

Jen explores facets of identity

by Carolyn McCusker '17

This year's Baird English Symposium author Gish Jen visited KO to speak to students and faculty about her books and her experiences as a writer on Thursday, Jan. 14 and Friday, Jan. 15.

The itinerary for Ms. Jen's two-day visit included a dinner with the Senior Symposium class on Thursday, and, on Friday, an assembly with the Upper and Middle Schools, classes and a luncheon with students, and an evening dinner with teachers.

"She was great," said Upper School English Department Chair Meg Kasprak. "She understood exactly what she was supposed to do in terms of answering questions and talking to the kids, and she was really generous with her time."

At the Upper School assembly, Ms. Jen began with a reading from her collection of short stories, titled "Who's Irish?" The reading was narrated through the perspective of a Chinese grandmother, which is what Ms. Jen called a "slightly different angle" from the New York Jewish



Baird English Symposium author Gish Jen with the senior Symposium class. Photo by Symposium teacher Lynne Levine.

voice that Upper School students became familiar with in her novel, "Mona in the Promised Land."

"It's very customary for authors to give public readings of their work," Mrs. Kasprak said. "I really liked the story that she read."

After the reading, Ms. Jen fielded questions from KO students and faculty about topics ranging from the creative origins of her characters, to whether her work was autobiographical, to why she changed her name from Lillian to Gish.

In response to a question about how she pushes back against interviewers who stereo-

type her and put her in a box, Ms. Jen replied, "I just push back. I write books that resist that. Early in my career, I was always asked if I would write a book about China. But why would I write about that? I grew up in Scarsdale, N.Y., and I knew more Yiddish than I did Chinese."

During the assembly, Ms. Jen also discussed how she writes about the nebulous nature of identity in order to help others. "I'm aware of what a privilege it is to be a writer, and I've always tried to use that privilege in a way that would help other people," she said. "I could see that this construc-

tion that was around me was not just around me, but around a lot of other people as well. And I knew I could make people's 'boxes' bigger and more flexible."

Symposium students said Ms. Jen was very open and engaged well with the class at the Thursday evening dinner. "She was warm and friendly from the second she arrived," said Senior Symposium student Kate Betts. "She went around asking us what we were interested in and giving advice or sharing anecdotes. We all became comfortable with her very quickly, which made our discussions of her work so much better."

The Friday morning Symposium master class went similarly well, according to Senior Symposium student Evan Kelmar. "We asked about a lot of her overlapping literary themes and if they were intentional or not," Evan said. "She said she believes that all books are supposed to be a personal experience for the reader, so it's irrelevant whether or not the author intended an overall theme; all that matters is that the reader is able to get something out of the book."

Mrs. Kasprak said that preparation for the Symposium visit was, in keeping with tradition, hectic. "It always gets really crazy leading up to the Symposium visit," she said. "There's always lots of things to juggle. It's a little bit like being mother of the bride. But, the bride came. Everything was fine. They got married. No great crises, no disappearing authors. It was good."

Symposium students said that preparation for them didn't feel rushed because they had been preparing throughout the semester. "We'd really been planning from day one," Evan said.

Gilyard, McKee step into new roles

by Grace Amell '17

Next year, Form Four Dean and math teacher William Gilyard will be the new Assistant Head of School for Student Life, while current Assistant Head of School for Student Life Carolyn McKee will take on a new position – Director of Academic Planning.

Ms. McKee's new position combines some of her current duties as well as many of the duties of Director of Studies Dennis Sullivan, who will be retiring at the end of this school year.

Although the exact duties of the director of academic planning are still being worked out, Ms. McKee said she will take some tasks she is working on now

– such as working with students who are sick or concussed for long periods of time – and add them to many aspects of Mr. Sullivan's current job, such as scheduling and grades and comments.

Ms. McKee said that she was ready for a change in position. "This is my 14th year as Assistant Head of School for Student Life," she said. "I would like to do something different, and there is an opportunity for a new energy in the Assistant Head of School for Student Life position."

She added that this new job was a chance to shape a position that was needed at KO. "As Mr. Sullivan retires, it allows the opportunity for me to do something that is exciting and

different," she said, "but it also allows us to look at jobs differently and see what exactly is needed."

Ms. McKee said that one aspect of her old position that she is looking forward to carrying to her new one is working with students. "I liked working with kids as they make their way through their academic journey here," she said.

As Ms. McKee planned to take over her new position, an internal interview process occurred before the holiday vacation to look for a new Assistant Head of School for Student Life.

The process was rigorous – the applicants had to write a letter of intent about why they thought they would be a good fit for the job, submit a thorough applica-

tion, and meet various search committees who interviewed the candidates and offered their feedback to the hiring committee.

Associate Director of the Middle School Kathryn Dunn led the hiring committee, which was charged with making a

recommendation to Head of School Dennis Bisgaard. There were other committees that Mr. Gilyard met with as well. "[Form Six Dean David] Hild chaired a committee of faculty at large,"

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Ms. McKee and Mr. Gilyard. Photo by Anglie DeLucia '18.

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Victory for KO at final Hockey Night

by Eliza Charette '18

On Friday, Jan. 8, both the boys and girls varsity hockey teams brought home victories against Rye Country Day School.

For the last time, almost every student filled the stands and was outfitted head to toe in KO gear while cheering their classmates on. The girls team pulled out a 5-3 win, while the boys had a 5-0 win.

Every year, the Ryan Gordon Hockey Night has been a huge hit. The celebration starts with a spirit dress down day on Friday, followed by the two back-to-back hockey games and a free skate afterward.

Ryan Gordon, for whom the event was named, was a 2005 graduate of Kingswood Oxford. He was a member of the boys hockey team, but in college he contracted a rare illness and passed away. At that time the KO Hockey Night was named for him and dedicated to his memory.

As this year is the last year with on-campus hockey, the event gave the students an opportunity to show their support for KO hockey one final time.

Sophomore Skylar Barron was one of many who attended.

"For the last hockey night it was definitely one to remember," she said. "All of the fans were cheering and everyone was involved, and the teams then fed off this energy and played to their best potential." This energy radiated then through the stands and throughout the ice.

The event benefitted Team Tobatí, which is a volunteer non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of disadvantaged youth in Tobatí, Paraguay.

This organization is supported by Ryan Gordon Hockey Night, and this year, it raised \$6,000 in T-shirt sales, tickets, skate rentals, and concessions.

Team Tobatí Director Ronald García said that he was thrilled by the success of this year's Hockey Night funds. "Hockey Night is the greatest night of the KO year because we combine the excitement of sports with the camaraderie of high school youth to help out an underprivileged community in Paraguay," he said.

"It was great to see everyone come out to support boys and girls teams for one last hockey night," said junior forward Celia Jarmoc. "The energy from the stands definitely contributed to the wins."



Parents of Ryan Gordon '05 with Head of School Dennis Bisgaard at the Ryan Gordon Hockey Night on Jan. 8, 2016. Photo by Lexi Banasiewicz '16.

The girls started the game with a lead, but in the second period, Rye started to make a comeback.

However, with the energy of the crowd and the perseverance of the team, KO was able to match the crowd's intensity and bring back the win.

The boys team played after the girls. Ready to bring home a second win, the boys held a strong lead throughout

their game. Senior forwards Kyle Keenan and Jared DeFlippo started the game with two quick goals in the second period. From there, the boys showed an aggressive effort throughout the game.

One player on the opposing team took a hard hit from Senior Co-captain AJ Przystawski, which ended in severe injuries. "I saw the opportunity to hit him and capitalized, knowing it would get our team

"Both the team and the crowd felt like it was a night we won't forget."

— Jared DeFlippo

and crowd's energy up," AJ said. "The intention was not to hurt him, but it's just a part of the game."

Both teams said they felt like this was an energetic night and a great way to show that the students support KO hockey and Ryan Gordon Hockey Night.

As KO hockey comes to a close, several students said they will never forget their last hockey night and what it represents — a celebration of the spirit of KO and the life of Ryan Gordon.

Jared said that the event was truly memorable, especially for the players on the ice. "This being my senior year and the last Hockey Night at KO, both the team and the crowd felt like it was a night we won't forget," he said.

Rosoff, Bisgaard to be honored at gala

by Noah Stanton '17

KO will be hosting its fifth biennial Black & Crimson Gala on Saturday, April 16 from 6 to 11 p.m. at the Hartford Marriott Downtown. Sponsored by Hoffman Auto Group, the event will celebrate two important occasions: Dennis Bisgaard's 10th year as head of school, and the life of the late Pat Rosoff, former academic dean of humanities and creative arts department chair, who died in 2014.

The night will consist of several fundraising activities, including a silent auction, a raffle, a "raise the paddle" auction, and a live auction. The proceeds from the event will go to the Parent Association to be used towards renovations for the new field house, workshops and lectures for students and parents, and renovations of the Black Box Theater, which will be renamed in honor of Mrs. Rosoff.

Co-chairs Heather Clifford and Mary Carangelo are coordinating the gala, along with members of the Parent Association and Mrs. Rosoff's husband, Neil Rosoff.

Mrs. Clifford said that she has high expectations for gala attendance. "The event is geared toward all KO families, parents of recent grads, alums," she said. "We hope to have a huge turnout."

Jim Altman, 26-time Emmy Award-winning reporter and current host of Fox CT and KO parent, will be emceeing the event.

To kick off the evening, guests will begin with a cocktail hour and silent auction, which will showcase items donated by

students, parents, and teachers.

Raffle tickets will be available for purchase during this time. Before the event, students and parents from each form will craft a different themed basket to be raffled off.

Then dinner will be served, and the "raise the paddle" activity will commence. Additionally, Mr. Rosoff has been working to create framed prints of his late wife's artwork, which will be displayed as centerpieces available for purchase to further honor her memory.

The gala will close with its most prominent event: the live auction. To facilitate the auction, guests will use a mobile bidding app called BidPal, which will be available for download. This is the first year that the app will be used for the auction. Mrs. Clifford said she hopes it will "make the bidding process easier and more exciting."

During the weeks leading up to the gala, students can contribute to the fundraising through "Pennies for Pat," a loose change drive to be held from Monday, April 4 to Friday, April 15. Form deans will speak about Mrs. Rosoff and the wonderful impact that she had on the KO community, and change will be collected for the renovation fund in her honor.

Overall, both Co-chairs said that they are very optimistic about the success of the gala, and that they hope to raise a significant amount of money for these important causes. Mrs. Clifford emphasized how eager she is for the night. "We are really excited about this event!" she said.

YMUN a snowy success

by Mark Sheehan '16

Kingswood Oxford's Model United Nations (MUN) Team traveled to Yale University in New Haven for a MUN conference from Thursday, Jan. 21 to Sunday, Jan. 24.

They will also host the only Middle School MUN tournament in the state on Saturday, March 12.

MUN is a program started by the United Nations in which participating students assume the roles of diplomats from assigned countries and participate in mock versions of real UN committees.

To compete in a MUN conference, students research their country's views on their assigned committee prior to the event, and, during conferences, they use the rules of parliamentary debate to negotiate and draft resolutions.

Students participated in the annual MUN conference at Yale, which included over 1,500 student delegates from over 40 countries.

Most delegates from KO represented either Saudi Arabia or France, while other KO students

represented a variety of other countries such as Bulgaria and Angola, or participated in specialty committees, such as the Soviet Praesidium.

Head of Model UN at KO history teacher Stacey Savin said the trip was definitely a success. "It went very well, especially because we had so many new kids," she said.

Ms. Savin also said the students who were new to MUN did a great job. The Yale Conference faced bad weather, as a blizzard on Saturday led to cancellations for committee sessions from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and from 4 to 7 p.m., although Ms. Savin said these cancellations provided delegates with a valuable opportunity for rest.

Sophomore Gabrielle Ruban, who represented Bulgaria in the European Union, said she loved her experience with YMUN. "[It's] great because it makes you more aware of the world around you."

A major part of planning for MUN conferences involves the Model UN chairs, experienced seniors who help other delegates prepare.

Senior Chair Ahmad

Chughtai said he likes what being a chair involves. "Being a Model UN chair involves teaching less experienced delegates about the conference procedure," he said, as well as "helping to organize the trip."

On Saturday, March 12, KO will host the fourth annual Kingswood Oxford Model UN (KOMUN) conference, the only middle school MUN conference in Connecticut. This year, the conference will be attended by 198 students from 13 schools throughout the state.

Students will discuss one of three different topics — the Syrian Civil War and global terrorism, global warming and pollution, and the refugee crisis.

Students will be in nine different rooms chaired by KO Upper School students involved with MUN.

"Joining Model UN was one of my best decisions in high school," said Senior Student Coordinator for KOMUN Alexa Casale. "It's so much fun and such an interesting activity to take part in. I'd recommend it to anyone."



KO Model United Nations participants before departing for the Yale Model UN conference. Photo by Rebecca Cole.

The editorials below represent the collective opinion of the members of the KO News Editorial Board: Benjamin Waldman, Kate Betts, Mackenzie McDonald, Noah Stanton, Alec Rossi, Kelly Maloney, Lauren Barnes, Sasha Bash and Gwyneth McDonald.



by Benjamin Waldman '16

A Wyvern's Tale Learning is a shared experience

Seriously, let's talk about sex

No one would contest that a KO education is a first-rate one; between the extensive array of classes and diverse extracurricular opportunities, KO provides students with what their transcript needs. But is our school falling short when it comes to what teenagers need?

It has come to the attention of the staff of the KO News that even the limited health education classes many of us experienced as underclassmen have been superseded by the VQV Freshman Seminar program, with a curriculum that includes topics such as study skills, current events, digital citizenship, cultural competency – and nothing related to sexual health, relationships, drug use, or anything covered in the typical high school health curriculum.

Now, perhaps the assumption is that because the KO Middle School's "Life Skills" class includes those topics in its curriculum, all KO students have had similar exposure to this type of education. Unfortunately, it seems that this conjecture has caused many students to miss out on crucial information.

We believe that KO can't assume that its Upper School students' previous schools or parents have provided them with accurate, non-stigmatizing information about their health.

Certainly, some of this is bound to

be absorbed merely by nature of spending four years surrounded by adolescent peers, through the power of the Internet, etc., but to have students potentially depend on these unreliable sources entirely is a high risk to run.

Students deserve to become educated in this area not through trial-and-error or word of mouth, but through comprehensive, informative classes.

Now, this is not to say that KO does not provide its students with ample resources for support when it comes to some areas of navigating the adult world: groups like the GSA and Orange is the New Gray are notable for tackling the more abstract concepts related to these issues, like gender and sexuality identities and dynamics between genders.

However, involvement in these conversations is entirely optional for students, and so we would like to encourage KO to provide at very least the most basic, scientific facts and figures through a mandatory class, so that students will be equipped to make responsible, healthy choices whenever the need might arise.

If this across-the-board approach were to be taken to educating KO students on these incredibly important issues, the KO community could move toward normalizing these conversations and fostering a more healthy culture regarding sex and health.

I recently attended a Model U.N. conference in New Haven with 40 of my classmates. During the four-day event, which included many hours of committee and a blizzard, I had the opportunity to engage with 1,600 other high school students from around the country and the world.

I've participated in four conferences in high school, and I've noticed an interesting trend in the ways students interact with each other. Broadly speaking, there are both collaborative and competitive mindsets among different delegates. However, it seems to me that Model U.N. conferences sometimes become breeding grounds of backstabbing and cutthroat competition, causing students who are there primarily to learn and have fun to be disheartened or frustrated.

This trend, I think, strikes at the heart of the purpose of education and provides a meaningful opportunity to take a hard look at the atmosphere KO fosters.

Back to Model U.N. for a moment. For those unfamiliar, each KO student is assigned to a committee that works to resolve a certain global problem. Vigorous debate among many students with diverse backgrounds and experiences is a perfect formula for making strides toward addressing these important issues.

But offering awards for individual delegates based on performance leads to predictable results: some delegates try to capture the attention of the Yale students who run the committees by talking even when they have nothing to say, by writing solutions ahead of time, by manipulating and shortchanging others they work with. This desire to win an award by all means necessary runs contrary to the goal of Model U.N. (and, indeed, of the U.N. itself) – problem-solving through collaboration and compromise. We should *all* be learning from each other, and we *all* have something to add to the discussion. That means not drowning out someone else's voice just because speaking more will bring you some immediate benefit.

Yale seems to recognize this; the elite Security Council committee did not have individual awards this year. Their thought was that "this committee is for experienced delegates looking to challenge themselves intellectually." Aren't we all looking to challenge ourselves intellectually? If so, does doling out individual awards continue to hold water? I'm not sure it does.

I wonder how much KO recognizes the importance of collaboration over competition. We should strive to create

an environment where students can learn from each other as well as from teachers, where students feel comfortable enough to work with their peers, where students don't feel like the person sitting next to them in class is a "threat" to attaining their goals.

KO has taken a large step in that direction with the Harkness method in English classes, in which students discuss the work among themselves, gaining a deeper understand of the material through collaboration with their classmates. My experience with Harknesses has been that there is usually a heavily weighted group grade and a lightly weighted individual grade. I believe this strikes a nice balance; it encourages everyone to be involved due to a personal "stake" in the outcome while telling students that they all should work together. It shows us not only *how* to work with others, but also that it is *beneficial* to do so.

I would like to see the Harkness method incorporated into other subject areas as well. This may mean de-emphasizing purely individual grades, or at least bolstering the prevalence of group work.

When I arrived at KO in sixth grade, I was unaccustomed to working with others. In my math class, however, Mrs. Repp emphasized collaboration, and I found that I was able to solve problems with others' help that I would not have been able to alone. Math and learning, I discovered, are not zero-sum games.

In the Upper School, by contrast, group work is arguably not considered as important. Some teachers seem hesitant to allow students to collaborate on problem sets, labs, and the like. And even when teachers allow it, I feel more that it's tolerated rather than promoted.

Here's a thought. Maybe if we are encouraged to solve problems cooperatively, we'll become scientists who share data rather than hoard it to find a cure for cancer. We'll become politicians who know how to compromise. We'll become people who work together to make a difference.

I understand that competition can be very important as well; it makes us work harder, it pushes us, and it helps us improve. My argument is that competition *combined* with collaboration will lead to even greater results.

When Gish Jen visited campus, I had the opportunity to interview her (see page 7. A line she said in passing resonated with me: "Somehow, we have to learn to work with each other." The sooner we embrace the fact that learning is a shared experience, the more rewarding our learning will be.

Keep your friends close

There is nothing more discouraging than to go to drop your bag off in the bottom of Roberts and to have to doubt that decision, to have a nagging voice in the back of your head asking, "Should I really leave this out in the open? What if someone steals it?"

Yet, with laptops, Chromebooks, chargers, and even winter coats disappearing from various places across campus, that voice has a point.

First and foremost, we would like to recommend that all members of our community heed the advice that's been given to the student body at large: to stop leaving belongings in unmonitored areas, particularly valuables, and to set precautions on electronics devices specifically.

In the interest of more long-term changes, we need to confront the ideological issues at hand. Because KO is a school community veritably built on trust – doors aren't locked during the day, and

technically, students could simply waltz off campus at any time if they chose to – it's particularly disturbing that this recent round of thefts is forcing faculty to distrust students and students to distrust one another.

In particular, the faculty-student dynamics that have arisen from this situation create an uncomfortable situation for all parties involved, and so we believe the key to overcoming these issues lies in creating a culture of student-to-student accountability.

We understand that no one wants to jump to conclusions or to faculty involvement because of the potentially monumental consequences, so our recommendation is that students begin a dialogue among themselves aimed at preventing anyone from making any further mistakes of this nature.

We all want to be a part of a community in which students feel safe on campus – and in order to restore that, we need to start trusting each other.

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Senior Symposium offers unique experience for KO community

by Lynne Levine

The Senior Symposium class, unique to our school, offers a rare opportunity to both students and teachers. Having taught the class twice, 10 years ago with Tim O'Brien and this year's class reading Gish Jen, I have been struck by the genius of Warren Baird as he envisioned the concept; his original design of the Symposium virtually ensures the success of the program.

Over time, other features have been added to add enrich the experience: art prints commemorating the writer's visit, the tradition of seniors teaching each English class, a book club to discuss some of the works, and even a fundraising basketball game. All of these have enlarged the Symposium, causing it to become one of the intellectual highlights of the year.

Being asked to teach the Senior Symposium class is a distinct honor. Each time I have marveled at the freedom I have been given to select the writer, work with the most talented English students, and create any type of assignment. In 2005, the work of Tim O'Brien appealed to me as timely and relevant. The invasion of Iraq had begun in 2003 and had not been going well. There

were numerous and striking parallels between that conflict and the United States' tragic experience in Viet Nam 30 years before. During his speech to the Upper School, Mr. O'Brien said he was shocked that the U.S. had become involved in such a difficult quagmire again. That year, the entire Upper School read O'Brien's memoir, "If I Die in a Combat Zone" and also his book of related stories, "The Things They Carried."

Several students that year, both in the Symposium class and others who were not, decided to write their senior theses about Mr. O'Brien's work, which I thought was an important result of the Symposium. Ms. Appel continues to teach "The Things They Carried," and I am pleased that some of my current seniors are using it as a source for their senior theses.

This time I was looking for a writer whose work the students could enjoy and relate to, and who would give them a different cultural perspective. Having read "Typical American" and "Mona in the Promised Land," I decided to ask Ms. Jen. She immediately agreed, and I dove into the enjoyable task of reading everything she had written while also searching for literary criticism of her work. While doing so, I became increas-

ingly glad that I had chosen her because she writes in a variety of styles and genres. I believed that teenagers could relate the themes of her work to their lives, and I saw that over time she had grown in skill and maturity as a writer.

The students in this year's class were as engaged and eager as my class before. Having never taught Ms. Jen's work before, I was clearly learning with them in the best type of collaboration. Students had opportunities to lead a discussion on a chapter or participate in a small group discussion to share insights. I hope they learned as much as I did from these discussions and from their papers!

Many of the seniors were excited about writing their own stories, and each read one story he or she had written to the class. In short, it was an exhilarating mix of ideas every day, stretching all of us in the best possible way. However, possibly the biggest payoff came with the arrival of Ms. Jen herself. From the beginning, she and I hit it off, and I knew she would be wonderful with my students. And she was! She approached them with warmth and generosity, eager to talk to all of them.

The first night at dinner she shared stories about her career, insisting that when writing the first novel, "Typical American," she had

no idea what she was doing and was amazed when it was accepted for publication. We were all amused by her contention that for her, as she put it, "short stories are a love affair, novels are a marriage." If a story fails, she added, not much time has been wasted. Jen also described how she passed herself off as Korean to attend fundamentalist Christian churches to do research for her novel "World and Town," since Koreans tend to be more religious and her presence would not be questioned.

Finally, when asked how she works with an editor, she revealed that her editor often tells her to put lines or sections back into her novels that she has removed, unlike most editors she has heard of who ruthlessly cut passages. It was a rare chance to hear a working writer talk about the details of her craft, made that much more rewarding by the fact that we were familiar with all of her work.

The rest of her visit was just as interesting for us, as we continued the questions in class the next day and Mark Sheehan read his hilarious story to her, which she thoroughly enjoyed.

Throughout the day Ms. Jen was impressed by the intelligence and engagement of all the students she met both in and out of the Symposium Class. I was

impressed by her demeanor with students in every venue, and that she answered a question with characteristic warmth even if she had already heard it four times that day. In a recent email, she told me that she truly enjoyed meeting students and teachers here, calling our Symposium program "so spot on." I agree with her. I don't believe a similar opportunity to study one writer in such depth this way exists anywhere else.

Near the end of "Mona in the Promised Land," Aunt Theresa tells Mona, "One very important thing in life is to know how to make yourself at home." The safety of home is an important theme in Ms. Jen's work, a place of sanctity, of belonging, of security and happiness.

I was gratified that Ms. Jen said she felt "completely at home" here at KO. There could be no higher compliment from Ms. Jen about her day with us. Almost all of our Symposium writers have felt the same way, thanks to this wonderful program begun 33 years ago. Each of them truly has felt welcomed and completely impressed by the students. I believe this is what Warren Baird intended.

English teacher Lynne Levine taught the Senior Symposium class this year.

Advice Column

Question: How do you handle friends of friends with whom you do not want to hang out?

by Chastity Rodriguez

You have choices to make, dear one! Is what your friends are doing while hanging out so much fun that FOMO (fear of missing out) is very real? In that case, you'd choose to focus on the fun and not on whatever it is about the FOFs (friends of friends) that you dislike.

No? The FOFs are just too much? No amount of fun is worth being around them? OK, then, in that case, you'd choose to pass on hanging out and instead focus on the peace of mind and all-around good vibes you feel when the FOFs aren't around!

Now, mind you, all of that is based on my assumption that you merely dislike these FOFs. How do we know if we hate someone versus merely disliking them? When we dislike someone, we tend to avoid them but we don't really spend much time actively thinking about them and don't really care either way if they succeed or fail.

Hatred is very different. It involves our time and effort as we perseverate on our perceived

enemies' flaws, insults, offenses and secretly cheer when she or he is passed over for something they really wanted or is rejected by their crush. Conversely, we chalk it up to luck or extra help when the object of our hatred experiences success.

Another solid indicator that we have moved from dislike to hatred is when we find ourselves warning everybody about him or her and feel like it's imperative that people know "the truth" about how evil this person truly is.

So. If we're talking about something stronger like hatred, I'd like you to consider this quote from the Swiss psychotherapist Carl Jung before I jump into some next level advice: "Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to a better understanding of ourselves." Huh? Yup: The people we hate have loads to teach us about ourselves. How, you wonder?

I invite you to consider the following: Sometimes we hate people who we wish we were more like. You know the kid who's super comfortable casually chatting up adults? If you hate that kid, chances are the thought of making small talk with adults

makes your stomach knot in fear. And other times, we hate people who remind us of a part of ourselves we don't really like all that much. So the kid who exhibits annoying attention seeking behaviors tend to be hated by other attention seekers!

Oftentimes, although we might not be aware of it, we hate people who remind us of a person who has hurt us in the past. Or sometimes our enemies remind us of a larger group of people who have made us feel small.

Hopefully you're beginning to see how our tormentors (those FOFs you hate, not just dislike) really are a wealth of information about our own inner workings and if talked about with a skilled listener (like your local friendly school counselor), we can transmute those feelings of hatred into dislike.

And if you disagree entirely or have more questions, I would love to continue this conversation!

Ms. Rodriguez is the Upper School counselor at KO.

Tell 'em why you mad:

"Because the Wifi at this school is dysfunctional."
– Nicole Demers

"Because I'm just trying to slide into the spring, but thesis got me in a crunch (sorry to my advisor, Mr. Hild)."
– Lauren Barnes

"Because my Webkinz account got deleted."
– Alexa Casale

"Because Sunday lacrosse is supposed to be a fun little throw around at the field house, but now it's outside."
– Isabel Kaufman

"Because they took the unicorn filter off Snapchat."
– Ryan Albanesi

Tell 'em why you glad:

"Because it's almost graduation."
– Rachel Maselli

"Because it's 57 degrees in January."
– Kayla Glemaud

"Because Spotify is back."
– Meredith Ferris

"Because it's three weeks until the musical."
– Lexi Banasiewicz

Emphasizing importance of education 'plants' seeds of social change in India

by Ishaan Patel '20

"Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, but teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." What exactly does this mean? To me, this means that education is a priceless commodity. Education gives people power – power to change his or her destiny, to protect one's family, to enlighten, to fight poverty and hunger, to fight hatred and bigotry, and to fight abuse.

Therefore, it is evident that education is extremely important. However, did you know that more than 700 million adults in the world are illiterate and do NOT have the skills or awareness to improve the living conditions for themselves or their family? And if the cycle of illiteracy and lack of education continues, the world will have a greater and greater number of illiterate uneducated people to support. It is our job to break the cycle.

According to a United Nations Report in 2014, 57 million children in the world do not have access to a school and

therefore, lack basic education. How are we to know if one of these uneducated children could become the next great composer, scientist, or the Nobel Peace Prize winner? Furthermore, it has also been shown that if a large percent of a country's population is illiterate or uneducated, it affects the social and economic development of that country. Education for every child would mean a brighter future for the world as a whole.

A few years back, my aunt, Hema Shah, and two of her friends traveled to India to volunteer at a rudimentary school in Jaipur, India. They taught basic English and math to underprivileged kids who were of primary-school age. These children had no other access to a school and would have otherwise remained uneducated.

The school was composed of two very small classrooms in a run-down building with a small chalkboard on the wall. The children sat on the floor or sometimes on a thin blanket on the ground. Often times the classes were held outside because the space was so

crowded and the heat was unbearable. These children had no clean water to drink or wash with and very little to eat. The school was run by Pranay Udawat and his wife, Amita Udawat. They relied on the generosity of those around the world that came there to volunteer their time and teach these children. When my Aunt came back from her trip, she asked us all to collect school supplies so we could ship them to the school.

The pencils, paper, notebooks, crayons, and teaching aids were imperative for these kids to learn. We also sent blankets and clothes because these children had nothing to wear when the weather was cold. When the children opened the boxes of supplies, they were so excited and grateful that I became inspired me to start a non-profit organization, Planting Pencils.

With the help of donors Pranay and Amita, the Sankalp Volunteer Society was able to open a larger school and offer their classes to many more underprivileged children. The new upgraded

classrooms are bigger with more space for learning and teaching. There are bright, colorful desks for the children, and they have backpacks to hold their books and supplies. They are also provided with clean drinking water and water to wash their hands and decrease the spread of germs. Pranay and Amita still offer the opportunity for people around the world to come and volunteer.

All the students who attend the school have advanced academically significantly. They now know how to read and speak in English and Hindi. They have learned addition, subtraction, multiplication, division and even algebra. They take science and social studies, and they are healthy and thriving! The pencil that was planted years ago has now grown and flourished! Without this opportunity to attend school and learn, many of these children would not be alive today. They would have lost the fight with poverty, hunger and disease. They now have the ability to get a job, protect themselves and their families and contribute to society.

This is just one example that shows that education can change the life of a child so dramatically. The focus of humanitarian aid needs to shift to educating all! Only then can we stop the cycle of poverty, hunger, malnutrition and disease. When my Aunt went to India, it made me realize just how privileged we all are. We have access to an amazing education with an abundance of resources. It is our responsibility as the privileged students of the world to use our education and resources to help those in need of basic education.

Mahatma Gandhi once said, "Be the change that you wish to see in the world." In an effort to do just that, I have founded an organization dedicated to raising awareness and collecting support to improve the lack of education in parts of the world. This organization is called "Planting Pencils" and with your help, I am hoping to use the seed of education to grow empowered children around the world. It is my belief that one pencil, one book, one child at a time, we can make a difference.

Privilege provokes crucial conversations

by David Marottolo '18

In light of the recent discussion we had as a school this past Martin Luther King Jr. Day regarding the meaning of the word "privilege," I've been thinking about the various privileges that I (and others) enjoy in the course of everyday life. There are so many advantages that we as individuals possess, and others do not (and of course, the same applies for those "others" as well). Thinking about privilege, however, always raises one particular question for me: Out of all the numerous opportunities we enjoy, how many of them do we take advantage of? And how many do we disregard entirely?

In my humble opinion, one of the most underappreciated privileges we enjoy as a community, as well as in American society, is the privilege to have conversations like those held on MLK Jr. Day, conversations that focus on controversial (but particularly important) topics. This is something that, while it frequently comes up as an aspect of discussions about freedom of speech, is rarely emphasized in our day to day lives. It's a privilege that can easily be taken for granted, or even seen as unnecessary. Yet we must not forget just how significant it is, nor how many opportunities we have to participate in these conversations.

Let's begin by considering this topic as it regards KO.

There are so many opportunities to have meaningful discussions on this campus, but these are often overlooked or ignored by many students because they seem time-consuming or unimportant. For example, we need look no further than any of the social justice groups on campus.

Groups like United Students, GSA, or Orange is the New Gray, provide valuable opportunities for students to delve into issues that normally wouldn't be discussed as part of our everyday routine. This is what makes these discussions so significant: once we no longer take the time to think about controversial or conflicting opinions, the transition to viewing

Take advantage of this special privilege that we possess here at KO, and put it to good use.

— David Marottolo

such topics as irrelevant is a surprisingly easy one to make.

On a more general tack, the importance of discussing such topics is also something

highly valued by our society. Now, this is not necessarily the case everywhere. Unfortunately, there are countries around the world where similar conversations are discouraged or banned outright. However, in this country, restrictions on speech (at least from a legal perspective) are almost nonexistent.

However, while there may be almost no political restrictions on discussing these topics, there are often social or cultural barriers. There are still certain topics that are not discussed frequently in this country, not because we aren't allowed to, but because of other limiting factors.

While I don't want to focus on obvious examples, there are many places in this country where discussing racial tension, or the intricacies of the gender spectrum, is discouraged (either through active oppression of these topics, or simply due to alarming levels of apathy).

Therefore, I encourage everyone to take some time today to think about the conversations you find yourself having, both on campus and off it.

If in doing so, you find that you also feel this type of discussion is important, then remember that the opportunities are more abundant than you might think. Take advantage of this special privilege that we possess here at KO, and put it to good use.

(S)no(w) days off

by Kathryn Adams '16

There's no better feeling for a high school student than receiving that pre-recorded phone call from Mr. Bisgaard the night before a huge snowstorm saying that school is cancelled tomorrow. There's nothing better than being able to drop the loads of homework you have, make hot chocolate, watch a good movie, and go to bed knowing you can sleep in as late as you want.

Now, as a student, I cannot remember a winter like this one. Living in New England and having it be early February without a huge nor'easter is practically unheard of. And I must say, it's pretty unfortunate for students such as me, who depend on snow days to get through the long winter. Especially in New England, winter can drag out as long as five months—late November until early March.

Being the longest season, not only is it hard on students, but also the winter athletes who have the longest athletic season. Similarly, it is the time of year when academics are finally in full swing. For seniors, teachers no longer seem like they want to help us out because we have all finished applying to college. Juniors are struggling with the stressful beginnings of the college process, while also juggling the most challenging workload they'll have in high school. And freshmen and sophomores are now hearing that things are picking up because it's second semester now.

So, on behalf of the entire student body, I think we all need a snow day. Think of the message

that sends the student body: The administration truly cares about their students and understands that we all need a break sometimes. We all know that the teachers and faculty at KO care about the students here, but how nice would it be to know that they focus not only on the importance of academics and athletics, but also students mental health.

It's shocking to realize how not only the student body at KO, but high schools all around the country, depend on these breaks because of the rigor and stress that high school brings to teenagers lives.

This is significant enough that there is an actual website that calculates the probability of having a snow day in one's area. This calculator asks for the student to provide the school's postal code, type of school and how many snow days there have been already this past year, and then the calculator has enough information to calculate a relatively accurate prediction for students to lean on, in hope of the desperately needed day off.

Think about it; it could be pretty easy to plan. Email all the teachers in advance and find a day that everybody knows of, so nobody would plan assessments and, there ya go, a personal snow day for all of KO.

A day for students to catch up on work, relax and spend time with family and friends, and what a wonderful way to start off the new year, after a month of school after break. I cannot even imagine how happy the KO community would be to learn they got a snow day that not even the Snow Day Calculator can calculate!

Re-branding Barbie to encourage inclusion among all young girls

by Sasha Bash '17

As a child, I had a box full of babies (however, I did not have the Barbie Dream House or pink convertible sold separately). The tall, thin and leggy dolls were complemented with thick, long blond hair, perfectly shaped eyes and lips, and long eyelashes. This is Barbie; one of the most recognizable brands around the world. I have never known a company to have such a sense of identity. But this is about to change.

The face of Barbie as we know it is about to become more inclusive. Instead of just the original blonde Barbie, now curvy, tall, and petite Barbies will be sold. Furthermore, different skin tones, eye colors, hair textures, and ethnicities will be available. So what? We are teenagers and adults; what does this mean to us? Barbie dolls are what young kids play with. This influences and shapes their understanding of body image and what beautiful means. Barbie represents our pop culture, showing what physical characteris-

tics our society accepts and rejects, and the values we should abide by.

Therefore, the fact that Barbie is expanding the original Barbie to include more than 10 different types of people is huge. If Mattel (the toy producer of Barbie) recognized they had to change what their company stood for because parents were opting to not buy the toy, it just goes to show the positive direction our society is moving towards.

What forced a company to change its identity and brand? Barbie sales have been down for the past couple of years. From 2012 to 2014, sales have plunged 20 percent. What used to be the biggest toy company in the world now continues to lose sales every year. Most of this downfall can be attributed to competition such as the Elsa doll and Legos, a more gender inclusive toy.

Although one might not see a difference between Barbie and Elsa, another thin and blonde haired doll, Elsa has a story. Elsa represents sisterhood, strength, and perseverance while Barbie essen-

tially remains without a story. This leaves Barbie vulnerable for others to write her story, which is part of the problem. All together, Barbie has lost about \$500 million dollars from Elsa, Lego's, and other Disney Princesses.

Therefore, it was time for this iconic doll to change with the times. Under a top-secret plan called Project Dawn, Mattel worked for two years on how to make Barbie a more inclusive doll. One important thing to note is that I understand this transformation was not simple. While it might seem like a great idea to make the dolls in all different shapes and sizes, many different factors had to be considered such as manufacturing and shelf space. Furthermore, other concerns such as the fact that not all clothes will fit all the Barbies and that there are now two different shoe sizes were all obstacles Mattel had to overcome.

There have definitely been times that Barbie stood for feminism and showed young girls that woman can do whatever they set their mind to. In 1963 Barbie was

a businesswoman; in 1965 she was an astronaut, and Barbie was a surgeon in 1973. These were groundbreaking careers when women did not have a place in society outside of the home. Barbie pushed through glass ceilings, representing girl empowerment.

Unfortunately, it is not these accomplishments that are recognized. Barbie is mostly tainted by the overall perception of Barbies and many set backs from the Barbie industry. For example, Barbie was influenced by Lilli, a doll that represented a prostitute in Europe. This doll was not for kids, but rather sold in cigarette stores for adults.

However, this doll caught the attention of Ruth Handler who later brought them back to the United States and adapted Barbie. Originally Barbie dolls were sold with a diet book saying not to eat and a voice saying math class is tough. This sent the message that girls are worth nothing unless they are beautiful, which is more important than any intellectual ability.

Therefore, change is good. I

Barbie represents our pop culture, showing what physical characteristics our society accepts and rejects, and the values we should abide by.

— Sasha Bash

hope these new dolls give Barbie a chance to launch their new brand, holding on to the image that young girls can grow up to be anything they want, while shedding the unrealistic and unattainable body. With this combination, Barbie can go back to holding an influential place in children's lives and making a positive impact on society.

Locked out: Roberts side doors leave students aware of mistrust

by Jack Barry '17

I will start this humble opinions article with a daringly specific example. First, allow me to set the scene: It's mid January and the winter season is in full swing. You're cold, you're hungry, but mostly, you're damp from the taxing swim practice you have just endured.

You're teeth chatter together, while your body struggles to fight off the oncoming hypothermia, which threatens to shut down even the most simple of your bodily functions. You have your swim bag slung over your shoulder in a feeble attempt to shelter your back from the daunting wind.

You finally allow a quivering hand to escape from the warmth of your pocket, and send it on a tragic journey toward the door handle. But what you've forgotten is that you are now attempting to open the side door of Roberts.

This door is all too infamous for always being locked for seemingly no reason. If you are like the unfortunate lad described in the scenario above, you'll be forced to make the treacherous walk to the center door if you want to find your way inside the building.

My question is this: What in the world is the purpose of keeping this door locked? Is there some secret that the student body has been kept away from? If, God forbid, this door was ever open at

any convenient point throughout the day, would the planet fly out of orbit and be obliterated by the sun?

The only answer I can fathom is that if the student body were able to simply enter and exit Roberts through any door that they please, then the school as a whole would fall into havoc. Now, this may seem like a petty problem that doesn't deserve any attention.

However, I have fallen victim to many times to the horrors of these locked doors. While I cannot confirm this, I have heard

that the side doors being open at all times would be an "issue of safety." This claim proves utterly ridiculous to me. How would two more doors being open in the building while all other doors are already open increase the chance of danger? I cannot believe that there is in fact an issue of safety.

What I can believe however, is that the locked side doors is another example to add to the metaphorical haystack made of instances of mistrust. The side doors being locked forces

the students in through the front door, into a more visible space of the new Roberts lobby.

The faculty funnels the students in through the central door, in a manner resembling hamsters in a maze. This issue not only aggravates me due to its mistrusting and nearly comedic, nonsensical nature, but due to its violation of basic human rights.

Students should be able to go into any door they would like when entering the school, which they attend. If not for

opening, are these doors simply placed on the front of the building for decorative purposes?

I can see the tour guides addressing their prospective students saying, "It's too bad we can't go in those doors, but, gee whiz, aren't they nice to look at! The pure ridiculous nature of this hypothetical interaction proves just how ludicrous the whole concept truly is. I beg of the faculty to open these side doors for student access, and free the student body from the bonds of injustice."



Cartoon by Evan Kelmar '16

MLK assembly assesses privilege

by Benjamin Small '19

Students, teachers and faculty observed Martin Luther King, Jr. Day between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 19 by watching a brief video about privilege in Roberts Theater and then breaking into groups of about 20 students each to discuss the issue of privilege.

Juniors Kayla Glemaud and Ariba Memon commenced the assembly by connecting the issue of privilege to the values of Dr. King. "Despite remarkable achievements, we continue to fight against the wage gap and the racial discrimination associated with the 'Black Lives Matter' movement," Ariba said. "However, we can adhere to Dr. King's value of understanding and recognize that we all have different perspectives and levels of knowledge."

Ariba and Kayla introduced a BuzzFeed video titled "What Is Privilege?" The video featured a group of BuzzFeed employees taking part in a privilege walk, in which participants take a step forward or backward based on their answer to a question pertaining to their privilege. One instruction, for instance, was to "take one step forward if you had more than 50

books in your house growing up."

After watching the video, students such as freshman Dan Carroll, said they thought that it aptly depicted privilege. "The video was a good way of visualizing privilege," Dan said. "It is something you can't put into words."

Director of Diversity, Inclusion, and Cultural Competency Joan Edwards took the stage and told students that they would be breaking up into small groups and discussing the various definitions of privilege. The discussion groups consisted of several advisee groups as well as a couple of student facilitators.

Overall, students said they enjoyed these discussions; however, some participants said the uncomfortable nature of the topic precluded open dialogue. "It came out to a rocky start, and the two leaders we had were having a hard time starting a discussion," said sophomore Adam Ovia. "Then we did a chalk talk where you went up to the board and wrote what privilege means to you. This was a silent activity." Adam said the chalk talk did spark a valuable discussion in his group.

Other students agreed that the discussions were lacking in student participation. "I liked the

idea of [the groups], but nobody really talked," said sophomore Holly Lombardi. "The reason kids didn't speak was [that] they're not comfortable, didn't know what to say, or couldn't say it."

The facilitators played a special role in guiding, moderating, and encouraging dialogue on the topic of privilege. Senior Briana Kirton said that she volunteered to be a facilitator because she loves being a leader, especially when discussing an issue as important as privilege.

After the discussion groups reassembled in Roberts Theater, Form Four Dean William Gilyard delivered a poem that he wrote about privilege. Afterward, Head of School Dennis Bisgaard stepped on stage and thanked Mr. Gilyard and the facilitators who had volunteered their time. "Think about our own privilege without guilt, but as empowerment on how to help and how to improve issues of inequalities," Mr. Bisgaard said.

Finally, Ms. Edwards walked to the podium to conclude the

assembly. "I am humbled today, as this whole community engaged in what is not an easy conversation," she said. "We're not here to all agree but we are here to be civil, understanding, and teaching."

In the wake of the assembly, students said they appreciated the discussions, because privilege is a difficult yet important subject. "I think it's something people aren't necessarily aware of, and it is kind of an uncomfortable subject," said freshman Jason Meizels. "It is difficult to talk about something that elevates you above others that you have no [control] over."

Students and teachers said they think privilege is an essential topic to discuss. "[Privilege] is an important issue, especially here, because that is a discussion that we don't often have," said junior Carolyn McCusker. "We share this common privilege of going to KO, attending a private school. It's important to be aware of the privileges that we have."

Students said that privilege is hugely important in the world as a whole. "I think it's definitely an important issue, one not only in school but outside as well," said senior facilitator Nye Deskus. "Privilege is important because it's an issue that sticks out to people."



Mr. Bisgaard concludes the MLK assembly. Photo by Lexi Banasiewicz '16.

Gish Jen wants to rethink the rules

The interview below was conducted by Benjamin Waldman '16.

Q: I wanted to first talk to you about your process of becoming a writer.

A: The short answer is that I become a writer through the process of elimination. I was pre-med, I was pre-law, I actually went to business school, I thought about being an architect, I thought about being a contractor, I thought about having a bookstore, I thought about having a knitting store. I just like to write, is what it really comes down to. It was very difficult because my parents were so opposed.

Q: You went to Stanford Business School and dropped out after a year, after which your mother didn't speak to you for a year. Clearly, you've had some struggles in attaining that goal of becoming a writer. How does the actuality of being a successful writer compare to the goal of becoming a writer?

A: Being a writer is not all fun and games. It's actually a difficult profession, and I can see why people don't want their children to go into it. It's very hard to make a living, and you're only as good as your next book, and you're preoccupied all the time, and it's hard on your back. What's good about it is that it's interesting, and in my case, I do feel like I've changed a lot of things as a result of my work. I've touched a lot of people I would never have known I could touch. It feels like an incredible privilege. And it stays – the work is there. There's something about that which feels very special.

Q: In reading all of your works, I've noticed that there are connections, places where you seem to have taken something you've written previously and inserted it into the story. Is that by design?

A: It's just part of the process. Because frequently, I'm sitting down, I just have an idea, I'm kind of on holiday, I write this story. And later on, I think, "Huh!" The beginning of "Duncan in China" became this piece for Fashion of the *Times*. Nothing is set in concrete. To me, it's no different than that I wore these shoes to visit your school when I also wore them to a wedding. I don't think, "Oh, I wore them." It's just a natural by-product of the process.

Q: Do you like that it creates a sense of synergy among the works?

A: I think it's interesting for the reader. I think it's fun. I don't know what it *means*, exactly. But I think it maybe helps bring their attention to the fact that these things are made up. They can be made up in a different way. It could have gone in any one of a thousand directions. I think if they had that feeling of freedom, that there's a lot of play involved, I'd be thrilled to see people think about that in in themselves, to try this and then try that.

Q: You've said that it's important to write about "dangerous topics" like religion, power, and sex. Why is that? And if I'm uncomfortable reading a story you've written, are you successful?

A: Yeah. It's supposed to

unsettle you. The reason is that we need society; we need culture. Somehow, we have to learn to work with each other and there have got to be rules. That said, once these rules get set, they have a life of their own, and instead of enabling us to live our fullest lives, they actually hamper us, even though we made them up! That's because times change.

The nature of culture is such that it's self-concealing. We internalize it so we're not even aware that we have all these assumptions. It's dangerous because they're taught to defend these ideas, and so there's always an aspect of, "Well, you can't say that." My question is always, "Why can't I say that?" Why can't a Chinese person turn Jewish? If a Chinese person can turn Buddhist no-problem, what's the difference?"

Q: Is your confidence in writing about those dangerous topics something you've developed over time or learned to do as time has gone on?

A: I think I was always a little bit of an iconoclast, so there was always a Mona side to me. Maybe because I grew up in this bi-cultural way, where my parents were born in China and came to America when they were relatively old, they were already quite set in their ideals. The fact that I also had this double vision from day one was a very natural thing for me to look at culture this way, the way that you could look at it as an outsider. It was very natural for me to see the places where you might be able to make a little fiction out of something.

Q: Most of your books are about characters younger than you, with the exception of "World and Town." What changed that made you look forward rather than backward?

A: I look both forward and backward in "World and Town." But I'm interested in young people partly because young people are in that phase of trying to figure out who they are, and they are in that phase where, as they wrestle with that, they can get themselves into quite a lot of trouble. I was also interested in writing about immigrants playing a new role in society. They're not just newcomers at the gates, and it's not all about how they dealt with America. "World and Town" is much more about what they give back to America. They challenge the idea of America as the place of rebirth.

Q: You mentioned that some of your critics have accused you of being too compassionate. Do you see a lack of compassion in our current culture?

A: Yes. [Laughs.] It's a lot easier to say so-and-so was full of fill-in-the-blank, or so-and-so is evil. People *are* evil, and people *are* full of fill-in-the-blank. But just like the grandmother in "Who's Irish?" you're actually seeing them at a moment. I think we start judging as soon as people say one thing we disagree with, and I just don't think it's productive. When you say compassion, maybe it doesn't have to be compassion as in, "Everything you do is OK." I don't mean compassion like that, but compassion in the

sense that you recognize someone else's humanity, regardless.

Q: What do you make of the current debate over immigration and how it has progressed or devolved in recent months?

A: I think that voices that say, "We should send all the Mexicans back" – I can't even discuss it. I think it's so ridiculous. Our society would come to a halt. Do I think that we should make an effort to have a system where people can come here in a legal way and be legal? Yeah, of course. Obviously, the system is very broken, but you can't just send everybody back. The kids who are all in school here? Who are we?

Q: What's next for you as an author?

A: I'm actually working on a non-fiction book. It is about differences in self between East and West, and how we see that all around us in the culture. It's called "The Girl at the Baggage Claim," and if I keep my book on schedule, it should be out next February or March. I've been excited about it!

Q: What do you want your legacy to be?

A: I want people's hearts to change. I was incredibly honored and thrilled when Junot Díaz said that he had compulsively read "Typical American," over and over and over again, as he was writing "Oscar Wao," and, to me, that means that everyone who is then influenced by "Oscar Wao" will have a little bit of my work in [them]. There's a way in which something of the way that you saw the world lives on.

This interview has been condensed.

Follansbee writes book of poetry

by Hannah Bash '18

Former KO English teacher of 15 years, Harper Follansbee Jr., has written an emotional and moving book of poems titled "In the Aftermath of Grief," which was published in 2015.

Published last year, the book comprises 37 poems split into six different sections. The first section is about the art of writing poetry, while the second delves into Mr. Follansbee's childhood.

In the third and fourth section, Mr. Follansbee explains his wife's pregnancy and the death of his daughter Charlotte, who died when she was 13-days-old of meningitis. These sections explore the "aftermath of grief" and how Mr. Follansbee and his wife dealt with their terrible loss.

The grief portrayed in these poems is derived from other deaths too, such as the Sandy Hook shooting and the passing of Patricia Rosoff, a KO art teacher and dean.

His inspiration for the book was the loss of his daughter. "What prompted me to start writing

was Charlotte's death because writing poems was the only thing that helped me survive," Mr. Follansbee said. How

Mr. Follansbee started his career as a writer in college. "After living in the woods for seven years with no published work, I decided to move and teach for 34 years instead," Mr. Follansbee said.

He said he decided to devote his book entirely to poetry because he believes that he writes poems better than prose. "There's just an edge to my poems that the prose doesn't have," he said.

After working on these poems for 15 years, Mr. Follansbee said he attempted to publish them a couple of years ago. He went through Rennie McQuilkin, the poet laureate for Connecticut and a publisher he has known since he was 2-years old.

Mr. Follansbee met Mr. McQuilkin at Phillips Academy where his dad taught. Once he sent his poems to McQuilkin, Mr. Follansbee said he organized them in such a way that he said evolved naturally.

Mr. Follansbee then decided to contact Katherine Nicholson, art teacher in the Upper School and Middle School Creative Arts Department Chair, to design the cover for the book. He contacted Mrs. Nicholson last year when the book was almost complete.

"I worked with her when I did the Voice, the literary magazine of the Middle School, and I have always admired her as a teacher, so I asked her," Mr. Follansbee said. In order to gain inspiration to create the cover, Mrs. Nicholson said she read his book three times.

The publisher suggested to Mrs. Nicholson that she look at an image of a Jerusalem artichoke since the Sandy Hook poem was about a father and son planting Jerusalem artichokes. A Jerusalem artichoke blooms sunflowers in October and is edible, but the roots grow underground like a potato.

Mrs. Nicholson said that a year before she was asked to create a cover for the book, she stumbled upon a gross weed in her garden that she wanted to cut, but her husband told her to

leave it because it was a flower.

That summer, Mr. Follansbee had sent her the Sandy Hook poem, and, when the gross weed bloomed into sunflowers in October, she realized it was a Jerusalem artichoke. "It seemed really serendipitous to me. It was all woven together, the plant, the cover, Mr. Follansbee asking me to do the cover. There were too many coincidences for me not to use a Jerusalem artichoke," Mrs. Nicholson said.

Originally, Mrs. Nicholson said she tried doing a reduction-cut linoleum print, but it wasn't turning out the way she wanted, so she followed her backup plan: watercolor and pen ink.

"My backup plan actually ended up being a better piece of art because the print was too ambiguous and not showing the lines and shapes I wanted," Mrs. Nicholson said. The cover took her three months to make, with lots of revisions and conversations with the publisher and Mr. Follansbee. She said using pen and ink allowed her to reconnect with her first artistic

love. "The Jerusalem artichoke became a symbol of regrowth that combined the events happening at KO, personal events, and the poem that embodied the title," she said.

Mr. Follansbee said that he loves the cover and that having a book is wonderful. Currently, he is halfway through another book and hopes to write more. "It is interesting to see how you change as you continue to write. I think writing a book makes you take the job more seriously and boosts confidence levels," Mr. Follansbee said.

Mr. Follansbee can be seen often around campus, tutoring KO kids for all kinds of subjects and SAT and ACT preparation. He said being on campus enables him to stay in touch with some of the KO students he worked with at the Middle School and who are now Upper Schoolers.

"I'm so glad I finally got something out in print after all the years I've spent writing," Mr. Follansbee said. He said if anyone wants to purchase his book, it can be found on the Amazon website or at the Antrim House in Simsbury.

(Unw)rapping Michael Christmas

by Nic Bisgaard '16

Boston rapper Michael Christmas initially entered the public eye with his 2014 release "Is This Art?"

The production of his first project isn't extremely layered, but it all plays into the image he is successfully showing the world. It sounds like early, mixtape era odd future type beats, but a touch less dark.

However, this project is lighthearted, and, to many fans of the genre, refreshing. No track on this album takes itself too seriously, Michael just rhymes and jokes about his life, which really isn't anything out of the ordinary.

For example the intro to his song "Broke and Young" is simply "Yo so my dad said Need for Speed in Spanish is 'Rápido, más más más.'" However, his technical ability does not take a backseat to the charisma he brings.

Michael thankfully doesn't change up the formula that has been working wonders for him since the beginning. He still jokes, makes clever references and punchlines and overall just details the life that he's living in a very honest way.

Unlike many popular rappers, when Christmas's experiences brings ups and downs, he incorporates them into his music. These ups and downs however, are nothing earth-shattering, just everyday annoyances and lucky moments that make him so relatable and fun to listen to. He has experienced a change in lifestyle, but not by much, still allowing him to speak to every listener he reaches.

The 18-track album meets and exceeds all expectations. The

production is what it could have been on "Is This Art?" with a bigger budget and a better assortment of producers. The vibe is the same, just enhanced.

The raps are still from a regular man's perspective, for instance "Got a Spanish girl from the Domingo, and I'll accost her/ When she leave the house with no make up dawg it's awesome/ She told me not to kiss her, cause her wisdom tooth throbbin'."

Michael's actual rapping ability is better on this project, much to the excitement of his fellowship, but the little moments he excerpts from his life to include in his songs are the same ones he featured on his first body of work.

Although it's difficult to choose just one with the huge assortment of different sounds and feelings on this album, one stand-out is the second track on the album, "Everything Burrito."

The two-part track starts out with a smooth assortment of soul samples layered over each other with a quiet, bouncy baseline holding it all together. All the while, Christmas softly, almost melodically, delivers his bars, with a relaxed flow parallel to the vibe of the instrumentation. The track goes silent, then cuts into a soft, sequence of piano stabs that obviously are the warm-up for a huge instrumental. The soft baseline has become thick, and impossible to ignore, so the soul sample has transformed into something that sounds like a score for an old animated Disney movie.

The bounce of this track is undeniable, and difficult not to nod

Continued on page 10.

Groups perform at Choral Expo

by Gwyneth McDonald '16

On Friday Jan. 29, Outlook, the Upper School Concert Choir, Voce, the Middle School Choir, Octopipers, F2B, and the Upper Prep Choraliens all performed in Roberts Theater in the winter Choral Expo.

Creative arts teacher-David Baker, Outlook director, said he was excited to see and hear "Siyahamba" and "Tres Cantos," specifically because of the surround-sound set-up that the US Concert Choir employed.

"Also, 'Tres Cantos' sound effects and lighting (blackout at first) were really effective and definitely contributed to taking the audience to another place and culture," said Mr. Baker.

"I was also excited to collaborate with Mrs. Urrutia and especially Mr. DePalma who just experienced his first Choral Expo," he said. "Finally, I was excited to see the range of styles, genres, and abilities and accomplishments of each grade level from Upper Prep to Outlook!"

Mr. Baker said that freshman Olivia Coxon's solo in "On My Own" was really special and definitely one of the most exciting surprises of the evening since it wasn't in the program initially.

"Also, 'Shout Glory!' was a total blast and was a great way to start the concert, feeding energy to the Upper Prep Choraliens who came onto the stage with such confidence and excitement."

Mr. Baker said he wishes that the groups had been able to sing at least one school song with all of the singers to pay homage to Kingswood and Oxford, but, otherwise, he said that the night was really quite seamless and fun.

For the fall semester, creative arts teachers John DePalma and



Eighth graders Remy McCoy, left, and Jacqueline Oulette perform solos in a mashup of "Survivor" and "I Will Survive" at the winter Choral Expo. Photo by Lexi Banasiewicz '16.

Rebecca Urrutia, and Mr. Baker said that they decided to incorporate as many different cultures, styles, and languages as they could from an Italian classical piece ("Danza, Danza") to a contemporary Kenyan song ("Baba Yetu") to a Slovakian lullaby ("Dobra Noc").

"While we also incorporated traditional American choral music (gospels and spirituals and contemporary classical pieces) and even some pop tunes ('I Will Survive/Survivor')," Mr. Baker said, "we tried to balance the repertoire to give the choirs variety and different types of challenges. The next concert, he said, will feature choral and jazz versions of musical theater pieces.

"It will be a fun challenge for our singers, as there will be different interpretations of solo and duet pieces that many kids are familiar with," said Mr. Baker.

"While we had intended to do jazz mainly with our colloquy,

he said, our guest unfortunately needed to postpone his trip, so we made a quick decision this winter. Doing musical theater pieces will add a new type of experience for our singers since we haven't touched on this genre as a choral dept. in some years."

The Middle School vocal groups also gave strong performances. One of their standout pieces was a mashup of "Survivor" and "I Will Survive." The song featured eighth-graders Remy McCoy and Jacqueline Oulette.

"I really liked the Middle School pieces, especially the mashup," said sophomore Aparajita Kashyap. "I thought the soloists were really talented and their performance was really great."

Senior Ellie Kraus said that she is very proud of how well Outlook performed. "I think it was a great way to end the semester," said Ellie. "I also think we did a great job executing 'Tres Cantos.'"

WIAF unveils two-night format

by Gabrielle Ruban '18

For the first time ever, KO's Wyvern Invitational A Cappella Festival (WIAF) was held as a two-night event, on both Friday, Jan. 8 and Saturday, Jan. 9.

Now in its eighth year, WIAF is known as New England's largest independent school a cappella festival. Its proceeds, like those of Hockey Night, held on Friday, Jan. 8, are used to fund Team Tobati.

The \$13,000 made from WIAF combined with the proceeds from Hockey Night means that this weekend alone raised over \$19,000 for Team Tobati.

In total, both nights of the WIAF featured performances from 14 groups, including KO's own all-male a cappella group, Crimson 7, and its all-female a cappella group, Oxfordians.

History and creative arts teacher David Baker directs Crimson 7. They sang Bruno Mars' "Uptown Funk," featuring sophomore Zack Herz as soloist, and a Maroon 5 mashup, "Animals/Maps," featuring solos from seniors Richard Ferris and Jimmy Woods.

Oxfordians, directed by Middle School choir director John DePalma, sang a Taylor Swift medley, which featured solos from seniors Hayley Eicher and Ellie Kraus, as well as sophomore Gabriela Rusconi.

They also sang Amy Winehouse's "Valerie," featuring junior Carolyn McCusker as soloist.



Crimson 7 performing "Uptown Funk" at the WIAF. Photo by Clay Miles.

Seniors Gwyneth McDonald and Lauren Barnes performed as the group's first-ever female vocal percussionists, as well.

Carolyn was named Outstanding Female Soloist for her solo in "Valerie," and senior Josh Pugliese, a member of Crimson 7, finished in second place in the People's Choice competition.

Lexington High School's all-female group, Onomatopoeia, won first place. The Wheeler School's co-ed group (18 Wheelers) won second place, and Lexington High School's all-male group (Pitchpipes) won third place. Conard and High Schools' co-ed group, Be S#arp, received an Honorable Mention.

Mr. Baker collaborated with former Oxfordians director, Marcos Carreras to create WIAF eight years ago during Mr. Baker's first year of teaching.

Mr. Baker said he was very pleased with how WIAF went this year.

"It was great this year," he said, "Our emcee was fantastic, and we had a great panel of judges. From a logistics standpoint, it was the smoothest operation we've had, in terms of getting groups to come and getting everything running according to plan, during the actual festival. Some groups did cancel on us last minute on Friday night, but ultimately, it was the smoothest production and we raised more money than ever before for Tobati."

Mr. Baker explained that there are some changes the WIAF committee might make for future WIAFs. "We're thinking of changing the way the groups perform, in terms of the order," he said. "We may change the format from doing two different rounds to each group singing its

whole set. This year, we cut down on the number of awards, which made the festival more competitive and more select. I think we are going to do a mix of judges next year, so that we get a more well-rounded assessment for each group. This year, we had all a cappella people, but in years past, we've had college professors and high school directors as well."

Form Five Dean Ronald Garcis, who leads Team Tobati, said that the growing popularity of WIAF resulted in the conversion to a two-night event this year.

"There were a lot of groups that want to be in WIAF but couldn't be because of the lack of slots," Mr. Garcia said. "Instead of doing 12 groups again like last year, the arts department wanted to find a way for the best groups to perform on Saturday, not necessarily just those that participate every year."

Mr. Garcia said that, by making WIAF a two-night event, more groups could participate in the festival.

"[The Creative Arts Department] decided that the way they are going to do it from now on is that the top eight groups will still perform on Saturday and then the rest of the groups that showed interest, will compete on Friday," Mr. Garcia said, "The top two groups from Friday will get the opportunity to perform and compete on Saturday, as well. It's a way for more groups to get involved and also to have the best groups perform on Saturday."

Senior Chris Carangelo, a two-year member of Crimson 7, said that, while their performance this year in WIAF wasn't flawless, the group was still content with how they did.

"[Crimson 7] is unlike any club on campus," Chris said. "The group is a family. C7 had a wonderful performance. Though not perfect, we, as a group, were pleased with how we looked and sounded."

Junior and member of Oxfordians Emma Fisher said that in comparison to previous years, Oxfordians' performance this year was different, in a good way. "I think our performance was better than from what I've seen in the past few years," Emma said, "The girls seemed to actually enjoy themselves on stage and bring a new kind of energy to the stage."

Musician of the month: Hayley Eicher

Rock Review

by Gwyneth McDonald '16

Senior Hayley Eicher, starring in this year's winter musical "Sweeney Todd," is this month's featured musician.

Hayley says that she sings all the time, and that people always ask her why she's constantly singing. "I think when you never stop doing something, that's when you know that it's what you're meant to do," said Hayley.

"My entire family sings and they are all involved in the arts in some way," she said, "and it would have been really weird if I didn't get involved in the arts because I grew up surrounded by it. I grew up listening to Barbra Streisand and musical theater."

When asked if she prefers singing or acting, she says that she has trouble separating the two because singing is still storytelling.

"You don't just get up there and sing a few pretty notes and call it a day," Hayley said. "It's your job to convey a story, whether it's your own or someone else's. When I'm singing, I am acting. Those two things for me are inseparable."

Hayley started getting serious about theater when she was 16. "That year I was really ambitious," said Hayley, "I applied to Interlochen." Interlochen, a summer music camp in Michigan, is famous for having a great musical theater program.



Photo courtesy of Hayley Eicher '16.

They gave Hayley a merit-talent scholarship. "It was a big deal for me because it was my first clue that I had a shot in musical theater," said Hayley. "It was really inspiring to me as a person."

The next summer Hayley went to the Carnegie Mellon Musical Theater summer program, which she said confirmed that she wanted to go to college for musical theater.

"Interlochen allowed me to make connections with people I never would have made connections with," she said.

"People have asked me why I would want to take classes over the summer," she said, "but it really doesn't feel like work or class because, when I go there, I am doing what I love. And when you love something

that much you don't care how much you have to work for it."

Hayley said Interlochen and Carnegie Mellon were amazing growing experiences. "It's not all sunshine and butterflies, but it's a great time," said Hayley. "Acting teachers are some of the most honest people I know, but I have learned to use their criticism to make me stronger."

Creative arts teacher and musical director Joshua Feder, who is Hayley's acting coach, helped her prepare for her college auditions. He is also well connected in the industry, and he put Hayley in contact with administrators in the top musical theater colleges.

"He isn't afraid to tell me what I'm doing wrong," Hayley said. "If you're told 'yes' all the time, then there's no room for improvement. He has challenged me and made me a better actor than I would have been."

After college, Hayley said she would ideally like to be on Broadway. "As crazy as it sounds, it feels like it is something I am made to do," she said. "I'm not going to let anything get in the way of me achieving that. It's just something I need to do. I don't have a choice because I don't want to do anything else with my life. I know I won't be happy if I do anything but that."

Hayley hopes to get into a bachelor of fine arts musical

theater program next year, even though it is statistically harder to get into a good musical theater program than it is to get into an Ivy League school.

Hayley said she doesn't think people realize just how hard the musical theater industry is. "This industry is just rejection after rejection after rejection. You go to auditions and you're there for three hours staring at 20 other brunettes that are 5'5". And the people who are watching the auditions see the same girl over and over again," said Hayley.

"If there is anything I've learned, it's that, at the end of the day, you need to remember the things that make you unique because, without that, you're just another brick in the wall. You have to find that little thing that you have that nobody else has and, once you find that, you will be ahead of so many other people," she said.

"Mine is my ability to immerse myself in my work," she said. "The parts that I've played at KO are really guts parts and people ask me how I do it. But it takes work, confidence, and it doesn't happen overnight, but my ability to do things that are uncomfortable on stage sets me apart," she said.

"Most teenagers don't have the confidence to do that yet," she said, "so I'm thankful that I know I have something that makes me a little different."

Continued from page 8

your head to. However the song still retains a certain airiness to it, with synths covered in reverb on the higher end of the production. Christmas turns up the aggression in his delivery, and at some points even plays around with emotions that are more difficult to deal with, speaking about jumping out of a plane and crying as a child because kids made him want to "become a villain." The two halves of this song couldn't be more different in terms of emotion and aggression, however the transition between the two is extremely natural.

"The soul sample has transformed into something that sounds like a score for an old animated Disney movie."

— Nic Bisgaard

Senior Superlative: The Artistic Duo

by Tara Kilkenny '17

The creative skills and talents of seniors Bobby McCabe and Joanna Williams are recognized and highlighted in this year's selection of the "Most Artistic" senior superlative. The two artists, chosen by their senior classmates among many other potential candidates, received the most votes to win the title.

As seniors, both Bobby and Joanna take advanced art courses and create specialized pieces within these classes. However, they initially took standard art courses years ago, which gave them a strong foundation to lead them to where they are now.

When Bobby came to KO as a freshman, he first took the Drawing course. Due to the quality and skill of artworks he had previously completed, he wasn't required to take the Introduction to Studio Art class.

As a sophomore, he experimented with another type of art by taking Sculpture. The following year, he became a member of Honors Portfolio Prep.

Of all the different types and styles of art Bobby has learned to create, drawing is his favorite. "I don't have formal training in drawing, and it's really some-

thing I've learned to do over time," said Bobby, "so I draw every day, and I tend to keep notebooks with me and practice."

Drawing isn't Bobby's sole artistic focus, however. He is a member of the Robotics Team, where he designs and conceptualizes the building of robots, and he also creates posters. Additionally, he has been painting the walls in the RTS room and working on art-related projects outside of school.

Bobby's favorite works he's done over the years include a stylistic drawing of John Lennon, a drawing of a hand he completed in sophomore year, and a self-portrait with avian features from Honors Portfolio Prep.

"I've always tried to do more unique things with the instructions and materials I was given," Bobby said.

When he learned he was deemed "Most Artistic" of his class, Bobby said he was honored. "I don't draw to show off; I draw because I enjoy it and I think other people can enjoy what I do, so being recognized for that was nice," said Bobby.

Joanna, the other member of the "Most Artistic" duo, also has extensive experience in the arts. She took art classes all throughout Middle School and signed up for

Introduction to Studio Art when she entered the Upper School.

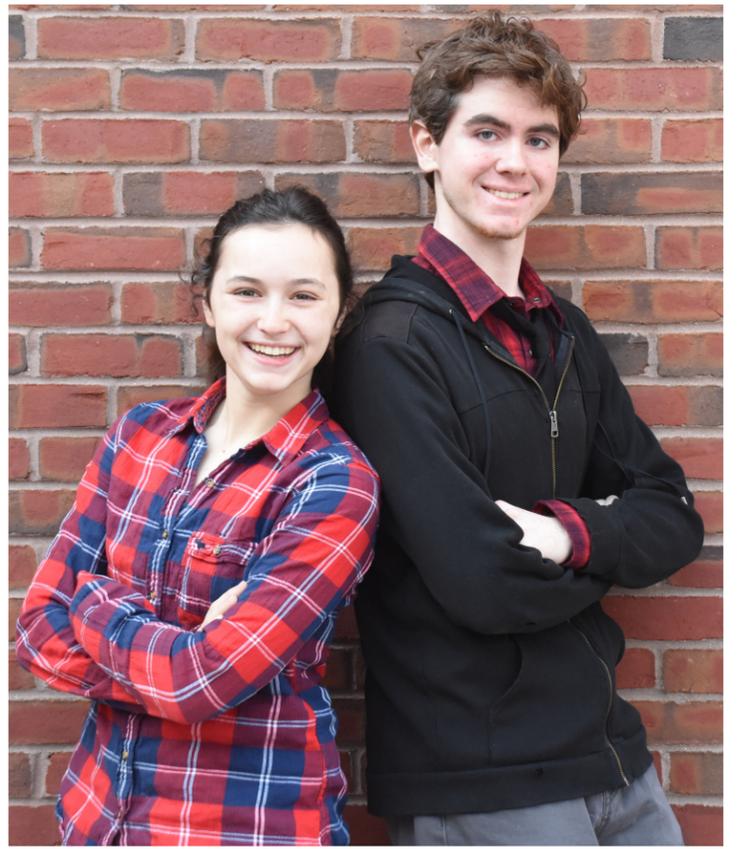
After working with styles such as sculpture, drawing, and painting, she decided that she enjoyed drawing most, so she took the Drawing course in sophomore year. Joanna was recommended for Honors Portfolio Prep for her junior year, where she broadened her skills and refined her art.

"In Portfolio Prep we got to critique and talk about our art a lot," said Joanna, "so this opened me up to different styles. I learned how to discuss art. It gave me a new skill set, and my art became more open-ended as opposed to following strict guidelines."

This past fall, she enjoyed taking a 3-D sculpture class, but she realized that drawing remains her favorite art form, especially drawing with ebony and charcoal.

Joanna regards a few of her works as her favorites, one of which is a photo-realistic piece of skates called "Lace Up," which she completed in Drawing class. She also likes a photo-realistic self-portrait entitled "Selfie," and others including "Evanescent" and "Rainy Day."

"I'm very meticulous in my work, especially my photo-realistic work," Joanna said, "but I'm fine with it because I



Seniors Joanna Williams, left, and Bobby McCabe are the winners of the "Most Artistic" senior superlative. Photo by Shelby Fairchild '17.

love how my work turns out."

As for winning the senior superlative, Joanna said she was happy and grateful when she heard that she won. "I was really excited because I knew there were a lot of strong contenders, so I

was surprised I got it," she said. "Art is therapeutic and relaxing to me, and it's a passion of mine, so I was happy when I found out."

Both seniors said they are extremely pleased that their peers have recognized their artistic talent.

Sasha's art pops out as exemplary KO artists honored in statewide competition

by Aparna Kashyap '18

The spotlight artist of the month is junior Sasha Bash. Sasha's interest in art started in Middle School with her eighth grade sculpture class. "I made this dress that was a full-length dress on a mannequin out of paper," she said. "It kind of turned a light on."

Sasha, who is currently in Portfolio Prep Honors at KO, also takes art classes outside of KO. While those classes started as classes in fashion design in her freshman year, they have since evolved.

"As I got more experience, that class turned into just doing what challenged me and what pushed me out of my comfort zone," she said.

Sasha describes her style as focused on pop art and the modern era. She said she also likes art that has a message to convey.

"I like art that has a particular meaning to it, like social art, something that gets a message across," she said. "I don't like to do the obvious, and I like my art to have meaning and show something about a subject."

Sasha says that her artistic style has evolved to have more meaning. "Originally, my artistic style was just drawing something that was pretty," she said, "but I think now my art is now evolving more into the importance of my work and what the message is."

Creative arts teacher Scott McDonald describes Sasha's style as illustrative. "The pieces she's been doing recently have

been based on 1950s photos and ads, like you'd see in a graphic novel," he said. "She's very inventive, but at the same time she's also very careful and has a lot of control over her media."

Sasha's most recent project is a series that challenges society's gender norms. Recently, she created a piece that featured a young woman crying, and she has decided to create a story: The girl finds out that her husband is cheating on her, and uses that to empower herself. "A lot of the times, if you look at pop art for girls, the girl is crying; she is always the victim," said Sasha.

Sasha's preferred media include Copic markers and colored pencils. "Copic markers have a brush tip, so they are less streaky

and easier to use," said Sasha. "With that is normally some sort of colored pencil or sharpie, or some sort of fine-tipped pen." Sasha said that she also works with charcoal and regular ebony pencil.

The creative process, according to Sasha, is divided into three steps. The first step is to figure out a message, or what she is trying to convey. The second step is to think about medium and content. "You want your medium to complement your content," she said.

The third step is to actually create the piece. "You really have to be able to analyze your work," said Sasha. "You don't want to be stuck with something that was a good idea, but wasn't executed well."

Mr. McDonald said that Sasha is very good at critiquing

work. "She is a wonderful participant in those conversations and always has something really valuable to offer," he said.

This summer, Sasha is going to attend an intensive six-week program at the Rhode Island School of Design, where she gets to choose her major; (Sasha is choosing fashion design). She will also take other studio art classes. "It will help me refine my portfolio, which is what I have been doing all year," she said.

Sasha is currently looking to incorporate art into college and her career. "I think that I want to be a fashion designer when I grow up," she said. "It incorporates art and business. There's also a merchandising side of fashion, and a creative side."



Sasha's colorful "Twiggy" piece is featured in front of the Epic room. Photo by Lexi Banasiewicz '16.

KO artists honored in statewide competition

by Aparna Kashyap '18

Currently, just under 600 pieces of art from students all over Connecticut are being displayed at the University of Hartford in the Silpe Gallery as part of the annual Scholastic Art Awards Competition. Kingswood Oxford students have created six of these pieces of art.

Once a work is selected for the show, it is guaranteed an Honorable Mention. One distinction above that is the Silver Key, and then Gold Key. "If it's a Gold Key, it's one of the best pieces in the categories," creative arts teacher Scott McDonald said. There is also a Best in Show award for each category (the categories range from Painting and Jewelry to Journalism and Poetry).

Junior Carolyn McCusker won a Gold Key for her charcoal drawing. "It was a charcoal self portrait of me looking angstily into the light with my eyes closed," she said. When Carolyn created the portrait, she said her goal was to have lots of shadows. Carolyn sketched the outline from a photo, and then filled in the shadows.

Junior Meghan Dalton also won a Gold Key in photography,

Continued on page 16.

It's all Greek to the faculty of KO

by Vivian Goldstein '17

When somebody says the word “sorority” or “fraternity,” probably the last thought to pop up in someone’s head will be political science teacher Dr. Ann Serow or history teacher Scott Dunbar. However, perhaps, the association shouldn’t be the last on the list considering that both teachers, along with history teacher Robert Kyff and history teacher Peter Jones, participated in Greek Life during their college years.

Joining the on campus Greek life was an easy choice for most of the teachers, who each had their own motivations for joining.

Dr. Serow had been thrown into an unfamiliar situation on the UConn campus as she was surrounded by a large numbers of kids, living on a remote part of campus, and landed in a social scene very different from high school.

“I was fine academically, but socially it was bleak,” she said. The sorority girls would always be smiling, laughing, and their dorms looked inviting and homey. To Dr. Serow, it made perfect sense to join a sorority and make friends that way.

For Mr. Jones, the experience was a bit different. He joined a frat with a group of friends his first time around. When he joined his second fraternity it was simply because he was a baseball player and many of the baseball players encouraged him to join.

In the end though, one commonality seems to have existed in the four teachers’ reasons for joining. They wanted



Amherst’s Phi Delta Sigma fraternity in 1968. Photo courtesy of Mr. Kyff.

to feel like they belonged.

“It gave you this ready-made group of friends to a degree that it gives you – not necessarily a sense of identity – but it gives you a sense of belonging,” said Mr. Dunbar.

Dr. Serow found most of the sororities she encountered to be “nice but pathetic,” as she termed it. However, there was one exception: Kappa Alpha Theta.

It was the home of UConn’s beautiful, high profile, social butterflies. Logically, she chose this one.

Mr. Dunbar joined Amherst’s Chi Phi, a very mixed and global group while Mr. Kyff joined Amherst’s Phi Delta Sigma, the “straight arrow” fraternity sporting the highest academic average.

Mr. Jones joined two of Middlebury’s fraternities, but doesn’t actually remember the name of either. He does remember that one was nicknamed “slug” because it had accepted a black and a Jewish

member in the 1940s. He joined his second one in his senior year.

Initiation was a little different for all of them. Both fraternities Mr. Jones belonged to didn’t rush and had no initiation.

Mr. Dunbar’s Chi Phi would throw pillowcases over people’s head, kidnap them, and took them to a “secret” location. “As a part of initiation the older members went and kidnapped the pledges . . . we put a pillowcase over [one guy’s] head and he freaked out!” recalls Mr. Dunbar.

Dr. Serow’s was a bit tamer – a simple initiation ceremony that went through the night; there was no hazing, only some goofy dressing up and things of that nature.

“I do remember thinking – although it was a weekend – gee, I’d really like to go to sleep and not have to keep doing this,” she said.

Mr. Kyff, however, may have the best hazing story of all times. First, he had to ground up a

dry banana peel for his fraternity brother to smoke, since it was a common rumor that a ground up banana peel would get anyone high. Then he had to shake a hand, which was covered with an unknown goop, in the dark cellar of the frat.

The part that makes his story so great, however, was that he had to go to Mount Holyoke College, an all-women’s school, and wait tables for one night. “That was supposedly my humiliation, but I thought this was the greatest thing because here I was, the only male in a room full of beautiful young women,” said Mr. Kyff. “And in fact I befriended one of the girls at the table I was waiting on . . . and she and I dated for several months!”

Overall, teachers’ tales of Greek life were fairly tame in their years as students.

The Chi Pi house did burn down during Mr. Dunbar’s years living there because someone had left a cigarette in the couch. Some furniture caught on fire and there was a lot of smoke damage, but otherwise his experience with Greek life was just jovial, good-humored fun travelling to other fraternity parties, dating some sorority sisters, and eating wherever he wanted regardless of his fraternity life.

Mr. Kyff did have parties often, but even then, people would joke that the only stains on their bar were Coca-Cola stains.

However, other fraternities would show for parties and pull the fire alarm as a prank. The fire department would arrive only to find that there

was no fire and the fraternity would be fined \$50 each time.

Eventually a fraternity meeting was had. “Someone said that next time that happens just start a small fire in a waste paper basket so that when the fire men come they won’t charge us for a false alarm,” said Mr. Kyff. And from then on that’s what Phi Delta Sigma did.

Dr. Serow claims the more dramatic Greek-life-experience considering she got her own, private room as a freshman. She mainly received it so she could study since her grades helped to keep the sorority of beauties, not so much brains, in good academic standing.

“They would walk past my room and say ‘She’s studying,’ because they didn’t study much,” remembers Dr. Serow.

Today, Mr. Jones’ fraternity has since been expelled from the college since it became mean and exclusive.

Kappa Alpha Theta rarely plays any part in Dr. Serow’s life anymore, except for the occasional times she wears the sorority pin.

Mr. Kyff and Mr. Dunbar’s college, Amherst, as a whole decided that Greek life would not be allowed on campus. However, Mr. Dunbar still gets some mail from Chi Pi and Mr. Kyff still holds onto friendships he made while in Phi Delta Sigma.

Overall, the experience was positive for all of them and none of them expressed any particular regrets. “I don’t regret joining. I enjoyed my experience and I enjoyed the people I was with,” said Mr. Dunbar.

A (Snap)chat with Jacob Silverstein

by Mackenzie McDonald '16

Snap, snap, snap. What’s that? No, it’s not the sound of someone snapping their fingers, you outdated goose.

It’s the sound of everyone and their brother (also their aunts, uncles, cousins and distant acquaintances) taking selfies on their smart phones a billion times each day and sending them back and forth to one another for a maximum view-time of 10 seconds.

It’s Snapchat, the social media phenomenon that is gripping the nation.

As many of you Savvy students will know, one of Snapchat’s relatively newer features is the creation of geotags.

For those of you elder folk/non-social media users who may not be familiar, a geotag is essentially a sticker you can apply to your snap selfie by swiping left after capturing your pic.

This sticker – or “filter,” to use a Snap term – shows your location as gathered by the GPS in your smart phone, but in a visually appealing, fun little way.

For example, the first West Hartford geotag reads “Weha” with multicolored stripes beneath the text.

But the newest geotags to hit



Photo of Kingswood Oxford’s Snapchat geotag. Photo courtesy of Snapchat.

West Hartford have added significance for us Wyverns, and it’s not just that they make your snaps look super cool or let your Snap besties know the location of your latest duck face (although they do both).

The wow factor is that one of Wyvern Nation’s very own is their creator – namely, junior Jacob Silverstein.

Yes, that’s right. Jacob is responsible for creating both the purple-and-blue geotag accessible to all West Hartford snappers, which aptly reads “West Hartford,” as well as the Wyvern-specific geotag which only Snappers on the Kingswood Oxford campus can use.

This one is appropriately red, and reads “Wyvern Nation.” Jacob says his inspiration for the new West Hartford geotag came in part from Blueback Square.

“I knew going into my first geotag that I liked the idea of a ribbon-type thing because it just seemed nice. I tried to think of ways to put “West Hartford” into a design and that’s where I got the blue from, like Blueback Square.”

After looking at some ideas on Google Images, Jacob says he did the actual designing and creating through Photoshop.

He says the process of creating a geotag involves visiting the Snapchat website,



Photo of West Hartford’s Snapchat geotag. Photo courtesy of Snapchat.

which features a “Geofilters” tab.

“It gives you the dimensions of the screen and a few basic details about the formatting of the file,” he said. “So after you make the geotag and save it as ‘Save for Web’ and it’s under 300kb in size, then on their website you have to draw on a map the area that your geotag covers.

“You then select if your geotag is for a specific event or if its a permanent geotag. You then agree to the rules of submission.” Jacob said. He added that the Wyvern Nation geofilter was a bit trickier to develop.

“I made several drafts because I wanted to originally have one that included a Wyvern of some sort,” she said. “But it didn’t really work for a number of reasons so I made numerous drafts.

“I came to one a bit more detailed than the current, but it

was too large of a file to submit because the size of the geotag doesn’t affect the file size; it’s the details that are in the geotag, the small, very precise details. So I had to take out a number of those, making the geotag a bit more bland but still good,” Jacob said.

Jacob said that creating a geotag is difficult, but the hardest one is always the first one.

“For the first one, you have to come up with an original idea out of nowhere because if you copy someone else’s design, it won’t pass,” he said.

Jacob says he’s good with Photoshop, which made the process somewhat easier, but in general, he says what inspired him is just to take a stab at it.

“I knew KO didn’t have a geotag and other high schools did, so I figured I’d give it a shot,” he said.

Snaps aplenty for Jacob!

Wyvern in Space winner announced

by Lauren Barnes '16

On Tuesday, Feb 2, 2016, the highly anticipated Wyvern in Space logo was revealed in a full school assembly.

Junior Connor Laughlin took the stage to announce that senior Bobby McCabe had won the logo drawing competition.

Announced earlier this year was the competition to draw or create a logo for the Wyvern in Space event.

Students were able to draw and submit an original design that would next be voted on by the students.

Once the deadline had approached, the submissions were then put on a google form where students could vote

for their favorite logo design.

Other logos included popular references from movies such as Disney-Pixar's "UP" and Disney's "The Lion King."

Connor was really happy with the outcome.

"It was a complete success" he said. "I got a lot of really good submissions and it really raised awareness for what the project is trying to accomplish".

Winner, Bobby McCabe's design included an illustration of a Wyvern holding the moon with a space background.

Because there was so much hype, bracelets for Wyvern in Space will be sold during lunch periods.

Later, Bobby's winning design will be featured on pins to support Wyvern in Space.



Drawing by Bobby McCabe '16. Photo courtesy of Connor O'Laughlin.

Running this campus: Mr. Rodilitz

by Lauren Barnes '16

On the Kingswood Oxford School campus, you can usually find mathematics teacher Scott Rodilitz teaching, running, and doing math!

Mr. Rodilitz has been at KO since the fall of 2013, when he began his career as a math teacher.

Mr. Rodilitz said that his favorite part of working at KO is working with students and getting them to enjoy what they are learning.

"I would say it's fun interacting with students around things I enjoy and am passionate about," he said.

Some of these things include cross country, track and field, and, of course mathematics. In his free time, Mr. Rodilitz said he enjoys to do, well, math.

"I would say I spend a decent amount of time of the day just finding fun math problems that I do on my own," he said, "to remember what it's like to be a student working through math problems and just because it's fun."

"It's fun interacting with students around things I enjoy and am passionate about."

— Mr. Rodilitz



Photo of Mr. Rodilitz and girls Cross Country Captain Lauren Barnes at a home meet. Photo courtesy of Mr. Rodilitz.

When he's not teaching, Mr. Rodilitz is coaching. Mr. Rodilitz is the girls cross country coach and the distance coach for the girls and boys track and field team. He said he enjoys coaching a wide range of student athletes.

"We have people who have been running two to three years and are really invested," he said. "It's also fun to run with the people who have never run before who train and push their limits."

He said he likes that they are building up a group of individuals in both distance track

by Isabel Kaufman '17

Having to go to school every day and share a campus with high school students can be intimidating, but many of KO's Middle School students say they actually enjoy the older kids company.

Eighth-grader Tre Williams uses the words "privilege, advantage, kind, funny, and helpful" to describe Upper Schoolers and said he thinks highly of the Upper School and loves many of the upperclassmen.

Tre, who says he enjoys "most of the time" spent on campus with Upper Schoolers said he sees this as a great opportunity to make older friends before he is even in the Upper School.

Along with making friends, Tre said he appreciates the opportunity to play on the high school football team.

Whether practicing with the team or going up against other strong teams, Tre says he feels that this higher level of play helps him improve his skills.

On a different note, Tre, and eighth grader Jack Krugman say they both see the ups and downs to sharing the cafeteria with the high school.

"Sometimes one high schooler will be taking up a whole table that could fit like 12 people," said Jack.

Agreeing that finding a seat is sometimes a challenge, Tre

and Jack went on to say that this is not the end of the world, and that these older students don't really bother them during lunch.

As the child of Middle School history teacher Andy Krugman, Jack interacts

"It allows us to see the atmosphere, getting us ready for our days as the upperclassmen."

— Landon White

with high school students pretty often during his days.

Because he has been around the KO campus since he was very young, Jack said he feels as if he has grown up with some of the older classmates.

"They are so nice to me, and are great role models," he said.

Similarly, seventh grader Landon White said he believes that sharing a campus with older students is enjoyable because it gives him a little taste of what his future will look like.

"It allows us to see the atmosphere, getting us ready for our days as the Upper-

classmen," Landon said.

He has an older brother in the Upper school senior, Holden White, so Landon is around many of the older kids on a daily basis, and is used to their company.

He said he likes being able to see Holden and his friends sometimes during the school day.

Taking a broad overview of all of Kingswood Oxford, Tre, Jack, and Landon, all in the Middle School, say they don't see much of a difference between the Middle and Upper Schools.

"The only real difference is the number of people," said Jack.

Some similarities between the schools that Jack said he has noticed are the willingness of all teachers to help their students, and the kindness of the students.

"We are different ages, but that doesn't really affect anything because we are one big community," said Landon.

Aware that there are different buildings for the Upper School and Middle School students, Landon says he doesn't think that they are necessarily separated, because they are around each other often during the school day.

Both nervous and excited to soon be part of KO's Upper School, the Middle School students say they believe that they really do have the feel of high school, just from sharing a campus for their first few years.

as a young teacher and [to be able to get] to know other teachers."

He said that having people you can bounce ideas off of is really vital in your first years of teaching in a new place. He said a big help in getting to know the other teachers has been living so close to campus, in the yellow house on the Boule-

"It's also fun to run with the people who have never run before, who train and push their limits."

— Mr. Rodilitz

vard, just south of Seaverns Hall.

Now having been at KO for a few years, Mr. Rodilitz said he is beginning to change things up himself.

He and fellow math teacher Will Amarante have started teaching their elective called "Game Theory," which he said he's very excited about.

"It's basically about making logical decisions," he said.

"In life your brain is very good at doing this subconsciously. It's fun to sometimes do this numerically."

it too seriously, yet he discovered he was pretty good at it and was eventually persuaded to go out for the track and field team.

"I got excited about it," he said, "and slowly but surely realized that I was better at it." He said that there was more than being better at running that made him choose the sport, but it did play a big role.

As for life every day at KO, Mr. Rodilitz says he enjoys the group of fellow teachers he gets to work with.

"It's a good group of colleagues," he said, "especially

Spectacular seniors swipe superlatives!

by Olivia Rossi '18

People flip through the pages of the KO yearbook, page after page, searching and searching – all to find those Senior Superlatives.

These “most likelysts” and “bests” have become a tradition at KO, and some say the most-read part of the yearbook.

The entertaining categories acknowledge people’s personalities, strengths, appearances, or even futures. The titles include “Best Best Friends,” “Best Social Media Presence,” “Desert Island Dream Date,” and “Most Likely To Be Late To Graduation.” But now, the Senior Superlatives are getting a face lift and a new voting process.

According to Retrospect Editor-in-Chief senior Kendall Allerton, this year’s Senior Superlative pages will feature a snazzy new style of photo. “We put cool backgrounds on the pictures so they go with the theme of the superlative,” she said.

Senior Jack Wolf, who won in two categories, said he appreciates the change. “I get a nicer picture in the yearbook, so that’s cool,” he said.

Retrospect has also changed its voting procedures for selecting the super seniors.

Kendall said this year’s ballot was better than last year because it listed the names of all the seniors next to the superlatives. All

the seniors had to do was click the name they chose for each category.

Having all the seniors’ names next to the superlative, Kendall said, ensured that seniors wouldn’t forget someone when considering nominations.

All the seniors interviewed by the KO News said this new ballot made the voting process easier. Senior Gabby Sullo said this helped because it made sure that no one was forgotten and that different seniors were spotlighted in a funny way.

Senior Emily Kirton made an effort to make sure she voted at one point. “I didn’t do the first round, but I did the second round,” she said.

Senior Nicole Demers said she not only voted but also that she enjoyed the process. “They’re usually right on point,” said senior Isabelle Delflipo.

Senior Carter Swanson agreed. “Sometimes they are unintentionally mean,” he said, “but, for the most part, they are really true.”

But senior Rachel Maselli, winner of the “Class Clown” category expressed some doubts. “[I] agreed with most, but some, I was like, ‘What?’” she said.

Senior Lauren Barnes agreed with Rachel. “I am happy with that I won ‘Best Future Parent’ but I think that it might be flawed because Mark Sheehan did not win any of his nominations.”

Senior Evan Kelmar said that he believed the system had some glitches. “I lost all three of my superlatives, so clearly the voting process is flawed,” he joked.

Senior Mark Sheehan also did not win his nominations. “I think I can outlaugh Vinz, and I should have won that superlative,” he joked. “I think the superlatives are a really neat tradition though.”

People who did win superlatives tended to agree with their titles. Jack said that he was not surprised he got “Best Eyes” because green is the rarest eye color.

As for Jack’s title of “Desert Island Dream Date,” he said, “Like who else is gonna win? Nye doesn’t deserve it, so it was basically between me and AJ.”

Senior Brenden Lantieri said his win was . . . well, a lock. “I was an easy choice for best hair,” he said. But Brendan added that he should have gotten “Best Dressed,” not senior Dylan Udolf.

Junior Isabel Kaufman said she really enjoys the senior superlatives tradition. “I’m really excited to see who wins each category in my grade next year!” she said.

Overall, the seniors agreed that the entire Senior Superlative process – the voting, entertaining rivalry, anticipation of the results, and the reveal – brings the class closer. Maybe there should be a category for the person who does that.



From left to right: History teacher Peter Jones, and seniors Gwyneth McDonald, Mackenzie McDonald, and Lauren Barnes. Photo by Ali Zilahy.

Warmth War!

by Emma Smith '18

For sophomore Maitland Bailey, the commute to school is brief; she lives about a 10-minute walk from school, which is very convenient, especially in the morning.

However, on cold winter mornings, the brief walk can be quite nippy. “You have to wear hats and gloves and scarves a lot,” Maitland said, “to make sure you aren’t losing body heat.”

Once Maitland gets to school, the heads of shivering students all around campus like her are snugly covered with warm, fluffy hats.

Even in the hallways, many students choose to keep their winter hats on; some to stay warm, some as a fashion statement.

This is where students can run into trouble with the dress code. Assistant Head of School for Student Life Carolyn McKee said that KO’s official dress code policy states that no hats are permitted indoors.

Despite this seemingly strict rule, many teachers are flexible about winter hats in the hallways and classrooms. Director of Teaching and Learning Asha Appel said she allows winter hats in her classes for health reasons.

“When it’s very cold out and there are so many people that are sick,” Ms. Appel said, “one of the best things you can do is stay warm, and you lose the majority of heat through your head.”

Nonetheless, both Ms. Appel and Ms. McKee said that it is important to make the distinction between a baseball cap and a winter hat, based on what they imply.

“I think with baseball caps it’s more of a fashion statement,” said Ms. McKee, “but I do think in the winter the hats become a practical thing.”

Ms. Appel said she finds even further problems with baseball hats. “Baseball hats at this school are more of a badge of identifying a certain group to which you belong,” Ms. Appel said. “I think that that creates exclusion for others, and also potentially perpetuates stereotypes that I would like very much for kids to see beyond.”

Science Department Chair Fritz Goodman said he does not allow hats of any kind in his classroom. He said he feels that taking off one’s hat inside is a way to show respect.

“If you wear a hat indoors,” said Mr. Goodman, “I interpret that as a symbol of disrespect for KO.”

So what is a chilly student to do on a cold winter day? Constantly taking your hat on and off to dodge teachers who enforce the dress code seems impractical.

Maitland said she has found a solution; on particularly frigid days, she wears a toasty headscarf or earmuffs around the back of her head. These clothing items are allowed by the dress code, and keep her cozy whenever she needs a little extra warmth!!

How students feel about the warm winter?

Mackenzie McDonald: “Honestly, this warm weather hits me right in the core because it really just shows how global warming is real, and I used to have a polar bear Webkinz named Icedrop.”

Sasha Bash: “I like warmer weather, but I don’t think the polar bears like it very much and I feel bad for them.”

How does the Internet at KO work?

by Neil Hemnani '18

How many devices are connected to your home’s network? Among a phone, computer, and other devices there are maybe seven or eight? How many do you think are connected to KO?

One thousand two hundred sixty-three. That’s how many wireless devices connected to KO’s networks on Thursday, Jan. 28.

How are all of these 1,263 devices connected!? How is it secure? What websites are frequented the most?

You probably know that KO has two wireless networks: ko_wireless and ko_faculty, the former’s password being the beloved phrase “321snowday.” However, Director of Technology Dan Bateson said neither network is faster.

“The [ko_faculty] is not any

faster. That’s a common misconception,” he said. “KO access points control both networks.”

At KO, the Internet is split into two networks for safety reasons. If faculty and students/guests were placed on the same networks, the faculty’s files would be easy to access. Having them separate ensures protection for KO files and resources because students and guests do not have access to them.

Also, if someone were to put a virus on ko_wireless, it wouldn’t affect KO’s files because of the networks’ separation. The virus would simply be trapped in ko_wireless.

Mr. Bateson said that both networks use the same wireless access points and ethernet switches. There are 82 wireless access points around campus and 35 ethernet switches.

The speed that this provides is about 100 megabits per second for downloads. Mr. Bateson said that he hopes this number can be doubled for next school year. Recently, KO switched from Comcast to Universal Connectivity to be their Internet Service Provider (ISP). Comcast is used as a backup for the school.

Mr. Bateson said that the school switched for reliability services. “We upgraded our network based on recommendations from area schools,” he said. “We wanted the reliability of fiber.”

(Fiber-optic communication is a way to access the internet by using light in an optical fiber cable.)

How is the internet at KO regulated? At KO, 20 percent of the Internet traffic comes from usage of Netflix and YouTube. Another 7 percent of the traffic comes from iTunes.

Mr. Bateson said that when the bandwidth is filled to its capacity, he can lower it by taking certain steps.

“When our bandwidth gets completely saturated,” he said, “we’ll find the user that is the largest consumer and take appropriate steps.”

Mr. Bateson said that he can remove Internet access for the largest consumer for a certain period of time to alleviate the pressure. He said that, usually, the Internet traffic reaches its peak at 1 p.m. every school day.

Of course, there is also security for the networks.

There is a firewall at school that checks every packet of data that enters and leaves the KO Internet for any malicious software or anything else harmful.

“[The Internet] has multiple layers of security built in, including

a firewall, antivirus programs on KO computers, and certain other mechanisms,” said Mr. Bateson.

The firewall, which you may recognize from your Internet usage as Fortiguard, also blocks websites that aren’t appropriate for school.

“The firewall software is smart enough to block security risks or sites with adult/mature content,” said Mr. Bateson. “Occasionally there will be sites that they don’t block, which I manually allow, and vice versa.”

An example of a banned site is Yik Yak. The site/app allows users to anonymously post their thoughts online, which can be read by all users within a five-mile radius. However, the site is a catalyst for cyberbullying.

Yes, there are usually over a 1,000 devices connected to KO every day, but the KO networks are able to handle it!

Human rights students visit NYC

by Jeffrey Baker '17

On Thursday, Jan. 14, students taking history teacher Stacey Savin's International Human Rights class took a day-long field trip to Ellis Island in New York City.

Originally, this class was titled "Nazi Germany and the Master Race," though this year it was changed to "International Human Rights" to reflect coverage of the more general topic on genocide and responses to it.

When asked the purpose of the trip, Ms. Savin said that it was to explore a museum for immigration and the history of immigration.

"We used to go to the Holocaust and the 9/11 museum," she said, "but since we changed the curriculum, we changed the trip to Ellis Island, the immigration museum, and the Statue of Liberty."

Sophomore Alex Herz, an International Human Rights student, said the trip enriched his understanding of immigration.

"It was a very intellectual trip as a whole," he said. "My favorite

part was viewing the city of New York from the top of the Statue and looking at how much the city has changed compared to the pictures I looked at of how it was decades ago. It really gave me perspective

on the process of immigration and how difficult it actually was."

Ms. Savin said the trip was fruitful. "It was fantastic, and it was highly relevant to what we are learning in the classroom

and on the refugee crisis that is happening today," she said. "It just opened recently, so it was perfect timing for us to take the trip. Also, there was beautiful weather on top of all that that made the experience that much better."

Alex said that Ms. Savin has a very unique and effective way of teaching human rights topics. "She has a teaching style that fits my needs and I feel that my classmates feel the same way," he said.

Ms. Savin said the trip was meant as a visual representation of the learning done in the classroom itself. She said the new format for the trip was successful because the range of topics addressed by the sites visited enriched the experience of students in the course.

Overall, she said, the Ellis Island trip was designed to further enhance understanding of immigration, and it succeeded.



Mrs. Savin and her International Human Rights students on a field trip in New York City. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Savin.

KO Forensic Union prepares for February 7 speaking tournament

by Jack Antico '17

Forensic Union will face stiff competition on Sunday, Feb. 7 at the annual KO Speaking Tournament.

Forensic Union Coach and English Teacher Sarah Whalen explained the basic format of the tournament. "It's a public speaking tournament in which students partake in two different events," she said. "They prepare either an After-Dinner Speech or a Persuasive Speech, and do either an Impromptu Speech or an Ethical Dilemma. The latter two are extemporaneous."

Ms. Whalen explained the logistics of the tournament, and named some of the more well-known competition attending. "We belong to a league called DANEIS [Debate Association of New

England Independent Schools], which is basically all of the big private schools in Connecticut and Massachusetts," she said. "Some of the schools that have replied so far are Roxbury Latin, Stoneleigh-Burnham, Choate Rosemary Hall, and Phillips Exeter."

Stoneleigh-Burnham hosts its own public speaking tournament every year in October.

History teacher Ted Levine, a past judge of the tournament, credited the students of Forensic Union for organizing such a big event. "Mainly the students of Forensic Union organize the event and they do a great job," he said. "It really has become the premier public speaking tournament among the independent schools."

Ms. Whalen and the senior officers of Forensic Union,

while noting their competition, expressed varying degrees of confidence in the Forensic Union's ability to win the competition.

"We have won the whole tournament in the past, and I am hopeful we will win this year," said Forensic Union President senior Mark Sheehan. "Forensic Union is a really great club and we have a lot of great members. Hopefully we will continue having success, but it's still early on."

Other officers, such as Secretary Ahmad Chughtai, were also curious. "There are a lot of schools there; it will be close, even if we do win," he said.

Ms. Whalen said that she still remains confident. "I saw some students at Stoneleigh-Burnham, and they were crazy good, but we have some weapons too: Connor

O'Loughlin, Mark Sheehan, David Marottolo, and Adam Kim, to name a few," Ms. Whalen said.

Overall, the officers were optimistic about KO's speaking ability. "We tend to do very well in tournaments and we have some great public speakers, especially our senior officers," said Vice President Joanna Williams.

The officers extrapolated on what they think makes the tournament enjoyable as both speakers and listeners. "It's just good practice," said President Evan Kelmar. "It's a comfortable environment; you have a lot of support and it's low stakes and a lot of fun. That's why I would do it."

KO students who volunteer will help run the tournament through tasks such as timing speeches.

Joanna said she'll volun-

teer to help at the tournament because she enjoys witnessing the competition. "I am going to volunteer because I love listening to the speeches," she said. "I love listening to the after-dinner speeches. I have volunteered for the past three years."

Mr. Levine said he enjoys the tournament and admires the unique opportunity the tournament brings for speakers.

"The comedians come out and the great speakers come out. Parliamentary debates tend to be kind of normal and this gives students a different opportunity to show their talents," Mr. Levine said.

KO's annual tournament is a major event for the Forensic Union and several KO speakers said they hope it will give them a chance to practice and improve their skills.

Chess Club ig-'knight'-es at KO

by Adam Ovian '18

The nature of chess tournaments can be unknown to those who do not participate in them. Are they similar to what is shown on television, with quick intense moves and players rushing to beat the clock?

Kingswood Oxford's very own chess tournament, held in Conklin Library on Friday, Jan. 16, was none of these; in fact, the chess matches were quite the opposite, consisting of long, drawn-out battles between two players that could take up to 30 minutes. However, a player's perspective is very different from an observer's.

If they hope to succeed, players are forced to envision every possible move ahead of them, to see the entire board as a world of possibilities and to choose one move that he or she believes will work best. This same process

is repeated each time a player's turn begins. So, although it may seem like a player is taking too long, he or she is thinking out every possible move to be made.

The tournament was coordinated by freshman Benjamin Small, who is also the founder and director of the Chess Club at KO. Ten students participated in the event, ranging from eighth graders to juniors. After each match, players were assigned new opponents based on their performance in the prior game, so that all 10 players competed continuously for a total of three hours.

In the library, five tables were set up with two chessboards placed on each. The rules were simple: Each game could continue for a maximum of 30 minutes, whereupon a five-minute clock would be used to create a sudden-death situation which

causes the players to make more daring moves to win the game.

At the end of the tournament, eighth grader Matthew Marottolo, with a perfect score of four wins, emerged as the Chess Tournament champion. Matthew has been playing chess for many years, but has not attended any tournaments.

Like most of the participants, Matthew said that he plays against members of his family, including his uncle, who is a Grand Master, along with his mother, who is also a very skilled player.

As the only Middle School student at the event, Matthew said that he really enjoyed the intimate setting and the supportive atmosphere created by the other attendees.

"I didn't really feel out of place," he said. "It was such a tiny group, and they were all really nice; some I knew already, and

others I had seen around campus."

Benjamin explained that, although the club attracted a lot of attention at the beginning of the school year when he first created it, interest has dropped a bit since its initial kick-off.

"We had about 25 people signed up," he said, "and a few people showed up, and then it tapered out."

He said he hopes that besides it being an enjoyable event, the Chess Tournament will draw some attention to the club and increase attendance at meetings. "I'm going to try to advertise it more, and I want to move it to PLB," Ben said.

Benjamin said the first chess tournament at KO was a success, and that he hopes it may strengthen attendance at KO's new chess club.



Two KO students compete at the tournament. Photo by Lexi Banasiewicz '16.

Caucusing KO: Do students, faculty welcome diverse political views?

by Alec Rossi '17

With the 2016 Presidential Election on the forefront of national news, Kingswood Oxford students have become increasingly political. In the midst of contentious debate between Republicans and Democrats, has Kingswood Oxford become a place where students feel encouraged and safe to discuss and share their opinions?

Do students with minority views feel marginalized by the majority or indoctrinated by the views of guest speakers and authors?

Located in West Hartford, a town dominated by Democrats and liberals, many students question Kingswood Oxford's political diversity. Senior Evan Kelmar said he believed that KO was not very politically diverse. "I believe that socially KO is absolutely liberal, and you would be hard pressed to find someone willing to admit they are socially conservative," said Evan.

English Department Chair Meg Kasprak said that KO has a reputation for being liberal. "The perception is that KO is very liberal," she said.

Junior Shelby Fairchild said she agreed with Mrs. Kasprak. "I think KO is definitely socially liberal," said Shelby.

Creative Arts Department Chair Todd Millen said that Kingswood Oxford's political lean is a product of geography.

"I think KO is in Connecticut, a very blue [and] left state...A lot of people who work here, who live here, [and] who send their kids [to KO] have blue views," said Mr. Millen. "If KO were in Dallas, Texas, it would be a much more right-leaning place," he said.

Before teaching at KO, English Teacher Sarah Whalen worked at an all-girls parochial school in New Jersey and a public school in New York City. "I think at the private school the political climate was really similar [to that of KO]," said Ms. Whalen. "The public school in New York City was very openly and blatantly liberal," she said.

Junior Matthew Rossi said he disagreed that Kingswood Oxford was politically homogeneous. "I

"Most students are most influenced politically by their parents. KO makes no effort to steer students in particular directions"

— Ms. McKee

think the distribution of liberals and conservatives is relatively even. The perception that KO is liberal comes from greater liberal outspokenness," said Matthew.

With political lean reflected in the policies of our current government, some students questioned if the actions of Kingswood Oxford's Student Government were reflective of their political viewpoints.

Mrs. Kasprak, the faculty advisor to Student Government, said that Student Government is very fiscally conservative. "I have to say that fiscally [Student Government] is very conservative, because we take in a lot more money than we spend," said Mrs. Kasprak.

Assistant Head of School for Student Life Carolyn McKee said she disagreed with Mrs. Kasprak. "I see the Student Government as being rather liberal," she said. Ms. McKee said the spending habits of Student Government are dependent on the year's leadership. "Student Government spending would better be classified as whimsical," said Ms. McKee.

Junior Vice President Emilie Sienko said she agreed with both Mrs. Kasprak and Ms. McKee. "While we have had a budget surplus for a few years, we have planned several events geared towards the second half of the year," said Emilie.

Forensic Union members said students' political views rarely enter their debates. "Forensic Union is very rarely political. Occasionally debates are because it is tough to avoid politics when you argue over belief systems, but they are never framed in a political setting," said Evan. "The structure of debate forces kids to not automatically choose their political party's view, but their own," he said.

Despite the existence of strong and opposing political views on campus, most students and teachers agreed that Kingswood Oxford was a safe and welcoming place for political discussion.

While KO is accepting of minority viewpoints, Mrs. Kasprak said there are limitations on tolerance. "I do think we are reasonably willing and open to hear diverse viewpoints, as long as those viewpoints don't involve intolerance, racism, sexism, [or things] over which people have no control," she said.

Evan agreed that extreme viewpoints are often not tolerated among students. "I think Kingswood Oxford is welcoming of all viewpoints, [but] the few extremists aren't taken seriously by the general population," he said.

Junior Jack Antico said that he disagreed with Evan. "I'd say KO is very, very liberal and not the most welcoming of conservative viewpoints. KO is more accepting of radical liberals than radical conservatives," said Jack.

In terms of the 2016 elec-



Senior Dylan Udolf wears a pin promoting Republican Donald Trump every day. Photo by Kate Betts '16

tion, Jack said that students are often branded based on whom they support. "Someone who supports Trump is seen as more of a radical than someone who supports Bernie Sanders," said Jack.

Ms. Whalen said she was not sure if all political viewpoints were tolerated on campus. "I think there are many different viewpoints represented by the students and the faculty, but I do not know if all are welcomed," said Ms. Whalen.

During discussions on Martin Luther King Jr. day about privilege and police brutality, Ms. Whalen said some students refrained from the discussion. Ms. Whalen said she believed that this discomfort may have been caused by student's conservative viewpoints.

When discussing politics, Jack said that students at KO are usually open to hearing alternative viewpoints. "Some people will be open to your ideas, and some people won't be," said Jack.

Mr. Millen said that he has not witnessed conflict between students with different political views. Mr. Millen cited the newspaper as an example of political diversity. "Kate Betts wrote an article about Bernie Sanders, sharing [her political opinion]," he said.

Mr. Millen said that teachers are eager to hear student's political opinions. "[Other] teachers and I want to hear what [students] have to say because kids are in the position of hearing different political views," said Mr. Millen.

While teachers are open to hearing different political opinions, some students said that teachers are not open to discussing politics. "Politics are a personal belief and some teachers refrain from talking about their viewpoints," said senior Mark Sheehan. "KO tries to be politically correct, and this often prevents or discourages students from having discussions rooted in politics," said Mark.

To some students, the

support for social justice groups was an indication of political openness. "Overall, I think KO is welcoming to just about any [political viewpoint]...[there is] tons of support for social justice groups and [KO provides] a great environment for everyone," said Shelby.

In April of 2014, Jake Leshem '14 wrote an opinion piece about the lack of conservatism at KO and the political sway speakers have on the student body. Jake cited the Bread and Puppet Theater performance as an example of a performance with an agenda.

"Each of their skits was politically based, and each seemed to be more liberal than the last," said Jake.

Jake also referred to the influence of the Symposium author on the student body. "The [year-long] emphasis on [Tony] Kushner made him gain the respect of many members of the community, specifically the younger students... As a result, when he spoke of his own personal [liberal] political beliefs, it was taken as fact by many of

I think KO is definitely socially liberal
— Shelby Fairchild

the students in attendance," he said, alluding to comments the author made regarding former President George W. Bush.

The consensus of Jake's article, a sentiment echoed by Abhilash Panthagni '14, was that assemblies influence student's political opinions.

Jake said that assemblies need to be more balanced or prefaced with information on the speaker's biases. "It is disap-

pointing that the assemblies do not appear to be balanced, particularly involving the political ideology that is shared," he said.

In response to student opinion Ms. McKee said that the administration made a greater effort to expose students to as many viewpoints as possible.

Mrs. Kasprak said that the diversity of speakers creates balance, citing military veterans as some speakers whose opinions have countered those presented in more liberal performances.

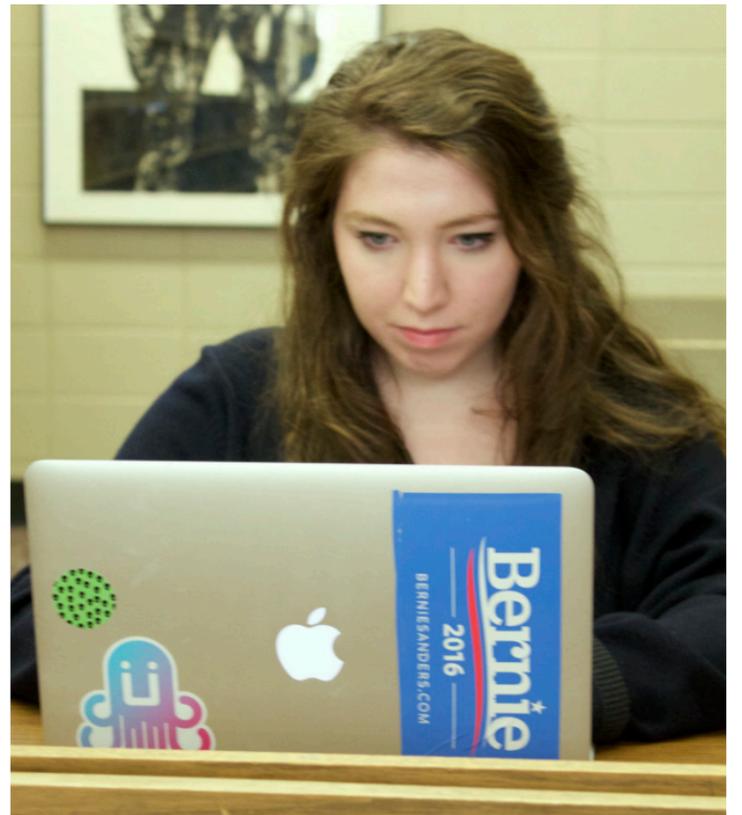
Most teachers and students disagreed with Jake's idea that speakers have a large influence on student's political opinions. "Speakers might influence student's political opinions; [however,] my parent's political opinions were passed on to me," said Mr. Millen.

Ms. McKee said she agreed with Mr. Millen. "Most students are most influenced politically by their parents. KO makes no effort to steer students in particular directions," said Ms. McKee.

Evan said that, rather than influencing students, speakers can reaffirm existing beliefs. "[Speaker's] political commentary only either reassures someone who agrees with them or makes someone who disagrees with [their views] think less of the speaker," he said. Evan pointed to Mr. Kushner as a politically motivated speaker.

While most students agree that speakers have little influence on their political views, Jack said he believed that there should be more conservative speakers on campus. "I think Kingswood Oxford should have more conservatives on campus, whether in the student body or in speakers," said Jack.

Despite differing political opinions, most students agree that Kingswood Oxford is a place where the different political views of both students and faculty are respected.



Senior Kate Betts expresses her support for presidential candidate Bernie Sanders by displaying a sticker on her laptop. Photo by Alec Rossi '17

Changes to student life leadership

Continued from page 1

said Mrs. Dunn, “and [Librarian Nancy] Solomon chaired a committee of student leaders.”

In addition, faculty who work directly with Ms. McKee got to offer an opinion, as did any other interested faculty. Candidates also met with Head of School Dennis Bisgaard.

The faculty member eventually selected for the role, Mr. Gilyard, said that he wants to focus on empowering students. “I want students to take lead-

ership in what is happening at the school,” he said. “I want to give opportunities to students to make change where they see fit.”

He added that he’s been interested in this job since he started teaching at KO five years ago, and that reaching a position of this nature was part of the “Five Year Plan” that he created upon arrival.

Mr. Gilyard said one of the main reasons he wanted the position was to work with students on a wider scale.

“I think the Assistant Head of School for Student Life is a

tough position, but for me it was ripe,” he said. “I had my eye on the role... because I wanted to affect students on a larger level, more than just individually.”

Mr. Gilyard will bring experience to the role, not only from his time as a math teacher on the KO campus, but also from previous positions he has held. “I was the principal of an independent K-8 school in New York, so I already knew what the job entailed,” he said.

Many students said they are interested to see what this

change in leadership will bring.

“Ms. McKee will leave big shoes to fill,” said junior Alec Rossi. “But I think Mr. Gilyard will be able to step up to the plate.”

As Assistant Head of School for Student Life, Mr. Gilyard will look after the affective side of the curriculum and student experience, such as discipline, student life and orientation.

Mr. Gilyard will continue to teach and coach, although he will narrow his field to one math class and one sport. In addition, he will not continue to be a

Form Dean, and the job will be given to another teacher at KO.

Both Ms. McKee and Mr. Gilyard said that they are looking forward to their new positions.

“There are places where I get to make it mine,” Ms. McKee said. “I’m excited for something different, and I’m excited for Mr. Gilyard to bring a new, exciting perspective into the dean’s office.”

There is one aspect of her current role that Ms. McKee said she is happy to leave behind, however. “I won’t miss dress code conversations,” she said.

Wyvern space-bound Artists honored

by John Ezzo '18

Picture a small, red, plastic Wyvern floating thousands of feet above the Earth. Yes, Wyvern Nation has set out to conquer the heavens by sending its mascot into space.

Junior Connor O’Loughlin recently announced that, with the help of the Student Government, he plans to launch the Wyvern into space aboard a high-altitude balloon.

The Wyvern is set to be launched off of the football field in a 350g latex helium balloon sometime this April and will be closely monitored by GPS radio.

The Wyvern, known as “the payload,” will be equipped with its own parachute and what’s called a Radar reflector, an FAA-required device made of tinfoil and a swimming pool noodle, designed to make the payload more visible to planes.

As the balloon goes higher into the atmosphere and air pressure begins to decrease, the lack of pressure will cause the latex forming the balloon to expand. Soon the latex will become so thin that it will burst and the payload will parachute back to Earth.

The Wyvern will travel 85,000 to 90,000 feet before it descends; it will not actually be escaping Earth’s gravity, but rather going into the stratosphere.

The idea to send the school’s

mascot into space was inspired by a similar experiment done by Stanford University, said Connor.

Two GoPro cameras provided by junior Tim Bucknam will be included in the payload to photograph the Wyvern. KO’s Director of Information Technology Dan Bateson is the faculty advisor for the project.

The Wyvern’s ascension will be documented in about five hours of footage, and will be edited by Tim into approximately four minutes. This will be set to music and shown in an assembly.

“It’s going to be a big project,” said Tim. The film will also be available on the YouTube page Buck Productions.

“We want people to drum up hype,” said Connor. To that end, the student body is being included in the project via the logo contest. Students are being encouraged to submit designs for the Wyvern in space logo that will be voted on by the student body.

“I think it’s an interesting project that’s never been done before,” said junior Shelby Fairchild, who has submitted to the logo contest.

One of the biggest concerns for the project is funding. Student Government voted unanimously to pay \$300 for the project, but this is only about one-quarter of actual money needed to put the Wyvern into space.

Connor said he intends to

buy merchandise, such as buttons and wristbands, and to sell them during lunch to raise the \$1,200 needed to fund the project.

The construction and fundraising themselves present challenges, but perhaps the biggest challenge facing the Wyverns in space project is locating the payload after it’s fallen back to Earth.

“It’s definitely feasible,” said Mr. Bateson. “But there are still challenges to overcome... I think his timeline is very ambitious, but the project may not be finished as soon as Connor plans.”

Connor is using a landing predictor website from Cambridge University in England where he can input the weight of the payload, and it will use weather patterns and wind speeds to predict the place of landing.

Connor said the goal is for the payload to land somewhere between Buzzards Bay, Mass...and the Atlantic Ocean. Connor said he will use a canoe and a 12-foot-long pole to track down and retrieve the payload.

Even with the intense amount of planning, Connor said the exact landing site is unpredictable.

“If it lands in someone’s yard, we’ll say hey, here’s a \$100 and a bottle of champagne. Can we please get our mascot?” said Connor. “However there are a few places where we can’t get it, for example, if it lands on an interstate highway or in a federal prison.”

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for a photo called “Far Away.”

The photo was taken as a part of her Photography II Honors class, for a project in which she took several photographs around the theme of “tone.”

Meghan has also been honing her craft outside of school.

“I’ve been assisting a photographer outside of school,” she said. “It gives you a different perspective. It’s really cool to watch a person who takes photos for a living.”

Eighth grader Vanessa Meikle won a Silver Key for her clay sculpture “Rebellious.” Inspired by a photo of Cara Delevingne, it depicts a girl wearing a hat and sunglasses, and is all gold.

“She just looked like she was up to no good and had that satisfied smile on her face,” Vanessa said.

Vanessa has been involved in the arts ever since she was little. “I entered in many art shows and fairs where I could sell my artwork, and, to my surprise, people actually bought it,” she said.

Junior Bonnie Steinberg received an Honorable Mention for her acrylic painting of cupcakes. She painted this piece of artwork last year, as part of her painting class.

“Everyone in the class photographed cupcakes and painted their photo,” she said.

Bonnie has been taking

art classes at KO since Middle School, and took Drawing and Painting during her freshman and sophomore years. This year, she is taking Honors Portfolio Prep.

Freshman Molly Baron received an Honorable Mention in the Printmaking category for a work titled “Donut.”

She made the piece in Printmaking this year, which is her third art class at KO; she has also taken Sculpture and Ceramics.

“This piece was difficult because of the many tries it took to get the colors perfect and all the stencils in line to form the doughnut,” Molly said. “But after the numerous tries my hard work finally paid off with the final project.”

Senior Mackenzie McDonald won an Honorable Mention for her black-and-white photograph, “Locked Out of Heaven.” Mackenzie visited Holyland USA, an abandoned church-themed amusement park in Waterbury.

“It’s super creepy and there’s all sorts of neglected religious objects lying around,” she said. “I thought the contrast of the rusty fence with the cross in the background was symbolic of being somehow separated from your faith.”

Out of over 3,000 pieces submitted from around Connecticut, fewer than 600 are being displayed.

“It’s an honor just to be in the show,” said Mr. McDonald.

KO welcomes new boys soccer coach Paul Wright

by Ben Putterman '17

From his origins in Gibraltar, Paul Wright’s life has taken him around the world. From Massachusetts to Spain, soccer has caused Coach Wright to train and play in different countries and for different teams.

Now, Wright has settled down at KO and will be the Head Coach of the varsity boys soccer team starting in the autumn of 2016, taking over for Peter Jones.

In 1995 after being recruited to play soccer by Central Connecticut State University, Coach Wright moved to the United States.

During his four years as a student-athlete, Wright won many awards including All-New England, All-Conference Team,

and All-Tourney Team. At CCSU, Wright still holds the record for most goals in a game (8) and has the second most goals in a season (23). After his college-playing career, he played professionally for the Western Mass Pioneers.

He then moved to the Major Indoor Soccer League and played for the Philadelphia Kixx and eventually moved to Segunda B in Spain.

He then came back to the states and worked in order to get his coaching badges and licenses. He coached for CCSU from 2006-2012 and is now the coach of the U13 Elite FSA team and is the director of Juniors Program.

As the new coach and member of the KO boys soccer program, Coach Wright said he

wants to adapt to the KO community and will try to improve the program one step at a time. “In my first year I am going to try and get the best out of the current group of players,” he said.

He said that a major key to improving the program quickly is for him to get to know the players. The player-coach bond and chemistry, he said, are always important when trying to get better.

Long term, Coach Wright said he hopes to improve the program as a whole by obtaining new players and working his hardest to help the younger players succeed.

“I am going to try to attract some of the best local players and make them think about coming to KO,” he said. “I want to help

the team be the most successful they can be,” Wright continued.

Four current varsity players assisted in the interview process for the head coach position.

“I think the addition of Paul Wright is vital to the improvement of the KO soccer program,” said sophomore player Ryan Goss. “His coaching skill and experience will help to improve the team.”

Team members said they’re looking forward to having a new face in the program and that they believe he will be an important part of advancing players’ ability and passion for the game.

“I think he will add a new dimension and motivation to the team for next season and hopefully, with help, can bring in some good players as well as improve

“I want to help the team be the most successful they can be.”

— Paul Wright

next year’s returners,” said sophomore player William Appleton.

Several members of the team said they were excited about being coached by Coach Wright.

An official introduction of Coach Wright to all varsity, JV, and Middle School soccer players will occur at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday Feb. 10.

Boys basketball continues season strong, looking for future success

by Kelly Maloney '16

The boys varsity basketball team continues their hard fought season playing some very competitive games to make their record 5-9.

Many new and returning players have stepped up so far throughout the season to put them in a comfortable position for the next month of the winter season.

The team had a rough patch of close, aggressive games that resulted in unfortunate losses.

On Wednesday, Jan. 13, the team played Hotchkiss, with a very strong start. KO took the lead for the majority of the first half and ended the first half with a 32-27 lead.

Unfortunately, with the depth of the Hotchkiss team and KO's lack of depth, the Wyverns could not match the fresh legs coming off the bench of the Hotchkiss team in the second half; the end result was 54-67.

The lack of depth on the KO team has been a weakthroughout the season.

"[We] lack depth and are young," said Head Coach Garth Adams. "The good news about being young is that there will be a lot of returning players who are adjusted to what it means to be a varsity player."

On Saturday, Jan. 16, the boys team traveled to Pomfret



Sophomore guard Ben Tauber dribbles the ball up the court at Milbrook School. Photo by Brittney Schwartz '16.

School. Pomfret came out strong the first half playing hard defense on KO perimeter shooters, one of the boys' strengths, which forced some tough shots.

With Pomfret having a size advantage, they went up 30-11 at half. Stretching their intensity to the second half, Pomfret did not let down and won the game 70-34.

One strength that the boys team has this year is shooting. "[We are] good offensively. We have no problems scoring the basketball," said senior Co-captain Ryan Nesbit.

Coach Adams agreed that the team shoots well, praising freshman guard Nick Bray and

junior guard Mark Billingsly. Coach Adams also spoke highly of sophomore forward Jackson Meshanic, "He is a classic, old school post player who plays strong inside," he said.

On Friday, Jan. 22, the team traveled to Westminster to play them the second time this season. The first time the team played them was on Dec. 5, beating them 80-73.

But this time KO was not going to let down. KO was up 28-18 with three minutes to go in the first half, but then defensive lapses let the Marlets back to tie the score 28-28 at half.

In the second half KO

came out strong and controlled the game from then on.

"Meschanic took advantage of the size advantage we had," said Nesbit. "Bray did really well defending their best player and taking him out of the offense.

Meschanic scored 24 points, Bray finished with 20 points on five three-pointers, and Nesbit had a double double with 10 points and 14 rebounds.

Another strength of the team, Nesbit said, is how well coached they are, which was evident after the Westminster game.

"Coach Adams does what puts us in a good spot to succeed," says Nesbit. "[He] puts the right people at the right time."

On Jan. 20, the team traveled to Gunnery School hungry for a win after some hard-fought battles. In the first half, KO was not showing how well they can play, and a lot of transition baskets and easy shots were taken by Gunnery.

The first half score ended with KO down 35-28. KO came back to the court in the second half ready to control the game, which they did both offensively and defensively.

With the score tied 62-62 with under 30 seconds left in the second half, Gunnery hit a three in the corner in last couple of seconds to make the final score 65-62.

"We didn't play as well as we are capable of," said Nesbit.

"We let role players score well above their season average."

But, in a rematch with Gunnery on Saturday, Jan. 30, the Wyverns won 83-72.

Going into this game, the team was hungry and ready for the win because of the three-point heart break they experienced in the previous game.

"They had one really good kid who we did a fairly nice job of [in the first game], but going into the second game, it's going to be about making other players beat us and not giving them open shots," said Nesbit.

Coach Adams said that the Wyverns had to keep an eye on the one strong player they have,

"We had to know where he is on defense and be mindful of where he is and giving him attention," he said. "[Also] making sure we stay with our shooters and making sure we don't give up easy shots."

"We played very well offensively and, even though we didn't have a very good defensive game, in the end we found a way to win," said Nesbit.

The boys continue their season this at 2:30 p.m., on Saturday, Feb. 6, at St. George's School.

Girls hockey battles throughout season with lack of numbers

by Kyle Zimmerman '18

The girls hockey team takes advantage of their small numbers by creating a strong team dynamic that allows them to continue playing hard even against the bigger, stronger teams.

This year's team has significantly fewer players compared to their opponents. "For our low numbers, we compete really well with the other teams," said sophomore Eliza Charette.

Senior Co-captain Nicole Demers agreed. "It has been a challenge with limited members but we have made the most of it," she said.

Players said Head Coach John Hissick carefully analyzes the team during games and puts together practices to improve on the team's weaknesses.

"He produces productive practices and makes plays that we can use in our games," said Charette.

"We play well together and execute our systems well," said Demers. Although the team has many strengths, they have one problem: scoring.

"In practice we work on our systems and we do them pretty well," said Charette. "We just have trouble putting the

puck in the back of the net."

The girls have been working on different systems to help improve their games.

Various team members said that, when they executed these new strategies in games, they turned out to be successful. Currently they are working on a new breakout and two different forechecks.

After the impressive win over Rye Country Day School on Hockey Night on Friday, Jan. 8, the

"For our low numbers, we compete really well with the other teams."

— Eliza Charette

girls have suffered several losses.

But they lost 6-0 to Governor's Academy on Wednesday, Jan. 13. "Governor's was a very strong team," said Demers. "We got in a big hole in the beginning, but we started playing better in the second half."

On Saturday, Jan. 16, the

girls suffered a 6-0 loss to the fierce Canterbury School. Even with a loss, the team was able to learn from their mistakes for future games.

The following Wednesday, Jan. 27 the Wyverns lost to Portsmouth Abbey 5-3, but they were able to stay in the game and hold off the Portsmouth Abbey team for a good amount of time.

Last Thursday, Jan. 28, they lost to Canterbury School for a second time.

But, this time, they lost 5-0, which was an improvement from last game. Players said their use of the new systems and Coach Hissick's coaching allowed the girls to do this.

Freshman goalie Courtney Fairchild plays a big part in blocking many of their opponents shots. On Hockey Night, for instance, Fairchild had a monumental 23 saves.

Charette said senior Ellie Kraus and Demers made colossal contributions to the team and made the better overall.

With the packed schedule last week, the team had limited practice time.

Players said it was good experience playing the stronger teams, but they didn't have much time to work on things



Senior Rachel Maselli fights for puck from a Williston Northampton competitor. Photo by Hope Nemirow '16.

that needed to be worked on. Games every Wednesday and Saturday have tired out the team.

The team has been disappointed with their games in the past, but this didn't stop them from having large goals for the future.

"Our goal as a team is to improve as individual players and then improve our game strategies to ultimately win more games," said Charette.

Other players said that they hope to finish the season strong by getting some more wins.

The team will play away at St. George's School at 1 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 6.

They did not play against St. George's last year, so they do not know what to expect. Hopefully, the team will have time to recover without a three games this week and secure a win.

The team also plays some very tough competition in the remaining month of the winter season, these teams include Gunnery School, Rye Country Day School and Greenwich Academy.



Junior girls basketball Co-captain Kayla Glemaud. Photo by Lexi Banasiewicz '16.

Players of the Moment: Kayla Glemaud and Zach Hoffman

by Austin Lemkuil '16 and Will Gitlin '17



Senior varsity boys hockey goalie Zach Hoffman. Photo by Lexi Banasiewicz '16.

Kayla Glemaud

Varsity girls basketball Co-captain junior Kayla Glemaud has achieved a successful performance this year, leading her team on and off the court. Glemaud first started playing basketball for a park and recreational league when she was in fourth grade. Glemaud has also been playing on an AAU basketball team since sixth grade and this will be her last year on that team.

"I like the intensity of the game and competitiveness atmosphere," said Glemaud. "I enjoy working as a team with other individuals, strengthening other people's games as well as my own."

Glemaud considers herself to be someone who is motivated and communicates with the coaching staff in terms of what's going on with the team and what needs to be done. She sets the tone with her effort and enthusiasm on and off the court, always putting the team first.

"Her effort affects the team and the team looks up to her as someone they can follow," said Head Coach Mark McCaleb. "She is someone that the team can build a culture around."

Glemaud's stats do not fully show her ability, since as a player her skills are solid in all aspects of the game. When she plays at the top of her game, she has the capability to be one of the best players in New England. One of Glemaud's greatest strengths is that she manages to have fun working hard but she works hard with a purpose.

"I think I need to be more aggressive attacking the basket," said Glemaud. "I need to take the right amount of shots while also spreading the ball around to give our team the best chance of winning."

Glemaud is playing out of position for KO this season, so it is difficult for her to work on her outside game. At the same time, because there is such a fluidity of the game she is able to work on her skills. As she has become more mature over the past year, she has been able to stay calm and composed on the basketball floor. During freshman year Glemaud would go back and forth with the refs but now she talks with them in a more mature manner.

"She is a great leader because she brings a lot of energy to the team," said junior center Isabel Kaufman. "Her work ethic is contagious and makes the team want to work harder." As captain, Glemaud said that she has to be a prominent vocal leader on the floor for the underclassmen who are not as confident to speak up.

"On the floor we have worked on trying to keep a less frustrated tension and try to be more positive," said Glemaud. "Off the court I try to be the person who people can talk to so that tension does not arise between people that would affect how we play on the floor."

Glemaud has been on the varsity basketball team for three

years now with three different head coaches. The instability of three different head coaches implementing different offenses and different coaching styles has been difficult to overcome. Glemaud said that always changing with what they want can be frustrating but she has adjusted to ensure success.

She plans on going to college to play basketball where she can play Division I basketball.

Zach Hoffman

Senior varsity boys hockey goalie Zach Hoffman has been playing hockey for as long as he can remember. From learning to play the game at six-years old to becoming a varsity starter, Hoffman's love for the game has only grown stronger as the years have passed.

Hoffman began his hockey career playing for the West Hartford Wolves through the West Hartford Youth Hockey Association at only six-years old. While he started to improve and sharpen his skills, he instantly knew that hockey would become a big part of his future.

"Hockey has always been a big part of who I am," said Hoffman. "When I first started playing for the Wolves. I didn't want to stop playing."

Hoffman's career early on shaped the player that he is today. After playing for the West Hartford Wolves for five years

up until eighth grade, Hoffman brought his talents to KO.

Hoffman's love for hockey runs in the family. With three older brothers who played hockey, it was only natural for Hoffman to lace up the skates as well. "All of my brothers played hockey so I was introduced to it at a very young age," said Hoffman. "They taught me how to play and it was nice to have brothers to look up to and help me improve."

Hoffman also said that while he has been playing hockey all his life, he has also always played goalie. From the first time he set foot on the ice he was instantly drawn to the goalie position and embraced that role on all of his teams.

"I've been playing goalie ever since I could remember," said Hoffman. "I love the position and I'm glad I chose it when I first began playing."

Two of Hoffman's brothers were skaters while the other one played goalie. Hoffman thought he should play goalie just to try it out and even out the goalies-to-skaters ratio in the family.

While Hoffman is a three-sport varsity player, he says that he is especially always looking forward to hockey season. He said that there is a special bond between the players on the team that has created a brotherhood.

He had to wait his turn for several seasons before assuming the role as starting goalie. "I learned a lot from the previous goalies on the team," said Hoffman. "They helped

make me the player I am today."

"He's doing pretty well this year adjusting to being a starter opposed to a backup in previous years," said enior Captain defenseman AJ Przystawski. "He keeps his composure and makes sure he puts his best foot forward when he steps on the ice."

Senior forward Kyle Keenan agreed. "Hoffman's stepped into a leadership role this year at a really important position," said Keenan. "He's done a great job this year and we can count on him to make a key save in games."

Hoffman said that playing for KO has created some of his best memories playing hockey. He said that playing in Hockey Night for four years at KO has been one of the best experiences of his life involving hockey. "Playing in Hockey Night is my favorite hockey memory," said Hoffman. "All of the fans going crazy in the stands definitely makes us play better and those are games that I will always remember."

Hockey Night this year did in fact make Hoffman play better, as the Wyverns shutout Rye Country Day School with a 5-0 win. Hoffman's fantastic performance at goalie helped the Wyverns earn a victory on his final hockey night.

"Hoffman's great game during Hockey Night gave all of the skaters a boost during the game," said Przystawski. "We knew we could rely on Hoffman throughout the entire game."

Hoffman is undecided as to whether he will continue to play hockey in college.

Girls squash(es) the competition

by Michael Loughran '17

Powered by a young and skilled roster, girls varsity squash looks to continue their success in the second half of the season.

Near the midway point of the season, the Wyverns are 5-3 against some challenging Founders' League opponents.

On Wednesday, Jan. 13, the Wyverns faced Canterbury and won in dominating fashion 6-1. In their next match, they beat Taft 6-1 on Saturday, Jan. 16.

The team hit a minor roadblock when they faced a solid Choate squad and lost 5-2 on Wednesday, Jan. 20.

"We played really well and this was one of those pivotal matches in the middle of the season to give you confidence.

Choate is an A-class school, so knowing we could compete with some of their players will give us confidence in future matches," said Head Coach Andrew Carr.

Using the loss against Choate as motivation and a confidence boost, the Wyverns returned to action with vengeance on Wednesday, Jan. 27, beating Suffield Academy 5-2.

This was Kingswood Oxford's first victory against the Tigers from Suffield in eight years and the first win against them under Coach Carr.

"This was a big win for our team because it puts us in good standings for New England, and we haven't beaten them in eight years," said junior captain No. 1 seed Julia Goldsmith.

The Wyverns look to carry

this success into the latter half of the season and carry momentum heading in to New England's.

Having a younger team, and no seniors, the Wyverns looked to gain experience coming into the season. "My expectations for this season were to get experience for the younger players and grow as a team," said Goldsmith.

"When I was younger, older leadership really helped me get better and feel more confident. I hope we can do that for the younger kids now," she added.

The team set a goal at the beginning of the season to play in the New England tournament, however a new goal has been set.

"Our goal from the beginning of the season was to earn an invite to B-class New England. This was a lofty goal consid-

ering we lost five of our top 10 players from last year but this team is hard working and a fast-improving," said Coach Carr. "The new goal is to not only make the tournament, but to do well in it."

Halfway into the season, the team lost a player when junior No. 5 Rose Esselstyn left KO for second semester.

"We went into the season aware we would lose a key asset, but we didn't let that bring us down. Rose played great matches, and, now that she's gone, [junior] Ambika [Natarajan] has stepped up to the plate," said junior no. 2 Faith Pease.

In order for the team to enjoy more success, Coach Carr says they must work on being more consistent. "Consistency is the biggest thing. Day to day,

we need to be more consistently hitting deep shots as well as mixing up our shot selection."

In practice, consistency is emphasized. The team practices their skills with a variety of drills and conditions themselves with running, culminating in practice matches to prepare themselves for the real thing.

Currently, the Wyverns are playing at a very high level. Some players said that their recent victories surpassed their initial expectations. "We came in the season as a team that was going to learn a lot this year since we are young," Goldsmith said.

The Wyverns expect to play well in their upcoming matches against Pomfret Wednesday, Feb. 3, Miss Porter's Saturday, Feb. 6 and Berkshire Wednesday, Feb. 10.

Ice see you, boys! KO hockey begins to see success on the ice

by Nick Ravalese '17

After losing to the Pomfret School 5-1 in a difficult game on Wednesday, Jan. 27, the varsity boys hockey team will look to regain their winning form in order to continue their successful run so far this season.

The team has had a strong campaign so far with a 4-8-2 record.

"It has been a good season so far," said Head Coach Ben Adams. "We have improved as a team since the beginning of the season and look to be a competitive team this season."

Head Coach Adams also discussed his team's success in their new league this season. "Games are much more much more equally balanced and competitive against new teams this year," he said.

"The Founders League teams we played last year were uneven and not fairly matched games; players were unable to fully excel and grow. Players on the team last year have been able to experience more success this season," he added.

Head Coach Adams said he has also been impressed by the leadership and performances that some players have contributed to the team so far this season, specifically from the seniors on the team.

"Zach Hoffman has really stepped up filling the goal and replacing the role left by Nicholas Bridges from last season," he said. Senior goalie Hoffman has had an



Junior Drew Nemirow lines up a pass in a recent game against the Moses Brown School. Photo by Hope Nemirow '16.

impressive season so far in net, achieving a .917 save percentage.

Junior Drew Nemirow and senior Co-captain AJ Przystawski have also made an immediate impact on their returns to the team this season. "It is great to have Drew and AJ back and healthy on the team. They have both made great contributions to the team," said Coach Adams.

Przystawski said he is very glad to be back playing with the boys hockey team after being unable to play all of last season due to injury. His contributions to the team have been noted by both coaches and his teammates.

"I'm really happy to finally be fit and able to play with the team again. We have a strong team and talented players that have helped us in difficult games this season," said Przystawski.

Coach Adams also praised other players. "Drew Nemirow, Kyle Keenan and Brendan Lantieri have been a solid partnership upfront and together lead the team goals," said Coach Adams.

The attacking trio consisting of Nemirow, senior Brendan Lantieri and senior Kyle Keenan have made an impressive impact on the team's offensive record so far this season.

Lantieri leads the team in scoring, averaging 1.5 goals a game, while Nemirow follows him averaging 1.38 goals a game and Keenan is in third averaging 1.1 goals a game.

Much of the squad's success can be traced back to their impressive work ethic.

"We work really hard in practice and come out to each game with a mentality to win," said junior Josh Bobruff. "We are able to compete and win against teams that we have struggled against in previous seasons."

Przystawski said he has also been impressed with the

team's efforts so far this season and the results of close games. The team has used their experience with close games to finish each competitive matchup strong in the last period, he said.

"We as a team improve each game and are willing to compete this season in order to get the results we want," he said. "Even young players and new additions to the team have made impacts in

"We have a strong team and talented players that have helped us in difficult games this season."

— AJ Przystawski

games and in practice in order as us for a team to get better," he said.

Coach Adams said the rest of the season will present challenges. "Our goals as a team change weekly depending on what challenge or task we will be faced with. Our goal for the season is to qualify for the home ice play offs, and in order to achieve it, we need to maintain a competitive mentality," he said.

The Wyverns skaters have four games left in which they hope to continue their successful run and make it into the playoff games.

Girls basketball searching for wins

by Ryan Nesbit '16

The varsity girls basketball team has had a bit of a disappointing start to the season, trudging out to a disappointing 3-12 record.

All hope is not lost, however, as two of those wins came in back-to-back games against Miss Porter's School and Cheshire Academy.

Junior Co-captain forward Kayla Glemaud described the 46-38 win against Miss Porter's as the point "where it all came together."

Glemaud pointed out senior Co-captain guard Kelly Maloney and junior forward Isabel Kaufman as key contributors in that game.

"[Kaufman] hit two early three pointers and scored in the post while [Maloney] had a "sweet and one-play" and pushed the tempo to get to the line," she said.

The girls also defeated Cheshire Academy by a score of 42-39, showing that they were the superior team when it mattered most. "We came out really strong, playing very well as a team both offensively and defensively," she said.

Unfortunately, the girls suffered a loss when they faced

off against Hotchkiss. The teams were tied with one minute to play, but KO ultimately couldn't pull out a third straight victory.

Maloney pointed to the opposing team's energy and fan support as well as a lack of depth off the bench as key factors in the loss.

Similarly, the girls lost to Westminster, a winnable game in which the Martlets pulled away from the Wyverns at the end.

The team definitely has their strengths, one of which is their play on the defensive side of the court. Glemaud points out that the girls are good at quickly anticipating passes and jumping the passing lanes.

She said that improving communication in games will be key to more success. "Once we are vocal on the floor, we will be able to stop any team that we face regardless of their height or athletic ability."

One of the team's weaknesses includes their lack of ability to create on the offensive end.

Part of the problem is that, when the going gets tough, the team has a tendency to play as a group of individuals as opposed to a unit, said Glemaud.

She also said that the team is working hard to focus on details in practice in order for them to recognize which players are best utilized in certain situations.

Maloney agreed that offense has been a struggle, saying that the team needs to finish better around the hoop. "We are in the right positions at the right times; all we need to do is finish," said Maloney.

Maloney and Glemaud each distinguished one another as standout players for the team. Glemaud said that she admires the intensity and work ethic that Maloney brings to each and every game and practice.

"I admire her leadership and I'm glad I get to work with her on the court," Glemaud said.

Maloney said of Glemaud that her selflessness truly makes it fun to share the court with her.

Maloney also acknowledged Kaufman's recent efforts in the absence of freshman forward Madi Henry. "Isabel is being tougher in the paint and taking it to the basket," Maloney said.

Maloney and Glemaud once again came to a mutual agreement that one of the goals for the end

of the season is to come together as a team and trust one another.

"I really want to have a team that trusts each other on the court and will hustle and play for each other, not the scoreboard at the end of the game," said Glemaud.

Obviously, the team wants to improve their record, but Glemaud

said she understands that it is about the process. She said that once the team comes together to play as one, the wins will surely follow not too far behind.

The girls look to take on Millbrook School in their next game at KO at 4:00 on Wednesday, Feb. 3.



Junior captain Kayla Glemaud defends against a Hotchkiss opponent. Photo by Hope Nemirow '16.

Boys and girls swimming dives through second half of season

by Ryan Albanesi '17

The varsity boys and girls swimming and diving team are relying on experienced leaders and an impressive work ethic to power past the annoyance of cancelled meets towards a successful post season.

In their first meet after an impressive finish for both the boys and girls teams at the KO Invitational, the Wyverns traveled to Northfield Mount Hermon on Saturday, Jan. 9. While the boys team won, the girls team performed well against the competitive opponents but could not finish with a victory, losing by just a few points.

"At NMH, our older swimmers were able to use their expertise and guide the younger swimmers to getting their personal bests," senior Co-captain David Lessard said.

Since that meet, however, the story for the swimmers and divers has been one of cancellations and tough practices. "In terms of actual meets, we haven't had many, so it's become a heavy training period," Head Coach Kata Baker said.

The meet scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 13 against Cheshire Academy, for example, was cancelled.

However, during their time, off, the team has not let up. In the period between meets, practices were structured specifically for both the girls and boys.

"The main goal has been endurance and working on the details," Coach Baker said. "In the meets, if I'm noticing poor streamlines or starts, I'm marking that down and we are



Senior Andrew Zimmerman swims butterfly. Photo by Ali Zilahy '16.

working on it now," she said.

Head Coach Alex Kraus commented on the now infamous 100x100 practice that he says is usually held at this time of year to start conditioning for post season swimming. "I try to encourage people not to be afraid of hard work, because it's really not something to be scared of," he said.

With a wide variety of experience on both teams, practices have also been tailored specifically to benefit each swimmer. "On the girls team, there are a lot of people who have been swimming since they were young, but we also have seven girls who are new to the KO Upper School and Upper School swimming," Coach Baker said.

To help each team member, practices are broken up into different parts, with each coach advising a small group of kids on certain skills, she said.

The captains and senior leadership on both squads have played a huge role in making these tough practices work, junior

Jack Barry said. "The captains have stepped up and taken control in practice, especially making sure everyone is staying focused when we are all working on our individual events," he said.

Junior Laura Polley agreed. "Even with losing some incredible, record-holding swimmers that graduated," she said, "new people and our captains have stepped up and everyone has been pulling their weight."

Also, this year has been particularly impressive in the diving category, with both Lessard and Coach Kraus commenting on the success of sophomore Carter Castanza on the board as well as senior Mick Hains.

In a dual meet against Avon Old Farms School and Miss Porter's on Saturday, Jan. 16, both teams suffered tough losses. The girls swam competitively but ultimately lost by a score of 100.5 to 76.5. However, there were some notable performances, including senior Captain

Olivia Shea winning the 200 free with a time of 2:11:34, and sophomore Emma Ouellette alongside junior Laura Polley taking first and second places respectively in the 50 free. Their times of 27.55 and 28.27 were both season bests.

On the boys side, the next meet against Suffield Academy saw some impressive solo results. In the 50-yard backstroke, senior Co-captain Jack Wolf won with a time of 28.40, and junior Jack Barry won his 200 yard freestyle by nearly ten seconds with a time of 1:52.07.

More importantly, Coach Kraus said, was how the boys team has worked together looking towards post-season competition: "The boys have six seniors and bring a lot of experience and some goofiness, but they do things like show up and they just sort of know how it goes."

Coach Baker echoed this sentiment, commenting on the girls team. "We have girls who are at that point where they've gone through so many rounds of this season, tapering and championships, that they are just consistently solid even if they aren't swimming their best meets just yet."

Leadership for both teams has been key, and Coach Kraus pointed toward an instance where, due to other coaches' having unavoidable commitments, he was all alone taking the team to a match.

"I showed up the other day by myself with the team, and it was pretty easy for me to say what the warm up," he said. "They worked it out totally by themselves and it was pretty simple

and nice to see them work it out."

After the meet against Canterbury School, scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 23, was cancelled, the boys and girls faced Williston Northampton on Saturday, Jan. 30 at home.

Before the competition, Coach Kraus commented on his goals for the meet. "I think both teams are a little mismatched with girls and boys. Their girls program is a bit stronger than ours and our boys a bit stronger than theirs... but we aren't going to worry about the overall score because their coach shares our philosophy that it's not all about the score but about getting everybody better."

Coach Baker agreed. "My goal for people is to start building some confidence, where even if we are going to lose a meet just because of how strong our opponents are. But I'm going to try and start moments where the confidence is growing and we're learning what it means to race smart," she said.

In the meet, the boys won with a score of 98-69 while the girls struggled, eventually losing with a score of 95-80.

Looking forward to post-season competition, all KO swimmers will have the chance to compete in the Founders competition, and then about half will qualify for New England's. "Everybody gets to have a shot at swimming their best at the end of the season, regardless of their specific talent or experience," Coach Kraus said.

Using their leadership and drawing on their hard work in practices, both teams are poised for a strong finish to the winter.

Boys squash has hope for future

by Gabe Wolman '16

With an extremely young team, the boys varsity squash team has begun the season with a poor 1-6 record, but with lots of hope for the future.

The Wyverns were defeated at the Millbrook School 7-0 on Saturday, Jan. 30. "We didn't have our No. 1, Matt Lazor, and the Millbrook team was really talented all the way through their lineup, but we fought hard," said junior



Boys squash senior Co-captain Josh Pugliese hits a rail against strong Millbrook team. Photo by Hope Nemirow '16.

Co-Captain No. 3 Ryan Albanesi. "In Josh Pugliese's match, each point was competitive and there's something to be said for trying our best even in these tough competitions. They were ridiculously good, and we were all bumped up a spot. Maybe with Matt Lazor it would've been better."

KO lost to the Loomis Chaffee School 6-1 on Wednesday, January 27, but the final tally was not representative of the competitiveness of the matches. "Loomis unfortunately our No. 4 Ben Putterman got injured so that would have been a win," said Head Coach Robby Lingashi. "No 2 Josh Pugliese's match went to five games and lost in a tiebreak. It was a match that could have gone either way, even though we lost 6-1."

The team traveled to the Kent School on Friday, Jan. 22, and lost 7-0. "We were missing Ryan because of a model UN commitment, and he plays three so everyone moved up, said Putterman. "I played a very talented player from Egypt. They were a very good team but it would have

been closer if the match was played at home because Kent's courts are not traditional courts. They are very skinny and high walls, which is a big advantage for Kent."

The team's biggest strength is their fitness, which can be attributed to their work ethic. "The team's biggest strength in my opinion is our fitness," said senior Co-Captain No. 2 Josh Pugliese. "We do a lot of running to stay in shape to prepare for long matches and to outlast other teams."

Though their biggest strength is fitness, health has been their biggest weakness. "Our largest weakness this year has been inconsistencies in our ladder, said Pugliese. "We have had one match and one tournament where we have had our full team, or people that weren't injured. The rest we have had one to two kids out every match, which can make a big difference."

"This is happening again against Millbrook as well," he said, "where Matt Lazor, our No. 1, won't be there, forcing the rest of the team play up

one spot, which in squash can be a large jump in skill level."

Despite the many losses due to injury, the team has found a few key players who have recently been playing very well. The top three players are eighth-grader Lazor, Pugliese and Albanesi.

One of the most improved players is freshman No. 6 Aiden Shea. With limited experience, Shea has shown promise for the future and displays true potential for his age. "The most improved has to go to Aidan Shea, said Pugliese. "He has only been playing squash for two years and as a freshman is doing well. He has yet to win a match but for a freshman to be playing at a number six spot is very rare especially against a lot of the stronger teams we play. However, he has done a great job bringing his play up to the next level."

Coach Lingashi also mentioned Pugliese as one of the most improved players, citing his fitness as his biggest strength.

Despite a poor record, Coach Lingashi said he has high hopes for his team. "We are not that great

right now," he said, "but we are not bad. We are floating in the middle."

The team's main goals are to have a strong showing at New England's. "My goals for the rest of the season for the team are just to stay positive and stay ready," said Albanesi. "We've got the potential for a few really good wins and New England's could be awesome, as long as we don't get down on ourselves and start second guessing what we've been doing."

This year's team is so young with only one senior and the No. 1 player being an eighth grader. It could be labeled as a rebuilding year because last year's team was a very strong team.

"Last year's team was by far the best KO squash has been since I have been on the team," said Pugliese. "We had a great senior presence, finishing with an 8-7 record. This year is more of a rebuilding year. I am the only senior on the varsity team this year, after losing four seniors from the team last year."

The team's next match is with Canterbury on Wednesday, Feb. 3.