



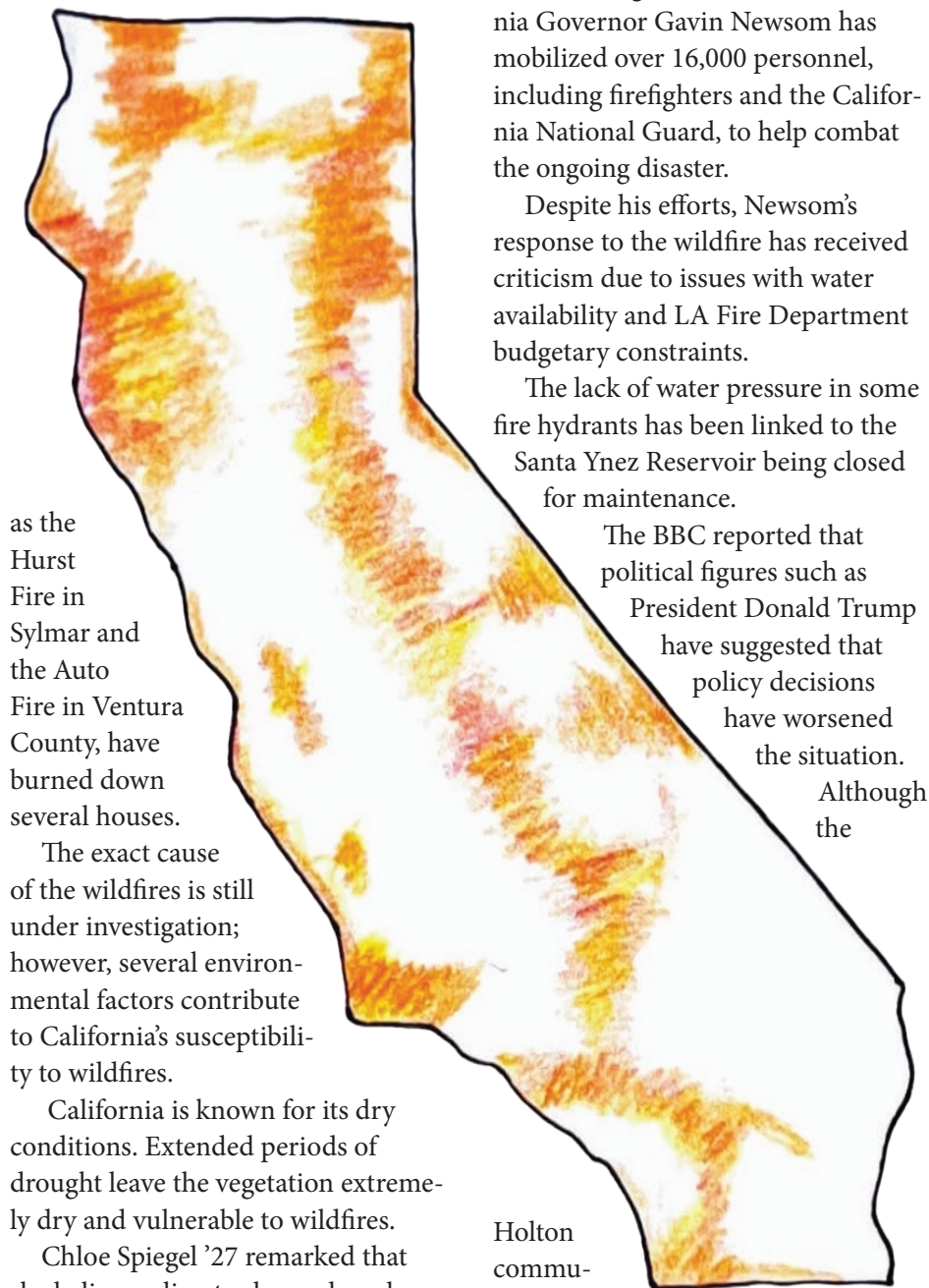
Wildfires Destroy Parts of California

BY MIA ESTEVEZ-BRETON

According to NBC, since January 15, Southern California has experienced devastating wildfires that have scorched over 33,000 acres of land, destroyed thousands of structures and so far, have claimed at least 28 lives.

The most notably hit areas are the Pacific Palisades, where the Palisades Fire continues to burn, and Pasadena, which has been invaded by the Eaton Fire.

Additionally, smaller fires, such



as the Hurst Fire in Sylmar and the Auto Fire in Ventura County, have burned down several houses.

The exact cause of the wildfires is still under investigation; however, several environmental factors contribute to California's susceptibility to wildfires.

California is known for its dry conditions. Extended periods of drought leave the vegetation extremely dry and vulnerable to wildfires.

Chloe Spiegel '27 remarked that she believes climate change has also "played a role in the wildfires since it

has dried out the climate, making it more susceptible to burning."

Additionally, according to CNN, strong winds in California have intensified the fire by reaching up to 100 mph and spreading flames rapidly across large areas.

Over 32,500 residents have evacuated from their homes in response. Evacuation centers have been established to provide shelter and essential resources, reported The American Red Cross.

According to his website, California Governor Gavin Newsom has mobilized over 16,000 personnel, including firefighters and the California National Guard, to help combat the ongoing disaster.

Despite his efforts, Newsom's response to the wildfire has received criticism due to issues with water availability and LA Fire Department budgetary constraints.

The lack of water pressure in some fire hydrants has been linked to the Santa Ynez Reservoir being closed for maintenance.

The BBC reported that political figures such as President Donald Trump have suggested that policy decisions have worsened the situation.

Although the

Holton commu-

art by Laila Clarke

nity may not be able to provide direct assistance to California, students can support the cause by donating to organizations such as the Red Cross and generally spreading awareness.

According to alumna Shawnly Benhia '24, who is a current freshman at UCLA, "school organizations, clubs and sororities are all raising money and holding donation drives for the members of the UCLA community that were impacted."

Due to the wildfires, Benhia "chose to evacuate to a friend's house in Newport out of fear." Eventually, her classes were "moved online, so [she] flew back home to Virginia," where she "complet[ed her] classes on Zoom." Benhia is now back on campus.

On January 30 and 31, the Environmental Action Club held a bake sale to raise money for families affected by the wildfires.

Despite the challenges posed by the catastrophic wildfires in Southern California, communities and organizations are coming together to support those affected through donations, relief efforts and collective resilience.



photo by Mira Wissman

Security Guard Dave Hawkins Retires

BY CHLOE SPIEGEL

Security guard Dave Hawkins, well-known for his friendly morning greetings, will enter retirement at the end of the school year.

Hawkins joined the community in February 2001 as a member of the facilities team. Then, he became a bus driver. Finally, Hawkins served at the front desk to keep the school safe. Hawkins said, "It was an honor and a pleasure to work at the front desk. I truly enjoyed it. It was fantastic."

His acts of kindness have had an impact on the experiences of community members. Lauren Hemann '27 shared, "Last year, in the basketball finals, he came to watch the game and to support us, and he was cheering the whole time."

Facilities Manager for Campus Safety Nate Wilson said, "Every memory with Mr. Hawkins is special. Celebrating special days together as a team such as birthdays and working by his side at the front desk stand out."

Hawkins made students feel appreciated. Liv Hoffman '28 shared, "I miss his greetings and how he represented Holton so well as the first person you see when you walk into school."

Hawkins was also known for giving advice. Head of School Penny Evins reflected, "When I would let Gigi [dog] out, we would sit in chairs and talk about life, purpose, Holton and health. It was like a therapy session for me, and he was like a philosopher." While community members will miss Hawkins, he wants everyone to remember that he is "not done yet" and "still a part of the family" as he will be back in Late February to work part-time.

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50,000 Attendees Show Up for “The People’s March” on the National Mall

BY ELIZA DORTON

On January 18, 50,000 people joined together in the People’s March to crowd the streets of Downtown Washington, D.C. and make their way to the National Mall in protest of President Donald J. Trump’s Inauguration two days later.

They marched for asserting women’s reproductive rights, combating climate change and promoting racial justice and other left-leaning causes at the direction of Women’s March, Planned Parenthood and several other progressive organizations.

The demonstrators began at three different squares to organize before marching to the Lincoln Memorial, where a rally took place and organizations held information tables.

This march mirrored the first ever Women’s March, which took place eight years ago in 2017 and followed Trump’s first inauguration. The event stands as the largest single-day protest in the country’s history, according to NPR.

Some feel the smaller number of attendees at the People’s March came from a feeling of defeat and exhaustion after Vice President Kamala Harris’ loss in November.

Though there were fewer marchers this time around according to AP News, the ones there came with a re-

newed sense of purpose and urgency.

This year’s switch from the Women’s March to the People’s March allowed for more diversity regarding who marched and for what cause as well as broadened the event’s overall appeal.

People held up posters with the words “Girls just want to have FUNdamental rights,” “Respect my existence or expect my resistance” and “Patients over politicians,” signaling that not only were attendees there to show their disapproval of Trump but also to continue these acts of activism throughout his next term.

Despite the cold, icy weather, demonstrators yelled chants, spoke to interviewers and promoted the march through social media. Police officers lined the streets and volunteers went up to people making sure they “knew their rights if something were to go sideways,” stated a volunteer at the march.

Hannah Ordan ’25, who attended the People’s March, said, “It was so inspiring to see people of all ages at the march. Being in the crowd with so many passionate people was really empowering.” Ordan further emphasized that the energy of the crowd at such a time in which attendees felt defeat felt hopeful for the future.



photo by Hannah Ordan

Trump is Sworn in as 47th President of the United States

BY MIRA WISSMAN

On Monday, January 20 at 12:02 pm, former president and businessman Donald Trump was sworn in as the 47th President of the United States. According to “The Guardian,” the Inauguration event drew in 24.6 million T.V. viewers.

President Trump, a conservative who also served as the 45th President of the United States, was sworn in by Chief Justice Roberts. According to “Politico,” the ceremony took place inside the U.S. Capitol, a change from the typical outdoor event due to below freezing temperatures and heavy wind.

Many powerful figures were in attendance at the Inauguration ceremony. According to BBC, among the most notable were X owner Elon Musk, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos and

TikTok CEO Zi Chew. A number of attendees appeared who particularly appealed to younger audiences, including brothers Jake and Logan Paul.

“AP News” reported that Trump’s presidency is historic in itself. The New York native is the first president in over 100 years to serve a non-consecutive second term, and additionally, Trump is the first convicted felon to ever be sworn in.

Immediately following the ceremony, Trump took a record-number of actions to reverse the doings of former president Joe Biden. According to “AP News,” Trump immediately ordered an ending to birthright citizenship, which confirms that a child born in the U.S. is a citizen if one or both parents are not citizens. Trump’s other orders included blocking the U.S. Tiktok ban for 75 days, requiring that the federal government

only recognize two genders—male and female—in all documents and programs and increasing barriers along the U.S.-Mexico border.

A diverse range of emotions seemed present at Holton.

Rachel Spencer ’25, a member of the Young Democrats Club, said, “It’s so disheartening to see the destruction of the work of the Biden Administration, such as lowering prescription drugs costs, happen so suddenly. This order will negatively impact the lives of so many Americans.” In regard to Trump’s attempt to ban birthright citizenship, Spencer expressed that she is particularly “interested to witness the legal actions taken” by the court to prevent the implication of the order, especially since the “ACLU is already getting to work.”

On the other hand, an anonymous member of the Young Republicans

Scribbler

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Club was “very excited to see what Trump has in store for the next four years.” This member also attended inaugural events that were “very fun” and allowed her to meet “interesting people.”

On Trump’s Inauguration, Canon Malek ’28 and Lida Bourne ’28 said, “We felt very moved and empowered by his inaugural address. His words ‘America will soon be greater, stronger, and far more exceptional than ever before’ really inspired us and gave us as viewers a strong sense of patriotism.”

Trump additionally said in his inaugural address that “the golden age of America begins right now,” a statement marking a clear moment of change in the United States’ history.

Dear “Scribbler,” Here’s my Love Letter to You

BY TABY DARGE

Dear “Scribbler,”

I still remember the fateful day that I met you. Headed to lunch, I was walking down the hallway for the clubs fair. It was the beginning of my freshman year, and I still felt very new to Holton.

I looked to the left, and there you were, looking extremely informative. Although the Kit Kats drew me in, I stayed for the writing.

I wrote my name down on the sign-up sheet but didn’t think much would come from it. You are the “Scribbler” after all.

You are not only the best publication in my mind but also the publica-

tion with the most fun articles and freedom for the writer.

Nothing compares to the thrill of writing your articles and seeing

exciting and engaging. You have more to offer than just the words on the pages; “Scribbler” gets into the students’ minds.

By the end of freshman year, I was

features.

Now, I had the opportunity to see a different side of you, “Scribbler.” You are amazing to write for but even better to edit for. Every month, I get a new version.

In December, I learned about your interest in the third-grade buddy program, and in November, I learned how students felt about the Learning Commons.

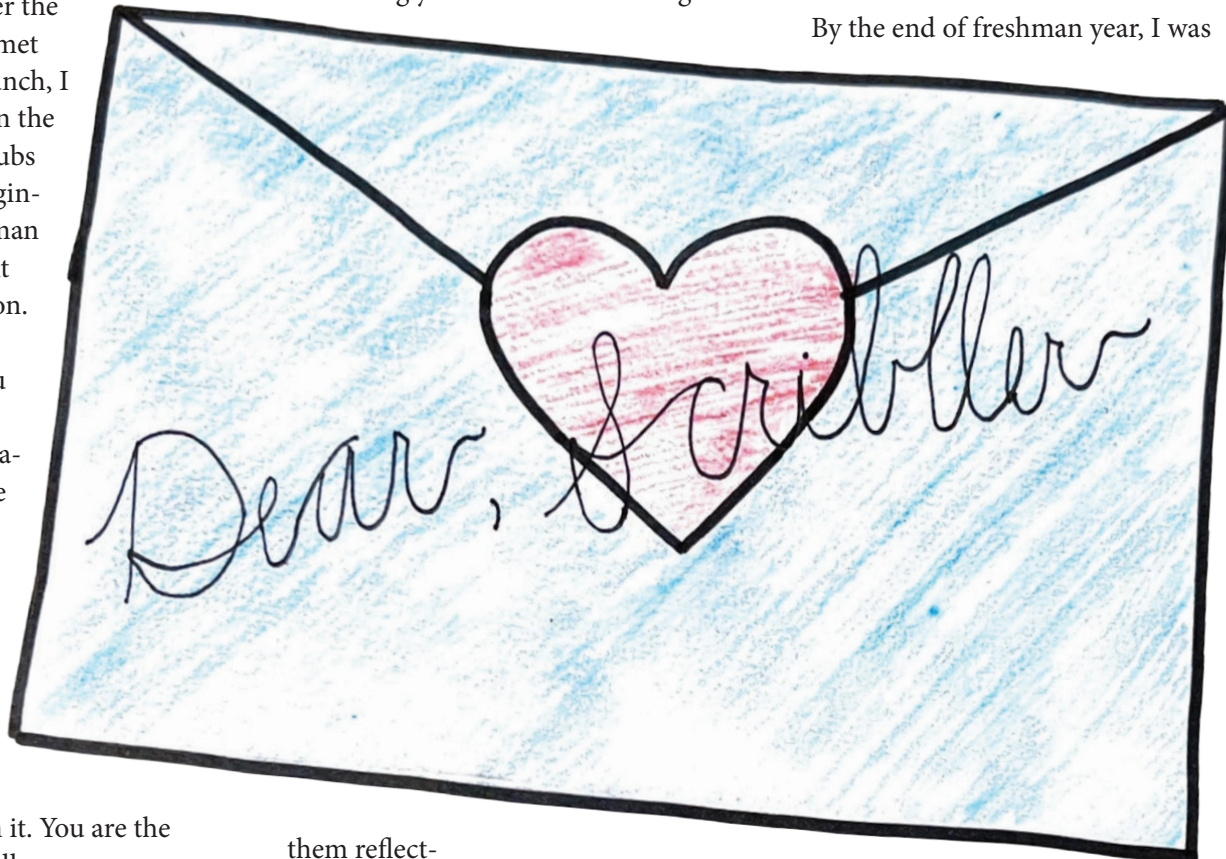
Through it all, I read and wrote about the Holton community through your eyes.

Surprisingly, despite your more serious sides, “Scribbler,” you have so much more to offer!

You entertain me with your colorful drawings and challenging crossword puzzles. I dedicate time each month to solving you.

Luckily for me, it’s the perfect amount of difficulty and enjoyment, a combination that makes you all the more lovable. Thank you, “Scribbler” for all that you are!

With Love,
Taby D.



them reflect-
ed on paper.

Your mix of articles and art are

a writer and an assistant editor of

art by Laila Clarke

OPINION: A Trump Presidency Threatens Our Future as American Citizens

BY ISABELLE APPLEBAUM

Growing up, everyone told me that I could do anything I wanted and be anyone I wanted.

My future was infinite and boundless, limited only by the stretches of my imagination and the extent of my drive.

I put my unwavering belief and hope in this mantra as I entered each room with the conviction that I belonged there.

Starting Holton-Arms in ninth grade strengthened this certainty. Within these walls, I can be the softball captain, a scientist in a lab, and a writer for the newspaper.

Every leadership position I look to—from the president of my class to the head of the HAA—is held with unrelenting dedication by one of the 90 girls in my grade.

Each of us embodies possibility, proving that there is no limit to what we can achieve when ambition meets opportunity.

As I applied for college and envisioned my career, the future was

blurry; however, I did not doubt that I would lead with the power and passion my parents, teachers and friends instilled in me.

On November 5, 2024, I realized how wrong I was. As Trump’s face flashed across my television screen underneath the words “president elect,” I couldn’t comprehend how this could happen. How could, according to “ABC News,” 45% of female voters vote against my ideals, against my rights and against my future?

As the shock and surprise have lessened through the past two months, I now understand how the 2024 election encapsulates everything it means to be a woman.

Although we often celebrate how far we’ve come, the election serves as a stark reminder that no matter how eloquent, qualified or educated you are, you can still be overshadowed or beaten by a man who lacks the same merit.

Kamala Harris was an immensely prepared presidential candidate. She served as attorney general of California, senator of California, and vice

president of the United States.

On the other hand, before running for office in 2020, Trump’s most prominent role was a reality television star and businessman.

Furthermore, Trump consistently proves he lacks respect for women, as evidenced by his history of derogatory remarks and alleged assault.

According to AP News, the current president has been found liable for sexual abuse in 2023.

Although many of my friends and classmates might call me pessimistic or melodramatic, I see my concerns rooted in the Republican party’s actions and rhetoric, which consistently undermine the values of equality and respect that we deserve.

NPR reported that Trump’s secretary of defense, Pete Hegseth, has said that “women don’t belong in ground combat units.”

Vice President JD Vance has referred to prominent political women as “childless cat ladies.” He went on to ask, “And how does it make any sense that we’ve turned our country over to people who don’t really have direct stake in it?”

My “stake” in the United States extends beyond my ability or desire to have children, so I don’t have hope, and I certainly don’t have faith, that President Trump will protect the futures of young women like me.

I see this election as a painful acknowledgment that worthiness alone is not enough. It’s a testament to the biases and sexism that persist as an undercurrent in our society.

For me, it reinforces an unsettling truth: even in a society that professes equality, the playing field is far from level.

I am lucky; I live in a blue state where my rights and opportunities are largely protected and policies often align with the values of equity and progress. However, my once boundless future feels narrower, dimmer and tethered by men. The limitless optimism I once carried with me now feels fragile and exposed to the world’s harsh realities.

Trump’s inauguration on January 20 laid bare the contradictions we live with daily: the encouragement to dream big in a country that too often undermines those dreams.

Meta to End Fact-Checking Procedures

BY KATE RUDGE

On January 14, Meta announced that it would be ending its fact-checking programs on the platforms it owns, including Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp.

According to “The New York Times,” Meta initially announced its fact-checking policy over eight years ago in 2016 after Donald Trump’s first presidential election win.

At the time, Facebook was criticized for disregarding widespread misinformation on its platform, particularly for posts from foreign governments that sought to plant disagreements among the American public.

In response to outside pressure, Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Facebook, began seeking out third-party fact-checking sites and companies to review posts with potential misinformation on Facebook and Instagram.

In Meta’s recent announcement, however, the company stated that said efforts to weed out misinformation had “gone too far.”

As Meta ends fact-checking programs, it will instead move to a program called “community notes,” which tasks platform members with the job of submitting notes on content they think is misleading.

This new approach, which Meta says has been successful on the platform X, gives people the ability to share what context or information is necessary on posts they come across.

Zuckerberg argued, “Some people believe giving more people a voice is driving division rather than bringing us together.”

He said, “More people across the spectrum believe that achieving the political outcomes they think matter is more important than every person having a voice. I think that’s dangerous.”

Though Zuckerberg said that he wants Meta to “return to [its] roots around free expression,” the decision quickly follows other Meta strategies to align with the incoming Donald Trump White House, according to “The New York Times.” After Zuckerberg dined with the President in December at Mar-a-Lago, Meta donated \$1 million to Trump’s Inauguration.

Additionally, “The Washington Post” reported that Joel Kaplan, a Meta executive closest to the Republican Party, was recently appointed to the company’s most senior policy job and spoke on “Fox & Friends” about the political bias in the former fact-checking programs utilized by Meta.

Meta’s decision has been met with conflicting views.

Nicole Gill, a founder of Accountable Tech, claimed that Zuckerberg is “reopening the floodgates to the

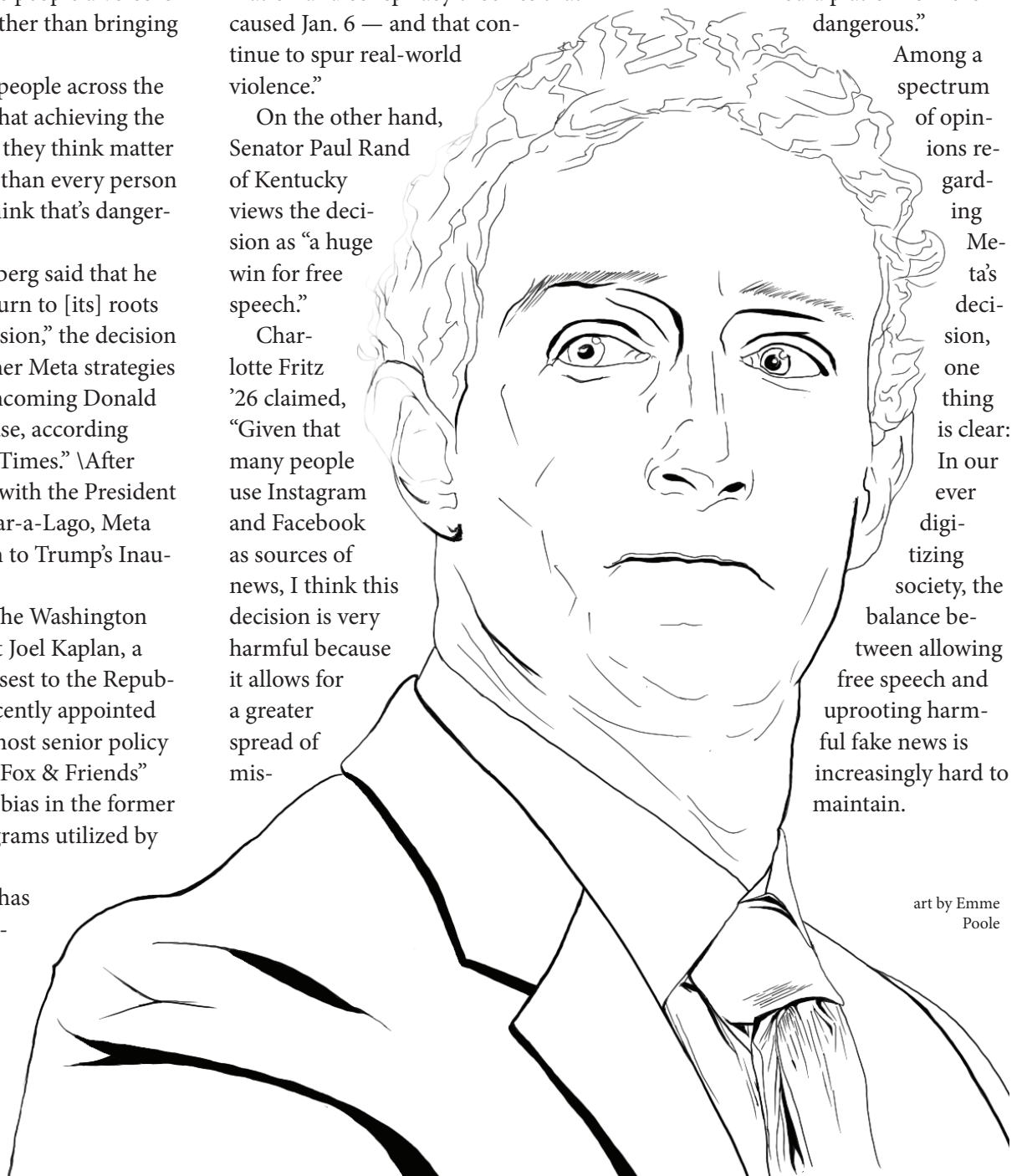
exact same surge of hate, disinformation and conspiracy theories that caused Jan. 6 — and that continue to spur real-world violence.”

On the other hand, Senator Paul Rand of Kentucky views the decision as “a huge win for free speech.”

Charlotte Fritz ’26 claimed, “Given that many people use Instagram and Facebook as sources of news, I think this decision is very harmful because it allows for a greater spread of mis-

information and makes these social media platforms more dangerous.”

Among a spectrum of opinions regarding Meta’s decision, one thing is clear: In our ever digitizing society, the balance between allowing free speech and uprooting harmful fake news is increasingly hard to maintain.



TikTok Faces Ban for a Mere 12 Hours, Returns to U.S. Users Shortly After

BY CHARLOTTE FRITZ

TikTok, a social media platform with the mission “to inspire creativity and bring joy” to over one billion global users, has become an American cultural phenomenon.

According to “The New York Times,” there are 170 million American TikTok users, roughly half the United States’ population.

TikTok’s influence on American culture is reflected in its role in students’ daily lives.

Leah Claire Peterson ’28 shared that “this past week [she] spent 22 hours on TikTok over the course of five days.”

Additionally, Lilly Fromer ’26 stated that she uses TikTok each day “for a wide variety of reasons including

entertainment and academic purposes. Teachers post quick concept videos that [she] watches.”

Due to TikTok’s prominence in American citizens’ daily lives, the idea of its absence is unthinkable to many. America’s access to TikTok, however, nearly ended.

In recent years, U.S. politicians have become increasingly anxious about the intentions behind TikTok’s algorithm and data collection.

According to CNN, because TikTok is owned by the Chinese company ByteDance, many politicians worry that the Chinese government could be stealing the app users’ data.

Fromer said that she has this concern to an extent given that she “knows people who have had to scan their passports and IDs, which have

their social security numbers on them.”

To address such concerns, in April 2024, President Biden instituted a law giving ByteDance, the company that owns TikTok, until January 19, to sell TikTok to a company trusted by the United States’ government.

In response, TikTok released a statement expressing its discontent and belief that the ban is “unconstitutional” because it restricts United States’ citizens from “exercising [ing] their free-speech rights.”

On the night of January 18, American users lost access to the app. According to “Forbes,” however, about 12 hours after the shutdown, the app became available again for pre-existing users, despite being unavailable for new downloads on the app store.

For many students, this 12-hour stretch was mind-altering.

Pallavi Deroy ’26 said, “It was crazy to see it gone for 12 hours” and added that in particular, she was shocked by “how upset everyone got over it.”

Shortly after taking executive office on January 20, President Trump signed an executive order granting TikTok a 75-day extension.

“The New York Times” stated that “some lawmakers and legal experts have expressed concerns about the legality of an executive order” as the federal law had already been enacted.

While TikTok currently functions for American users, its future remains unclear considering the influx of conversations surrounding privacy, foreign relations and security.

Is Book Banning a Growing Issue in American Schools?

BY CINDY MIAO

Each year, the English 9 classes delve into J.D. Salinger's classic novel "The Catcher in the Rye." Whether students grow to love or hate Holden Caulfield's rebellious character, the book is nevertheless a staple of the freshman curriculum. Not all schools, however, agree with its messages.

According to "National Geographic," historically, book banning in the United States revolved around challenging social norms. In the 1970s intense conversation sparked about the role of public education in an increasingly divided American society.

According to John Gold's "Board of Education v. Pico," an increasing desire for public education to "transmit certain moral values to students" began to arise. As a result, books like "Forever" by Judy Blume and "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee were banned for having procommunist, racial and/or sexual content.

The Holton classic "The Catcher in the Rye" has been consistently contested for its use of profanity and sexual references. According to the Banned Books Project, states including Wyoming, North Dakota and

California have completely banned the book.

Freshman Catarina Francisco Skamnelos shared, "I personally enjoyed "Catcher and the Rye" [because of the author's] particular style of writing. [Holden] addresses the reader as if retelling a story, making you feel as though you have a personal connection to the character...I understand why some people would find it inappropriate, but...[these topics] can provide a deeper insight into the character and the time period. By censoring these ideas you...limit students' ability to learn from [controversy]."

More recently, books including "Gender Queer" by Maia Kobabe and "The Perks of Being a Wallflower" by Stephen Chbosky have also come under scrutiny, with statewide and local libraries and schools deeming these books sexually explicit and inappropriate for young readers.

According to PEN America, "41% of all book bans address LGBTQ+ themes and maintain "long-standing, denigrating stereotypes that suggest LGBTQ+ content is inherently sexual or pornographic."

Supporters of these bans argue

that the prohibition of these books protects children's emotional and psychological well-being. According to CBS News, in a case going to the Supreme Court, Maryland parents argue that they have the right to excuse their kids from reading books in school about LGBTQ+ themes.

In contrast, opponents of book bans see the bans as threats to intellectual freedom. Many believe that banning books limits students' exposure to diverse perspectives and stifles critical thinking and empathy.

These arguments state that confronting controversial subjects through literature is a valuable educational experience where students can foster an understanding of different cultures, histories and personal struggles.

Author David A. Robertson stated, "Reading books with accurate representation...allows us to see the world through the eyes of somebody else. This creates a community where we acknowledge our shared humanity, our experiences and respect our differences."

The impact of these bans continues to fuel considerable debate. According to Isabelle Applebaum '25, "Books provide us with insight into differing perspectives and beliefs. They are necessary for facilitating the development of opposing ideas and opinions, which ultimately progresses society."

In response to the rise in book bans, organizations such as We Need Diverse Books and individuals such as author Ellen Oh are actively campaigning against censorship. Arguing that all students should have access to stories that reflect a broad spectrum of human experiences, these groups emphasize the importance of diverse literature in education. These efforts highlight the ongoing struggle to balance protection with the freedom to learn and grow through literature.

At Holton, banned books were previously discussed through a senior elective. Shay Squeglia, chair of the English Department, stated, "Our curriculum aims to expose students to literature that better helps them understand themselves and one another... Reading builds empathy and understanding."

OPINION: Our School Uniforms Do Not Hinder our Freedom of Expression as Students

BY TALIA WISSMAN

Walking through the halls, you will no doubt see the classic combination of a plaid skirt and polo, but do these matching outfits bring us closer as a community, or do they threaten our freedom of expression and sense of individual identity?

Head of Upper School Chris Lynch believes that uniforms are very important in our school. To him, "their main purpose is to build community, sisterhood and a common bond."

He also thinks that they help with equity and inclusion.

In fact and in agreement with Lynch, The National Library of Medicine mentions as possible results of uniforms increased student discipline, less of an emphasis on fashion or trends and even higher academic standards.

Students seem to agree with these benefits from uniforms.

Journey Stenerson '27 enjoys wearing a uniform because it "makes the mornings a lot easier."

Peyton Austin '25 expressed how a uniform "helps keep the focus on people's personality and who they are rather than materialistic things like clothes."

Lauren Hemann '27 agreed and said, "There are many other ways you can express yourself at Holton, so wearing a uniform doesn't take away from that."

I also love having our uniform. Honestly, I dread the Friday mornings when I am forced to put together an outfit.

In fact, I often weigh the possibility of just wearing my uniform as an easy solution despite the free-dress option.

Each day, the toughest decision I face is what sweatshirt I plan to wear or how I'd like to do my hair.

I often worry about college and what it'll be like having to select a new outfit for class each day.

While others may accuse uniforms of limiting identity, I appreciate the unity we all share in our Holton plaid.

There's something special about showing up to school and seeing

everyone in the same exact thing as you.

And, I don't think it *completely* limits our ability to express ourselves.

I actually think the few ways we get to personalize our outfits can be very special.

Through jewelry, socks, shoes, pants, hair and more, we all manage to make our uniforms unique.

Even more than that, I agree that the uni-

form brings about a sense of community both inside and outside of the school.

It is always special to see the Holton plaid outside of school, especially on Wednesday mornings at Starbucks.

Additionally, uniforms take away the emphasis on pressure of brand names and microtrends and allow us students to focus on more important parts of our identity.

Many students and I enjoy the uniform, appreciate the simplicity it brings into our lives and believe that it ultimately benefits our community.

We're all going to miss it when we're in college and are setting our alarm five minutes earlier daily to find time to dress ourselves!



form

art by Emme Poole

New Game of the Season Program Serves as a “Great Way to Bring the School Together”

BY MERRITT FELDNER

Have you noticed extra spirit at school athletic events this winter? The Parents Association (PA) and Athletic Department have recently joined forces to create the Game of the Season program. Every season, each team will have one main event.

Athletic Director Graham Westerberg, who aided in creating this program, said the goal is to “help build spirit” by highlighting each team.

He noted how the PA has worked hard to make these games “small but exciting opportunities to build excitement at games.”

Many students have been enthusiastic about this new program. Lauren Hemann ’27, who plays on the varsity basketball team, remarked, “As an athlete, I look forward to Games of the Season” as they “are a great way to bring the school together.” The program began just this winter and will continue in the future. It kicked off with the swimming and diving meet on January 9.

Students came to cheer on their

fellow panthers at the pool and grabbed a slice of pizza provided by the PA. Just a few days later on January 13, ice hockey had its Game of the Season against Holy Cross.

At Cabin John Ice Rink, a fan bus brought lower, middle and upper school students together to cheer on the team. Since ice hockey games are off-campus, the team’s coach Emily Wilde ’09 appreciated getting “to have some hype leading up to the game.” Fans brought their blue pom poms, and the PA brought cookies and hot chocolate to keep the fans warm at the

rink.

Sofia Aquino ’27 was one of the attendees at this ice hockey game. She said it was “fun to be with friends at” the game but noted that it would be great to see more students in attendance, especially upperclassmen. Ice hockey captain Elizabeth Farland ’24 said that she “100% would be inter-

ested in having another [Game of the Season]” and hopes that as the program builds, “next year and the year after there will be more spirit” at the school’s athletic games.

If you missed the first two Games of the Season, you can still support Holton athletics at the upcoming games. Winter track and field’s Game



photo courtesy of Holton Communications

Students Celebrate a New Era for the Washington Commanders and See a “Bright Future” Ahead

BY BLAIR GREENSPAN

After the Washington Commanders endured a 4-13 record last season, students

playoff season.

Under the leadership of first-year coach Dan Quinn and first-year superstar rookie Jayden Daniels, the Commanders went 12-5 in the 2024 regular season and won their last five

on the last play of the game.

The Commanders won their first playoff game in 19 years when they defeated the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in a wild card game 23-20, their fifth consecutive game where they won on a final play.

The Commanders exceeded the expectations of many fans, and most attribute the change to rookie quarterback Daniels.

McLean Daniel ’27 said, “Since Jayden Daniels is outperforming other rookies in the league right now, Washington is ecstatic that it has a good quarterback who is capable of making big plays and throwing to fantastic receivers.”

The team drafted Daniels from LSU with the No. 2 overall pick in the 2024 NFL draft, and he has had one of the best rookie seasons of all time. According to CBS Sports, Daniels set an NFL record for most rushing yards by a rookie quarterback and threw the most touchdowns by

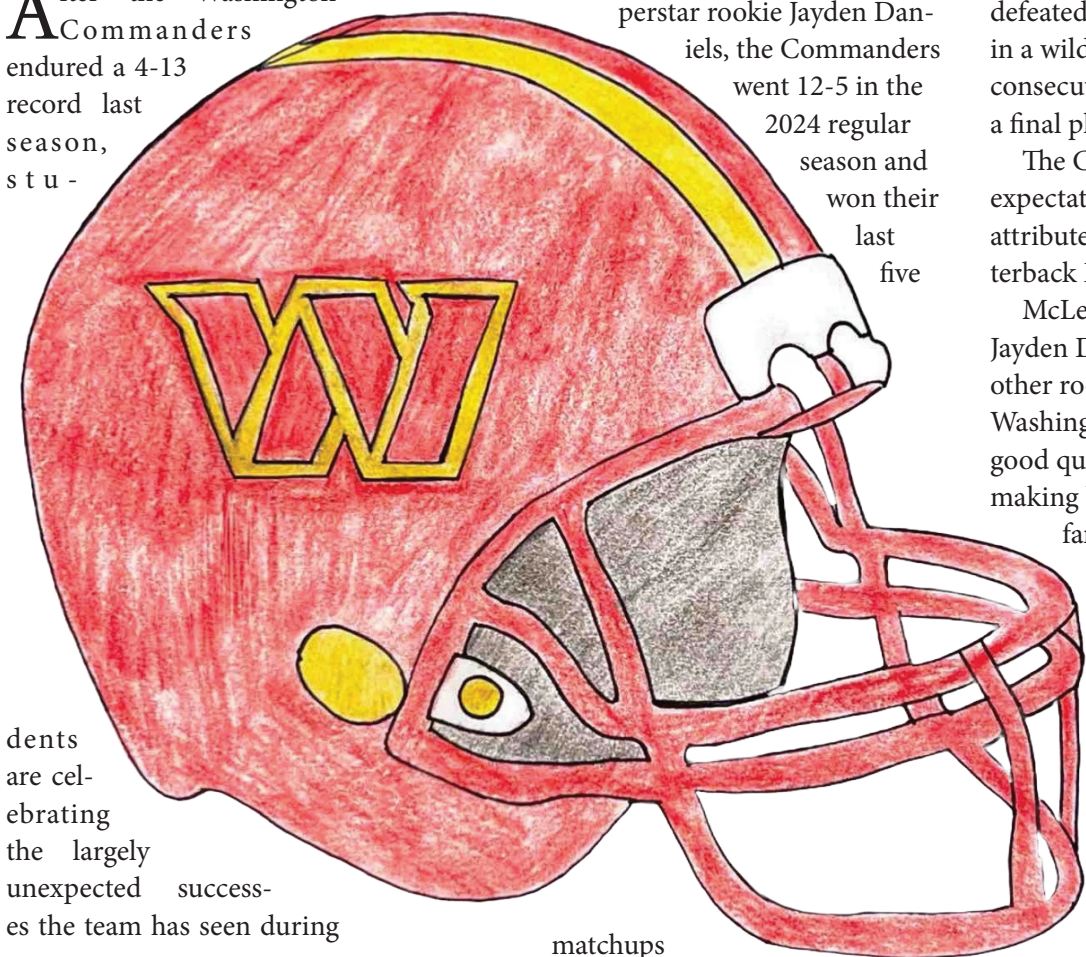
a player in the final 30 seconds of a game since 1970. In addition to Daniels’ success, star wide receiver Terry McLaurin set a 2024 team record by catching 13 touchdowns, according to the Washington Commanders team website. Both Daniels and McLaurin were selected to attend the Pro Bowl.

Sabine Rana ’27 shared that she sees “a bright future for the Commanders because [she] highly doubts that the Commanders will let Jayden Daniels go anywhere.”

When asked about what makes Daniels so special, Holton Athletic Director Graham Westerberg, an avid Pittsburgh Steelers fan, commented, “For someone who is so young, he seems to have a lot of confidence, and most importantly, he has a team that believes in him.”

While the Commanders lost to the Philadelphia Eagles in the NFC Championship, the team led a season of spirit and anticipation for its fans. Fans look forward to seeing what lies ahead for the team in the 2025 season.

art by Laila Clarke



dents are celebrating the largely unexpected success- es the team has seen during matchups

OPINION: Of All the Movies I Watched in 2024, “Dune: Part Two” is a Must-See

BY HANNAH ORDAN

I’ve always loved movies, but recently, I have revived my appreciation for seeing movies in the theater as soon as they come out—and let me tell you: 2024 was a great year for movies.

From the tear-jerking love story “We Live in Time” to the glittering musical “Wicked” and the exciting “Challengers,” it is safe to say that I spent much of last year indulging in my craving for film.

Out of all the movies I went to, one stood out to me as one of the best movies I have ever seen. That movie was “Dune: Part Two.” As a fan of the first movie, I was excited to see this action-packed, 166-minute sequel.

The film itself was beautiful and took place on the desert planet Arrakis. One scene in particular displays Paul (Timothée Chalamet) and Chani (Zendaya) against a backdrop of the bright sun setting above the beige dunes. Scenes like this one made the planet feel com-

pletely real, especially when portrayed on the big screen.

Thanks to Hans Zimmer and the sound engineers at AMC Theaters, the loud, electrifying music in “Dune: Part Two” transported me to another planet.

It’s no wonder that the movie is nominated for Best Picture at the 2025 Oscars.

Grace Curley ’25, my movie-going companion, commented, “I loved all the music and sound effects.

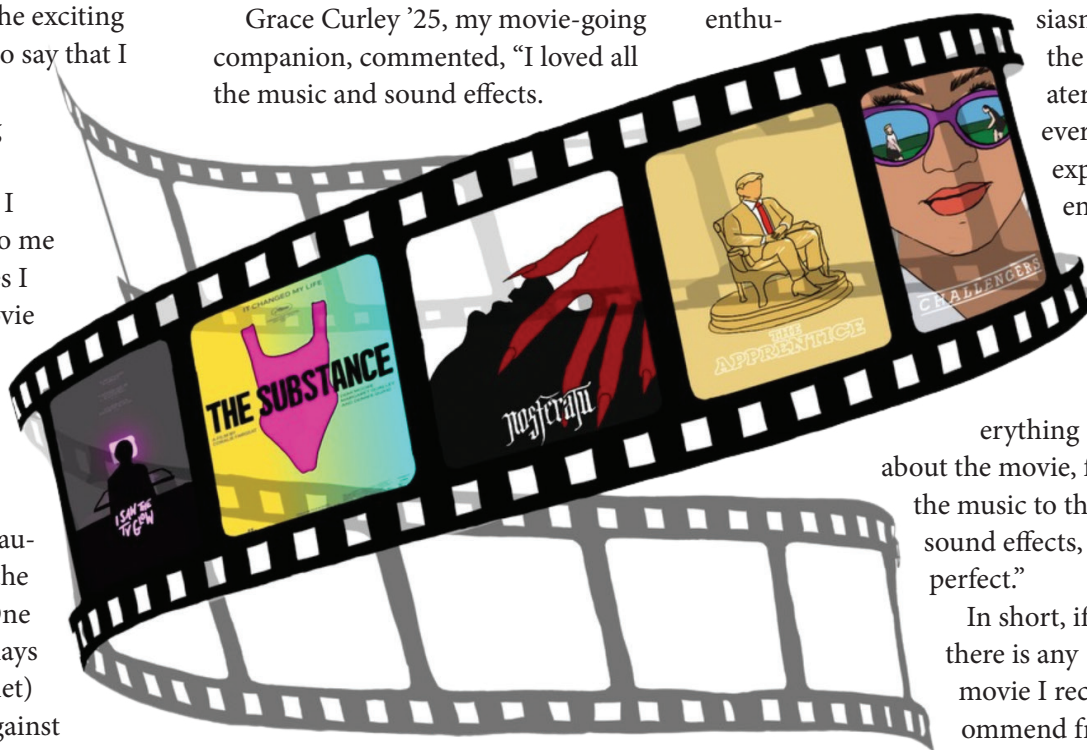
her appreciation for the film’s set and costume design, which “brought the world to life.” Annalise Ahmed ’25, a longtime fan of the “Dune” universe, added, “I loved ‘Dune: Part Two,’ and it’s hard to pick my favorite parts of the movie, but I loved the moment when Paul rides a sandworm for the first time. The scene was so fun to watch, and I could feel the enthusiasm in the theater as everyone experienced it.

Everything about the movie, from the music to the sound effects, was perfect.”

In short, if there is any movie I recommend from all of 2024, it is

“Dune: Part Two.”

It all added so much to the dialogue and ambience.” Curley also expressed



art by Emme Poole

Students Await Annual Orchesis Performance

BY NATALIE TOUSI

Orchesis, the school’s dance ensemble, consists of talented upper school athletes who perform all styles of dance ranging from modern and jazz to contemporary.

While students will have the chance to see a preview of the performance during the school day, the community is encouraged to attend the full performance on February 7 at 6:30 pm in the Lewis Theater.

Speaking on her experience as a member of Orchesis, Lily LaFalcia ’28 exclaimed, “I love being a part of Orchesis so much! It is so much fun and everyone that is a member of it is so supportive. It is truly like a family.” LaFalcia continued, “I’m proud of the fact that we got to finish 12 dances for our performance.

Charlotte Hendricks ’28, another member, said that her experience on the team “has been great” and that she has “seen [herself] progress and grow as a dancer.” She added that “the upperclassmen have been very supportive and welcoming.”

Hendricks is most proud of the dance that she choreographed on her own because choreographing was a new experience for her. She looks forward to sharing her dance with the Upper School.

Sarah Roney, Orchesis’ dance instructor, said that this team is particularly a bonded one.

She exclaimed, “I have had the privilege of watching some of these dancers since they were in Lower School, and getting to see them grow over the years is amazing. However, we also have welcomed in so many new dancers in Middle or Upper School, and no matter when someone joins the group, they become a valued and important member of this ensemble from the moment they join! Watching them connect and grow as artists, people, and friends is what makes this group so incredibly special to me.”

Roney said that the audience can expect “an exciting collection of creative and eye-catching works.” So, if students are looking for a way to support their classmates sharing talent with the community, they should ensure their presence at the February 7 performance.

Review: The 2025 Golden Globes Fashion Choices Present “Compelling Dialogue Between Tradition and Modernity”

BY SOFIA AQUINO

Los Angeles brought drama on January 5—not just with films like “Challengers” and “Wicked—” but with fashion choices so glamorous they turned the red carpet into a runway. The Golden Globes, first gracing our screens in 1958, has built a legacy of memorable red carpet looks.

PUNCH executive member Vivienne Craig ’27 shared, “Generally, I think people naturally bond over clothing, and fashion always gives people something to talk about!”

Craig added, “Fans can observe the neat combination of clothing with our favorite characters and films.”

While fashion may be subjective, there is always a clear winner in the court of couture.

Which styles reign supreme in Holton’s opinion of the 2025 best-dressed lineup? If you could wear an outfit from the event, which would

you pick?

Answering this question is no easy feat, but Lisa Maitland ’26, a PUNCH fashion designer, prepared her future look based off of Anya Taylor-Joy’s archival Dior couture dress, which “emanates a subtle yet glamorous elegance that, when paired with the statement jewelry, adds some noise to the overall look.”

Marsha Scherbel, advisor of PUNCH, receives inspiration from Nicole Kidman and Cate Blanchett, “models of elegance, sophistication and style.” Old Hollywood Glamour recurred in the looks of favorite celebrities, including Ariana Grande, Selena Gomez and Elle Fanning.

This year’s catalogue presents a compelling dialogue between tradition and modernity, challenging our views of self-expression in the ever-evolving fashion world.

Zendaya’s bold, burnt orange Louis

Vuitton gown demonstrates that femininity doesn’t need to be soft and subtle to be powerful.

Merritt Feldner ’27 mentioned another example of blurred lines between masculinity and femininity by saying, “Can we hype [Timothée Chalamet] up? I like the pop of blue.”

Known for his individuality, Chalamet wore a sleek suit compiled of metallics and glitter embracing a masculinity unafraid of softness and refinement.

Although these textures were previously often reserved for women, he challenges how one gender “should” dress and reflects society’s growing love for fluidity in self-expression.

As we look into next year, expect even more bold and boundary-crossing looks on the other side of the paparazzi flashes, offering us new ways to express personality and style discovery.

Across

1. Liberty ____, located in Independence Hall
5. Mountain range in the middle of Europe
9. Butte
13. Falls in love with Tony, the center of conflict between the Jets and Sharks
14. Prejudice
15. Bon ____, featured in Taylor Swift's "Exile"
16. A fire station burning down, e.g.
17. Not win but ____
18. IV, in Roman times
19. Lymph ____
20. 1/100 of a dollar
21. "I will walk 500 ____, and I will walk 500 more," line by The Proclaimers
22. Stereotypical depiction of a fox
24. Sadly, old-fashioned
26. Peruses
29. A movie cast is a group of ____
33. Commonly known as texting
36. ____ is ____! (Phrase of defeat)
38. Sportscaster Andrews
39. Powershot ELPH 360 camera maker
41. ____-lithic period, referred to as the "New Stone Age"
42. Harry's rival and Slytherin resident
43. Resting on
44. French hat introduced in the 1890s
46. Reason for a re-do on a serve in tennis
47. Most updated version of something
49. Compilation videos of scenes and pictures of a certain actor, per say
51. Narrow, long part of a guitar
53. New and improved
57. Something you may hear on a movie set: "And ____!"
60. Companions of bolts
63. Climbing gear
64. Adore
65. Weapon seen in the game "Clue"
66. Attach to a lapel
67. Ex: Chimps, gorillas
68. Unexplained sightings, in short
69. Expel or forcefully remove from, as a home
70. Holton students commonly use the brand "PaperMate" for these
71. What you may pitch on a camping trip
72. The "T" in "STEM," for short

Down

1. Snoopy's plane, the Red ___
2. Wear away
3. Straight, in mathematical terms
4. Homophone of the word for a Hawaiian flower
necklace
5. Ready and willing
6. MGM Studios lead animal
7. Examples: ziti and penne
8. The sum of squared errors abbr.



CREATED BY CARLISLE WINN

	1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12
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57	58	59				60	61	62			63			
64					65					66				
67					68					69				
70					71					72				

9. Member of the clergy
10. Song from “Descendants”: “ ____ Like Me”
11. 1/100 of a tālā
12. Greek god of war
13. Shorthand for minutes
20. Somewhere between green and blue
21. Apple computer
23. Sharp; eager
25. The sixth note in Solfège
27. “All finished!”
28. Blue ____ Shoes, released in 1956
30. Type of exam often used in world language classes

31. Often paired with soy sauce
32. Annoyance that often accompanies a winter cold
33. Digitize a document
34. "Friend" in Australian speak
35. Holton gets one ____ Day a year
37. Well-behaved
40. One's willingness to be accessible
42. Medjool, e.g.
44. Abbr. for the agency that prevents unfair business practices
45. Popular song by Lorde
48. "I Can ____ Clearly Now," song by Johnny Nash

50. Put much effort into
52. Piece of cutlery
54. A drink that makes you feel better
55. Period
56. Idina Menzel's Broadway career start
57. ____ bracelets (90s fad)
58. Deal with
59. Not odd
61. "Once ____ a time"
62. An example of one is the SAT
65. ____ two and two together (finally figure out)
66. Fur baby

ANSWERS	16. Irony	29. Actors	46. Let	65. Pipe	72. Tech	8. SSE	25. Lah	37. Good	55. Epoch
	17. Lose	33. SMS	47. Newest	66. Pin on	71. Tent	7. Pasta	23. Keen	35. Snow	54. Tonic
	18. Nine	36. Enough	49. Edit	67. Apes	69. Evict	4. Lay	13. Mins	32. Snot	48. See
	19. Node	38. Erin	51. Neck	68. UFOs	60. Nuts	6. Lion	21. Mac	34. Mate	52. Knife
	20. Cent	39. Canon	53. Better	70. Pens	57. Scene	5. Able	20. Cyan	33. Scan	50. Strive
	21. Miles	41. Neo	50. Nuts	71. Tent	60. Nuts	4. Lay	13. Mins	32. Snot	48. See
	22. Sneaky	42. Draco	60. Nuts	71. Tent	60. Nuts	6. Lion	21. Mac	34. Mate	52. Knife
	13. Maria	42. Draco	60. Nuts	71. Tent	60. Nuts	6. Lion	21. Mac	34. Mate	52. Knife
	14. Bias	24. Alas	43. Atop	63. Rope	63. Rope	7. Pasta	23. Keen	35. Snow	54. Tonic
	15. Iver	26. Reads	44. Fedora	64. Love	64. Love	8. SSE	25. Lah	37. Good	55. Epoch
ACROSS:	1. Bell	18. Nine	36. Enough	49. Edit	67. Apes	2. Erode	11. Ares	31. Rice	44. FTC
	5. Alps	19. Node	38. Erin	51. Neck	68. UFOs	3. Linear	12. Ares	30. Oral	45. FTR
	9. Mesa	20. Cent	39. Canon	53. Better	70. Pens	4. Lay	13. Mins	32. Snot	48. See
	13. Maria	21. Miles	41. Neo	57. Scene	71. Tent	5. Able	20. Cyan	33. Scan	50. Strive
	14. Bias	22. Sneaky	42. Draco	60. Nuts	71. Tent	6. Lion	21. Mac	34. Mate	52. Knife
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