five Star Graphics, a company founded by

Hale Brown '23, reached out to Sykes who referred them to Kamisaku, leading him to become a paid creator for the company.

Looking to the future, Kamisaku envisions building a network that transcends his Lawrenceville career. His aspirations include continuing his photography journey in college, ideally collaborating closely with collegiate teams and even venturing into professional sports photography. Lawrenceville has become a catalyst for these ambitions, with connections made through Sykes and the Athletics Department opening doors to external opportunities.

## The Godfather of MMA The Story of Dana White

ELI LACEY '25

In just 30 years, Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) has transitioned from a sport that was banned in most states, earning itself the name of “human cockfighting,” to one of the fastest growing sports in the world. Although many factors played into the growth and expansion of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA), the drastic boom in popularity can be mostly attributed to one man: Dana White. Dana White is one of the most successful entrepreneurs in history, and when he first purchased the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) in 2001, he was determined to make Mixed Martial Arts one of the most popular sports in the world. Like all great ideas, White’s did not come without serious adversity. Here is the story of Dana White, the man commonly referred to as “The Godfather of MMA” because of his immeasurable contributions to the sport of MMA.

Dana White learned at a young age that life comes with its fair share of challenges. White’s father, Dana White Sr., was an abusive alcoholic who was rarely involved in Dana’s life. In an interview with Graham Bensinger, Dana described his father as someone who “was never around, and when he did show up, you didn’t want him around.” Because of his father’s absence in his life, Dana relied on his mother, June White, to provide for him and his sister. Although June White did everything she could to provide for Dana, she frequently told him that he would never amount to anything and become just like his father. Dana would never forget his mother’s words, later saying that they played a big role in motivating him to become successful. Additionally, Dana never applied himself academically, frequently getting suspended, failing

his classes, and never attending college. Because of this, he worked lower paying jobs like a bouncer, waiter, and doorman in order to get by. One night, when working as a doorman at the Four Seasons, Dana made a decision that would change his life forever: he decided that he would quit his job and get into the fighting business.

White had always been a boxing



Karina Stakh '27/THE LAWRENCE

fan, so making the decision to follow what he loved was an easy one. Not able to find success as an amateur boxer, White moved to Boston and settled for a gig as a boxing instructor. At this point in his life, White was content; he was earning a somewhat decent income doing the thing he loved to do. White’s world would soon come crashing down, however, when he had a run-in with the infamous gangster James ‘Whitey’ Bulger. Allegedly, Bulger came into White’s boxing class demanding \$2,500. Although White was not poor at the time, he certainly could not pay the money demanded. After ignoring the initial request, Dana received a second call a month later telling him that he had 24 hours to pay, causing Dana

to promptly pack his bags and move back to Vegas, where he would meet up with his old high school friend, fellow fight fan and successful businessman Lorenzo Fertitta.

Once back in Vegas, White and Fertitta started training Jiu-Jitsu and Mixed Martial Arts. As they engulfed themselves in the Mixed Martial Arts world, they were greatly moved by the interesting lives of professional fighters and quickly established close relationships with many up-and-coming UFC icons.

Dana

order to clean up the sport, White made many modifications to make the sport more marketable, creating rules and regulations such as weight classes, uniform restrictions, and banning extremely dangerous strikes, all of which made the sport more appealing to the general public. Next, White searched far and wide for a state athletic commission that would sanction MMA. After being denied from state to state, White got the Nevada Athletic Commission to sanction MMA through a mutual friend. From the looks of it, the UFC was on the come-up; However, the organization faced one last obstacle: viewership.

Up until this point, only a very niche group watched the UFC and White planned on expanding the UFC’s reach through a reality TV show titled The Ultimate Fighter. The show would be a tournament with a select group of

aspiring professional fighters, having them live together while competing for a UFC contract. White knew the show would be a hit, but he struggled to find a television network that would air it. Despite rejection after rejection, White persevered, eventually landing a deal with Spike TV. Spike agreed to air the show for one season and renegotiate the terms of the contract depending on the show’s popularity. To the UFC’s benefit, the show was an immediate success, and continues to this day. The Ultimate Fighter was the big break the UFC was waiting for. Since the show’s premiere in 2005, the UFC has become one of the most rapidly growing sports organizations in the world. Coming from a single-parent household with an absent and alcoholic dad, Dana White was able to change his seemingly hopeless future through hard work and perseverance.

### Crossword Courtesy of Aki Li '25 Copy Editor

#### Horizontal

- \_\_\_ & Pepper
- Relative of Clue 4
- I \_\_\_ you to write for the Lawrence
- \_\_\_ Bud and Thorn

#### Vertical

- Clink, Clink, in a saloon
- \_\_\_ Dynamic
- Result of Dodgy WiFi
- Organic Carbon Catcher

1.	5.	6.	7.
2.			
3.			
4.			

## Groundhog Day Picks

	<i>Claire Jiang In Charge Person</i>	<i>Garrett Heffern Silently judges your opinions</i>	<i>Nichole Jin News Editor (I ran out of funny titles)</i>	<i>Bryan Boanoh Put a crossword on the sports page this week</i>	<i>Aki Li Made the crossword for the sports page this week</i>	<i>Emily Pan 21st Century Van Gogh (Thankfully has both ears)</i>
						
<i>what would your groundhog name be (must be the first letter of the place you're from aka monterey molly or usa ursula)?</i>	<i>Princeton Paulie</i>	<i>Lawrence Township Larry</i>	<i>Singapore Sally?</i>	<i>Robbinsville Rbryan</i>	<i>Japan Janana</i>	<i>San Diego Snoop Dawg</i>
<i>are you a winter or a spring person?</i>	<i>Spring! I need sun</i>	<i>More winter than most, less spring then most</i>	<i>Winter. It is weird for one to never take off their stark eggshell white black contrast North Face coat in spring</i>	<i>I like springs (boing boing boing elasticity and stuff yknow)</i>	<i>I love spring!</i>	<i>Christian girl autumn, actually</i>
<i>do you think Phil is going to see his shadow this year?</i>	<i>For the wellbeing of this campus yes</i>	<i>I try not to think about it</i>	<i>Mayhaps? Real shadow is the friends we made along the way? Depends on the UV?</i>	<i>Wouldn't put it past him</i>	<i>Yes, because spring will come early because of global warming.</i>	<i>Who's phil?</i>
<i>what happens when you see your shadow?</i>	<i>I jump</i>	<i>It runs back in its den</i>	<i>Yelp and run but it chases. This is a cry for help</i>	<i>The darkness stares back</i>	<i>You get replaced by a doppelgänger</i>	<i>We both do a little dance, put pointer fingers together, and fuse into a shadow monster</i>