

Students Anticipate the 2024 Presidential Election: “We’ve Seen How Important it is for Everyone Who is Eligible to Get Out and Vote”

BY MIRA WISSMAN, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As November 5th draws closer, many seniors are preparing to vote for the first time.

According to NBC News, the upcoming election between Democratic candidate Kamala Harris and Republican candidate Donald Trump appears to be closer than any election has ever been before.

Throughout the summer, the administration worked to ensure that students from all three divisions would receive age-appropriate lessons about election-related topics including the electoral college, history of elections and past election events.

“I really feel like those history class conversations emphasized the importance of participating in democracy,” said Peyton Austin ’25. “It can be easy to feel like your voice doesn’t matter if you don’t live in a battleground state, but your vote still holds so much importance.”

Particularly, many conversations have revolved around the oldest members of the Class of 2025, who will be of-age on election day. While this group of students is small, those who make the November 5th cutoff are enthusiastically anticipating their first chance to use their voice as a U.S. citizen.

Zara Shamim ’25 will turn 18 on November 4th, the day prior to election day. She said, “We’ve seen in past elections how important it is for everyone who is eligible to get out and vote. I’m very relieved I’ll be 18 just in time!”

Sarah Dicker ’25 will also be a first-time voter. She is most excited to “make a direct impact on electing [her] government officials and decision makers.”

While students look forward to voting for a number of reasons, above all, most feel that it is their duty as citizens to exercise their right.

Martha Lauren Nichols ’25 said,

“Voting is a right that was fought to attain for years, and I am lucky to get to act on this right now that I am 18....Especially in such a controversial election, I am so grateful that I get to do my part and cast my ballot.” Dicker agreed and said, “I am excited to exercise my right and be a part of something bigger to influence change for the future.”

Early voting opened in Maryland on October 24th, in Virginia on October 26th and in D.C. on October 28th. Nichols encouraged students to vote and said that this election holds “vital importance.”

art by Emme Poole ’26

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Where do the Young Democrats and Young Republicans Clubs Stand on Key Policy Issues?

CONTRIBUTIONS COMPILED BY MIA ESTEVEZ-BRETON, SPORTS EDITOR

Young Republicans Club 		Young Democrats Club
"I am personally pro life because I believe that the saying 'my body my choice' does not apply when you are pregnant. I believe that when you are pregnant, you and the fetus are not the same human being (you don't share a brain, you don't have 20 fingers and 20 toes, etc.). I believe a woman should have the right over her own body, but the baby in her womb is not HER body; it's the body of her child."	...on abortion rights	"We completely believe in and support a woman's right to make decisions about her own body. The government should not have the ability to make such a personal decision for anyone, especially if it is a life or death matter. Women have died because they were unable to get the abortion care they needed due to their state's laws."
"I believe that the Second Amendment is in the foundation of our country, and it cannot be taken away from the people. Nonetheless gun safety is a huge issue in our country and guns have taken the lives of many citizens, but for self protection and the protection of our rights they shouldn't be taken away, just regulated."	...on Second Amendment rights	"We believe that guns should be regulated. Bullets are the leading cause of death among children in America, and no other country even comes close to this statistic. We support a ban on assault weapons and support the red-flag law, which restricts gun ownership from individuals who may harm themselves or others and federally requires background checks for every gun purchase. "
"Taxes should not be raised for the upper class...Tax breaks should be granted to people with lower incomes, but no one is exempt from paying taxes. People who make more money shouldn't be taxed a higher percent since they are paying more anyway."	...on taxes	"We believe in a progressive and equitable tax code and think taxes should be higher for those who earn significantly more money than the average American. With higher taxes, the government has the ability to spend more money and overall positively impact the welfare of the people through government-funded programs as well as help the national economy."
"Healthcare should be universal, but private health care should still be an option."	...on healthcare	"We believe that healthcare is a fundamental right, not a privilege for American citizens. We support protecting and expanding the Affordable Care Act to keep reducing health care and prescription drug costs while increasing coverage to more Americans."
"As a country, we need to secure the border. The undocumented people are overwhelming our county, and we are all paying the price for it. Crime rates have risen, the state of our economy is dissolving, inflation is at an all-time high, and our county is suffering."	...on immigration laws	"We believe in improving border security as well as an easier and fairer path for immigrants to getting citizenship."
"We support [Republican candidate Donald] Trump for president because he aligns with Republican values on economic growth, national security and his Americans' first agenda. We feel that he has already proven himself as a better fit candidate in his first term."	...on whom they support for this election	"We support Vice President Kamala Harris for president of the United States. We believe that she represents the core values of the Democratic Party: fairness, justice, and equality. Her experience as vice president, United States senator and attorney general of California prove her capability and qualifications to run the country. She is not just a fit candidate but a necessary one."

OPINION: Putting Policy Aside, This is Why I'm Voting for Harris in November

BY ELIZA DORTON, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As the election season looms over Aus and November 5th draws closer and closer, there's a constant feeling of worry that enters my head every time I open my phone to look at the news.

Recently, "The New York Times" and "The Washington Post" headlines have read, "Trump's Consistent Mes-sage Online and Onstage: Be Afraid," and "As Trump Makes False Claims about Hurricane Relief, White House Calls it 'Poison.'"

As someone who follows politics and the election religiously, I find that these articles are not few and far between. My anxiety surrounding the election, in fact, seems to become more intense as we approach election day.

Currently, the polls are essentially tied as both candidates do whatever they can to campaign in battleground states.

This election, I've decided to vote

for Vice President Kamala Harris. She is immensely qualified. I am extremely proud to vote for the former attorney general of California, United States senator and current vice president.

If someone were to ask me whether the majority of my beliefs and policies align with Harris, I'd say yes. However, I'm aware that at least half of America does not feel the same way as I do.

In this election, I am not only voting for her because of her policies. I am voting for her mainly because she is not former President Donald Trump.

It's unfortunate, but I think because of the state of the country's politics today, this election and politics in general are no longer only about policy. At this point, they are largely about the character of each candidate.

Over the last eight years, we have seen the former president, I believe, incite an insurrection of the most beloved and important institution in

American history, challenge democracy by denying the presidential election, be convicted on 34 counts of felony charges in a hush-money trial, face charges and then be found guilty of rape (by definition of the word), withhold classified documents from the government and insult and degrade women to the highest degree.

On the contrary, Harris has treated nearly everyone she's publicly interacted with during her years as vice president with class, respect and integrity.

During the vice presidency and her campaign, she's faced countless digs aimed at her gender, race and family life but has kept calm throughout the unfair negativity surrounding her identity.

She connects to people on a personal level and can explain how policies impact average Americans.

A well-educated, strong and even what some might call more moderate-than-left candidate, Harris has done about all she can to earn the

Scribbler

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C.S.P.A Silver Medalist • 2020

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votes of Americans. She's proved herself time and time again at interviews, rallies, speeches and Senate hearings.

After the presidential debate on September 10th, I thought to myself, how could anyone not vote for her after this debate? Hasn't she proven that she has what it takes to run the country? It's clear that no matter what she does, some people just won't accept her as a legitimate candidate. I've tried my best to avoid this fact, but understand that maybe it is because she is a woman.

Now, it's up to those who are unsure for whom to vote, don't care for either candidate or might not vote at all. I am not asking you to vote for Harris. I am asking you to do the research, educate yourself and vote accordingly.

How is the Community Involved in Politics?

- “Working with student volunteers and [History Department Chair Louisa] Nill over the years, I have run a voter registration drive at Holton-Arms. Inspired by my grandmother, who marched for the vote, I consider it a paramount obligation for citizens to participate in the electoral process. We have been given an incredible right, and we should never take it for granted. We must remember that people have died to secure this right, and we honor their sacrifice every time we enter the polling booth.” - English teacher Melinda Salata
- “I registered to vote. I’ve realized there is no wrong or right answer for who to vote for; you really choose the person who represents the problems you personally care about.” - Kayin Bejide ’25
- “I am working as a poll worker on November 5th. Although I am still too young to vote, I see the 2024 election as one of the most pivotal moments in my life. I think that working as a poll worker will still allow me to participate and observe the democratic system. I have worked in the past as a grassroots volunteer for the 2020 Biden campaign and the 2024 Harris campaign. I serve as a member of the call-crew, which consists of talking to hundreds of voters in battleground states to increase voter turnout for Democrats.” - Isabelle Applebaum ’25
- “I have been very active this summer as a campaign fellow for the [Democratic candidate for Senator Angela] Alsobrooks and [Democratic candidate for Congress April] Delaney campaigns. I’ve knocked on doors around Maryland’s sixth congressional district for these two female candidates, and I was in one of April Delaney’s campaign commercials!” - Rachel Spencer ’25
- “Through my temple, I wrote postcards to voters throughout the country urging them to register to vote.” - Caroline Goldstein ’25

OPINION: Stop Saying You “Don’t Care About Politics”

BY MIRA WISSMAN, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

I’ve heard the phrase “I really just don’t care about politics” about a million times. And I will be honest: each time I hear it, my blood begins to boil.

To a degree, I get it. It’s easy to think that certain policies or government decisions won’t affect you, but in reality, they probably will. And if they don’t have a direct impact on you, they likely affect some of the people you care about who surround you.

Truthfully, I didn’t always care about politics as much as I do now. I was in fourth grade when former president Donald J. Trump was elected, and I remember acting in a similar manner to my classmates: coming to class on Wednesday, November 9th and shaking my head, a simple mirroring of my parents’ emotions. At the time, I didn’t feel any threat to my rights as an American citizen. I write this article now, however, as a soon-to-be-adult who is worried about her

rights as an American citizen. And while I have chosen to support Kamala Harris in this election, my goal is not to tell you why I’m voting blue. My goal is to convey why it is our role as not only American citizens but also educated students to pay attention to politics.

Holton has provided us uniquely with a place to have difficult conversations and foster our own opinions. Students take U.S. history in both eighth and 10th grade and learn about the election process. We discuss politics at lunch, have DEIB-related conversations during our annual Diversity Conference and run clubs dedicated to various policy-related issues. Holton is a unique place that has allowed us to learn not what to think but how to think. And it is our role as students to use our leverage and education to make the world a better place.

Additionally, it is important to remember that while a policy may not directly affect you, it may affect others

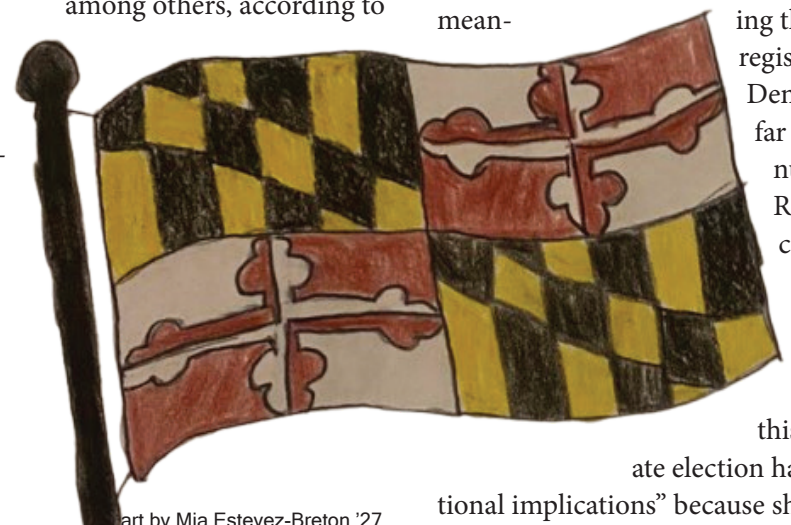
Maryland Senate Race Looms Over State Citizens

BY SOPHIA KUTKO, FEATURES EDITOR

As the election quickly approaches, the Maryland Senate race may determine the composition of the Senate as a whole.

Democratic candidate Angela Alsobrooks’ main campaign points include working towards equitable education opportunities and abortion rights. Alsobrooks vows to co-sponsor the Women’s Health Protection Act, which would restore the national right to abortion, and promises to fight for legislation that will slow the effects of climate change. She has received an endorsement from Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris and “The Washington Post,” among others, according to

Also-



in a way that contradicts your core values. Personally, for example, I care deeply about every woman’s access to full reproductive rights, including abortion. I am angered by the overturning of Roe v. Wade, which leaves the decision surrounding reproductive rights up to individual states. Though this decision does not affect me in my home state of Maryland, where abortion continues to be legal, I am angry for the millions of women in other states such as Texas, Alabama and Kentucky, where abortion is near-completely banned.

It is our job as educated, privileged Gen-Zers to care about politics. You don’t need to run for president to care; just engaging in a political conversation, signing up to work the polls on election day, or participating in a political club at school are all amazing starts.

We are the future of politics, so why don’t we start caring?

brooks for Senate.

Larry Hogan, the Republican candidate, is running on the platform of being a nonpartisan politician. Interestingly, Hogan’s campaign includes abortion rights in an effort to win Democratic and Independent votes, and he said that he will block a national abortion ban. Additionally, Hogan plans to fight for increased funding for law enforcement officers and to give them autonomy to make decisions at local and state levels. According to Hogan for Maryland, the Republican candidate received an endorsement from former president Donald Trump, although Hogan has been very vocal about his criticism of the former president.

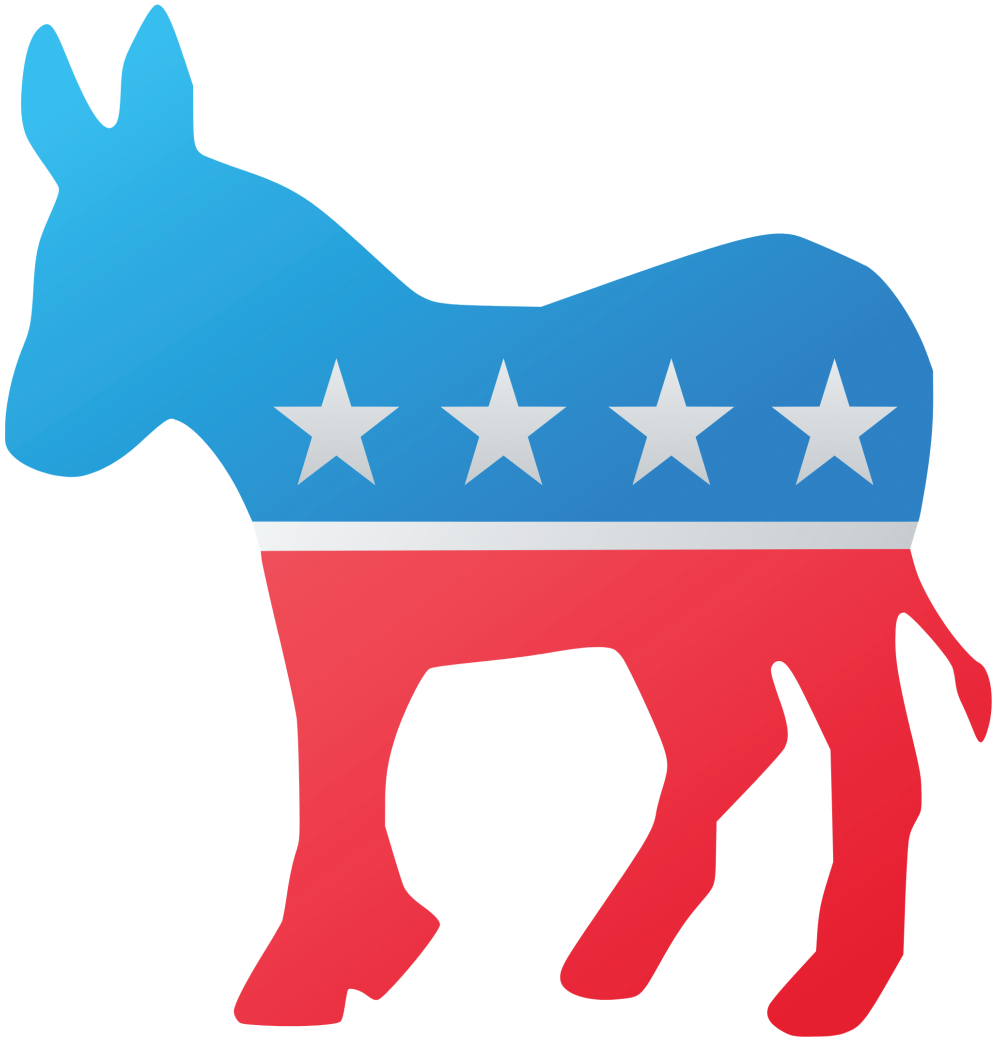
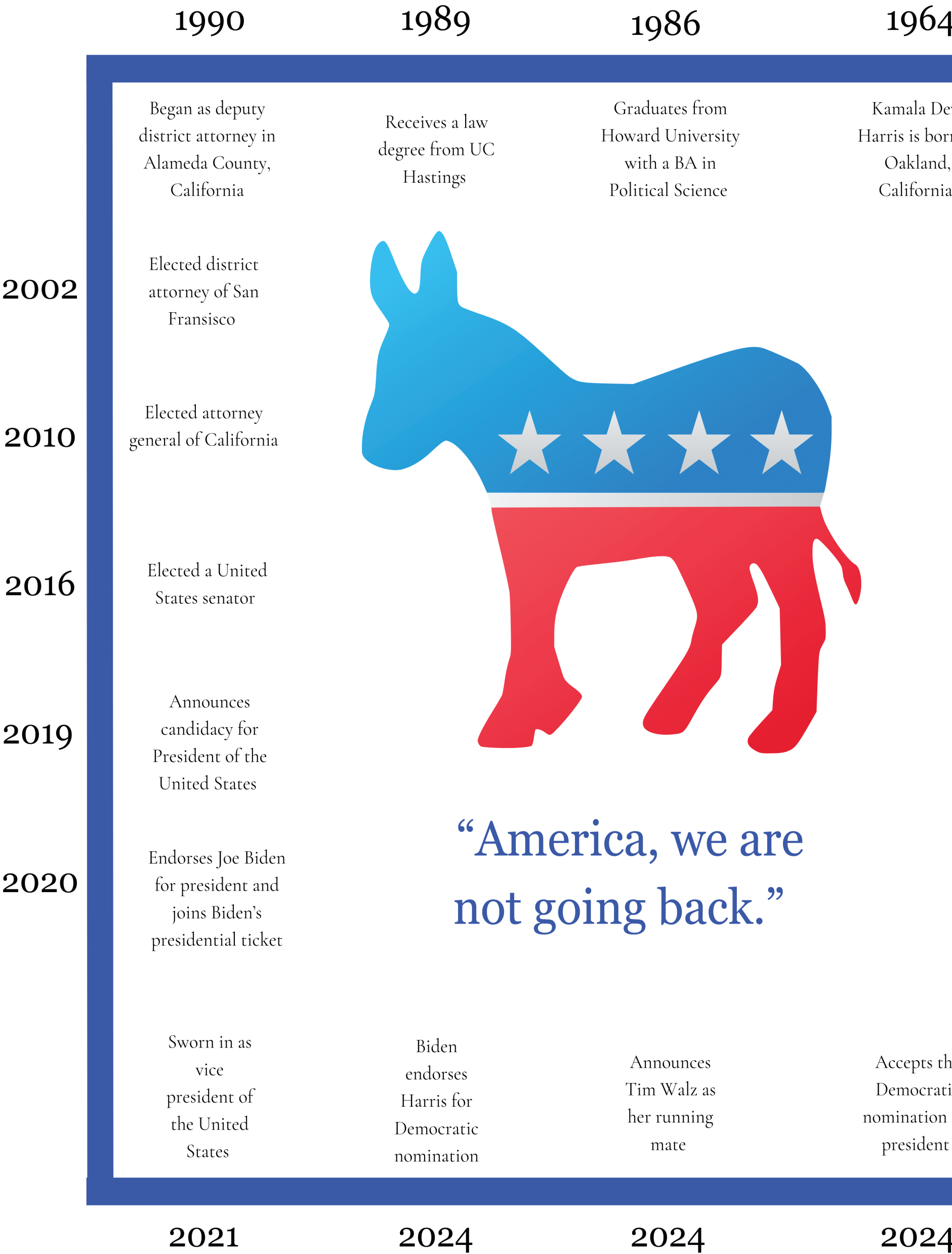
Democrats currently hold the majority in the Senate but by a very small margin. History teacher Joel Seltzer mentioned that “one or two changes could shift the balance of power dramatically.” Maryland is often called a “deep blue” state, meaning that registered Democrats far outnumber Republicans.

Seltzer added that this Senate election has “national implications” because should Hogan win, “it is likely that the Senate will be controlled by the Republican Party.” He said that individual Senators have “enormous power” and “can often block the passage of laws and appointments.”

Louisa Nill, Advanced Topics in US Government teacher, explained that “Senate and House elections, in [her] opinion, are actually more important than presidential elections because congressmen are the people that make the laws.” While the president is required to sign off on legislation, Nill said that “the House and the Senate are the ones really legislating on our behalf.”

Kate Rudge ’26, who has been involved with campaigns in the past, suggested checking the website of a candidate who is “always in need of volunteers.”

Nill encouraged Holton students and faculty to educate themselves before voting. Reading and watching the news, especially from unbiased news sources, is a great way to stay up-to-date.



“America, we are not going back.”

1946

Donald John Trump is born in Queens, New York City

1968

Graduates from Wharton Business School

1970

Works with his father on business developments in New York

1972

Becomes owner of Elizabeth Trump & Son

Builds several properties in New York City and opens the Grand Hyatt, coined best developer

1980

Hosts “The Apprentice” on NBC

2004

Announces that he is giving up “The Apprentice” to run for President

2015

Elected president of the United States

2016

Gives inaugural speech

2017

“Make America great again.”

Accepts the Republican nomination for president

Announces JD Vance as his running mate

Jan. 6 Insurrection occurs at the US Capitol

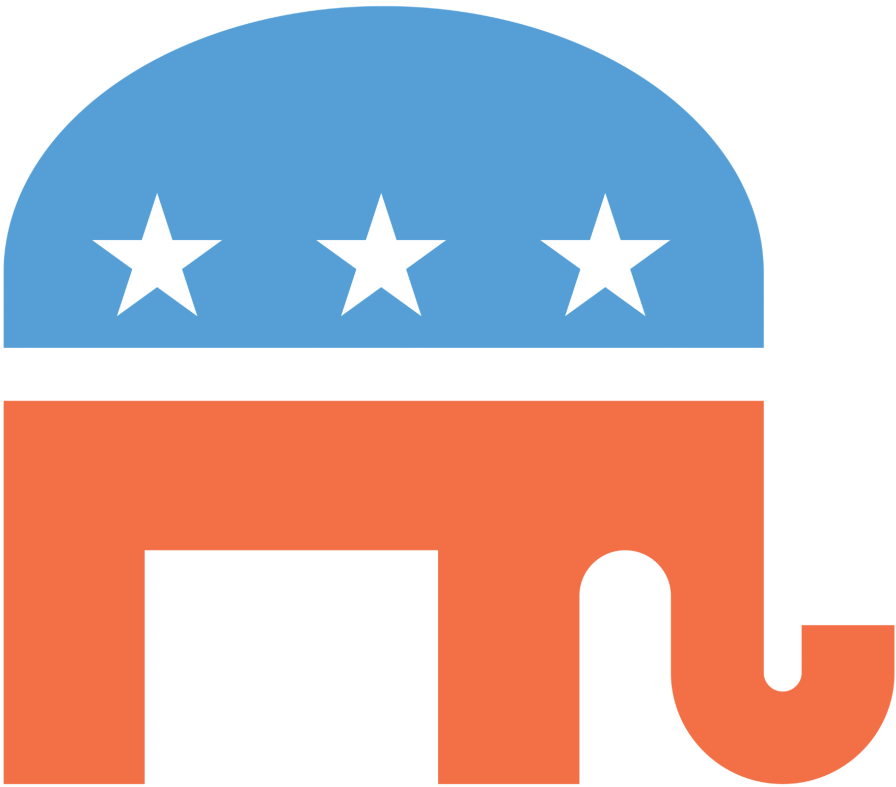
Loses 2020 presidential election to Joe Biden

2024

2024

2021

2020



Seniors Lose Half of “Slounge” to Bee Infestation

BY ZARA SHAMIM

Just 48 hours after the Class of 2025 celebrated its first day of senior year, the grade lost the more productive half of its Senior Lounge, more affectionately known as the “Slounge,” to a crowd of unwanted roommates: bees.

The beloved College Resource Room (CRR), home to countless hard-working seniors over the years, was closed off on September 6th.

Grade 12 Class Dean Shay Squeglia recalled the moment “a pair of seniors who were trembling in fear” informed her of the bee infestation and said she “immediately rushed to the Slounge to see what the buzz was

about.”

Some seniors were unbothered by the bees. Palmer Holley ’25 confessed that she “always saw [the bees] but didn’t care.”

However, other seniors were left with fewer places to do their work, and with the college application season in full swing, many members of the class were not happy.

With the new library still under construction and the lack of WiFi in the upper school offices, seniors struggled to find places to be productive.

Sophia Zachary ’25 spoke about how inconvenient it was not to have a place to work and said, “I couldn’t focus because the CRR was closed, and I had no

choice but to sit on the Jouch (jean-couch),” which is located in the other half of the Slounge.

Zachary wasn’t the only one confined to just half of the Slounge, though.

Each day, especially during lunch and U9, seniors piled onto the Slounge’s three couches and four chairs. Salma Baig ’25 recalled, “It

was so crowded and loud that no one could walk.” The closure lasted for longer than anticipated. Seniors were excited on September 12th when Squeglia emailed the class that the bees were “in the process of making their way to the great hive in the sky” and that the CRR would reopen the following day.

Unfortunately, the bees were resilient, and the CRR remained closed for another week.

The College Resource Room officially reopened two weeks after students originally reported the infestation.

Seniors rejoiced as they reclaimed the other half of the Slounge and celebrated finally having a space to work.

art by Emme Poole ’26



2024-2025 School Year Brings New Cell Phone Ban

BY BLAIR GREENSPAN

As the first month of the school year ends, students continue adjusting to the new cell phone policy. The primary motivation for cell phone restriction during the school day is to promote mental health and well-being.

Holton’s move is part of a larger change. Schools nationwide have implemented similar phone bans. According to CBS News, “some students concede having a phone in class distracted them from learning and not having them felt better.”

Rising nationwide bans have come as more research has correlated excessive cellphone use to larger levels of distraction and disrespect in the classroom. In fact, Pew Research Center reported, “72% of high school teachers say students being distracted by their cellphones in the classroom is a major problem.”

Additionally, increased screentime is “associated with higher rates of anxiety and depression” especially among teenage girls, reported KFF.

Assistant Upper School Director Kate Mitchell observed that students’ access to phones during the school day tended to shift focus and contributed to mental health problems. In addition, she noted that throughout the first few weeks of school, the

quality of student life seems to have improved due to the new phone policy. Mitchell said she hears “a lot more conversation among students in the hallways.”

As a result of the new policy, Mitchell believed that students’ grades and GPAs would improve. She predicted that the community would feel more connected after removing phones.

Chris Lynch, head of Upper School, stated that when the administration established the new cell phone policy, it hoped to create time away from phones and the pressure of daily news alerts.

Lynch believed that when students feel anxious, they cannot connect. Therefore, he hoped the new cell phone policy would “bring down stress levels and open students up to more meaningful conversations.”

Emerging research on the effectiveness on phone-bans, however, has been mixed. KFF reported, “some studies [suggest] improvements in student mental health and academic performance and a reduction of bullying, and others [show] little to no change.”

Students have differing opinions on the necessity and benefits of the phone ban. Hannah Ordan ’25 was “more productive during study hall now without the distraction.” Mira

Wissman ’25 agreed and said, “I feel like when I walk into the Slounge, everyone is talking instead of sitting alone on their phones.”

On the other hand, Caroline

Goldstein, ’25, found the phone ban makes “day-to-day tasks harder like exercising in the weight room and taking pictures with friends.”

The effects of the phone ban are still unknown. However, the Holton administration, like in

many schools across America, is continuing to navigate the digital world by seeking to strike the right balance between access to technology and mental health promotion.



Upper School Administrative Assistant Eranga Panagodage and Upper School Director Chris Lynch pose by the phone “jail.”

Do Endorsements Play a Large Role in Elections?

BY ISABELLE APPLEBAUM, MANAGING EDITOR

In the high-stakes 2024 presidential election, endorsements are emerging as an important tool in shaping voter perceptions and opinions. The term “endorsements” refers to any public support and approval for a particular candidate. From political leaders and labor unions to high-profile celebrities, a wide range of endorsements are shaping the dynamics of the race.

According to “The Washington Post,” candidates often seek endorsements from members of the opposing party to expand appeal to a wider audience. Democratic candidate Kamala Harris stated in the September presidential debate that she defines her campaign beyond typical partisan lines but as a “new generation of leadership for our country.” As she says, she prioritizes the representation of all American voices, Harris seeks endorsements from Republican figures. She successfully gained endorsements from many conservative politicians,

including James McCain, son of revered Senator John McCain, and Dick Cheney, former vice president.

Republican candidate Donald Trump secured the political endorsement of independent candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr, who is the nephew of former President John F. Kennedy and said that he would “throw [his] support to President Trump.”

As social media and pop culture have played a rising role in politics, endorsements no longer come solely from political figures but also include celebrities and influencers. According to PBS News, celebrity endorsements have assumed “new significance during an election year when campaigns jockey for endorsements from the entertainment industry’s biggest stars, hoping their candidate will latch onto mainstream pop momentum.”

Several high-profile celebrities have endorsed Donald Trump’s 2024 campaign. “Forbes” named Brittany Mahomes, wife of Kansas City Chiefs

quarterback Patrick Mahomes; Kid Rock, an American singer; and Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla Motors as the most significant celebrity endorsements.

Kamala Harris also garnered support from many celebrities including singers Billie Eilish, Charli XCX and John Legend. Arguably her most significant celebrity endorsement came from Taylor Swift, who posted on her Instagram account after the presidential debate. Swift wrote, “[Harris] fights for the rights and causes I believe need a warrior to champion them. I think she is a steady-handed, gifted leader and I believe we can accomplish so much more in this country if we are led by calm and not chaos.”

According to NPR, Swift’s endorsement of Harris drove 35,000 people to register to vote on Vote.org. However, celebrity endorsements don’t typically affect the outcome of a general election. “The New York Times” stated, “Celebrity endorsements are more

likely to matter in primary elections, when voters must choose between two or more relatively similar candidates.” It is not yet known if Swift or any other celebrity will make a significant difference in the outcome of the election.

As for students who are able to vote in the November election, most deny being swayed by any celebrity or political endorsements. Devani Shah ’25 stated, “I have done my own research on both candidates, and no celebrity’s personal ideologies are going to influence how I vote.” Peyton Austin ’25 agreed and said, “While celebrity and political endorsements are certainly interesting to see, I do not think they play a role in how I vote. Ultimately, it comes down to a politician’s beliefs, policies and ideals.”

Ultimately, both political and celebrity endorsements remain a powerful tool for candidates, but their true effectiveness will come out at the polls.

Raskin Introduces Suicide Prevention Legislation Following Son’s Death

BY KATE RUDGE

Jamie Raskin has served as the congressional representative for Maryland’s eighth congressional district since 2017.

The lead impeachment manager in the second impeachment trial of former President Donald Trump and member of the Select Committee to investigate the January 6th attack on the U.S. Capitol, Raskin has been influential within many committees.

Just seven days before the insurrection, Raskin experienced an extreme tragedy in his personal life.

On December 31, 2020, Raskin’s son Tommy committed suicide, according to a statement from Raskin on January 4, 2021.

uate, a skilled lawyer, and a loving man adored by those around him. He begun, however, to struggle severely in his 20s from depression until eventually taking his own life.

After this tragedy, Raskin steered ahead and sought productive means to spread awareness about the importance of mental health services and suicide prevention.

These efforts came as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported a rise in suicide rates by 37% between 2000-2022.

In fact, Tommy’s death represented just one of 49,000 people who died by suicide in 2022.

On September 12, 2024, Raskin and Congressman Don Bacon (NE-02) introduced a new piece of bi-

Suicide Act.

The primary goal of the STOP Act is to increase access to evidence-based stabilization care for those struggling with suicidal thoughts. Raskin explained that he feels responsible to “help people who are suffering and provide a long-term stabilization plan.”

According to Raskin, such stabilization services are crucial because they can help reduce or even eliminate immediate suicide risk as well as help people to control dangerous impulses.

Additionally, having these services at the disposal of citizens in need relieves pressure on hospitals and law enforcement to ensure that

the country’s health and

safety services are not overcrowded or overlooking others in need of immediate attention.

The STOP Act also proposes a new grant program at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), which aims to increase access for productive and prompt outpatient care as well as virtual stabilization care.

Under the bill, grant recipients including “community health centers, rural health clinics, certified community behavioral health clinics, primary care and behavioral health providers, state health agencies and school-based or campus-based health centers” would have access to training and technical assistance, according to Maryland Matters.

Many national organizations including the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and the National League for Nursing have endorsed the STOP act.

In the words of Raskin, “America is plagued by a mental health epidemic, and too many families have experienced the anguish of losing a loved one to mental illness and suicide.”



Holton Alumnae Teachers Share Their Reasoning for Returning to Teach

BY TABY DARGE

After we graduate from Holton, what do we do? Do we become doctors, lawyers or entrepreneurs? Or do we return to where it all started

and teach at our alma mater?

Holton's 13 current alumnae teachers decided to take the latter path, and as three of them suggested, the general reasoning behind their career

choice was that they wanted to help their students in the same way that their teachers helped them.

Upper school English teacher Maggie Spak '98 highlighted the education she received and said, "I wanted to be part of that intellectual world for my students."

Martha Macon Smith '09, Grade 10 class dean and upper school English teacher, agreed and said that she returned to Holton because it was the "place that helped shape [her] into the person [she is] in so many ways."

While students here, these alums contributed to the school in a variety of ways.

For example, Upper school Biology teacher Lisa Craig '76 was an active drama participant as president of the Drama Club and part of the backstage crew for several Holton-Landon productions.

Spak, on the other hand, was the editor-in-chief of "Scribbler" during her senior year and described being the current publication's advisor as a "full-circle" moment.

Reflecting, these teachers are aware of how Holton has evolved.

Craig noted the difference in class sizes and curriculum and recalled that her graduating class had fewer than 60 students and the highest level of math available to them was Pre-Calculus.

Additionally, she mentioned that when she was a student, Chinese was not taught as a subject yet.

Spak and Smith recalled that the emphasis on global education and culture immersion was not as large when they were students.

Many of these alumnae teachers did not plan on returning to Holton.

However, as Spak said, once she decided to teach, "there was no greater place [she] could think of than Holton."



Senior yearbook pictures for Community

Engagement Coordinator Emily Wilde '09 and 10th Grade Dean Martha Macon Smith '09

Opinion: I Hate CEA Writing

BY ELISE GLEDHILL

I have done a lot of writing in my life. And I mean a lot. I have written essays dripping with overcomplicated language detailing the history of famous physicists through the metaphor of a symphony orchestra. I have written an essay titled "Don Quixote is a Moron," an opinion I still advocate firmly for. However, just as the book "Telling Writing" said, my favorite writing pieces come from much earlier in my childhood.

In fourth grade, I wrote a creative story about Chippy Whippy Moo Moo Smooth Peanut Butter School for Intelligent Individuals. It illustrated the very colorful tale of a very gifted girl. She, of course, was secretly a dolphin from space who loved potatoes.

Inspired by the Geronimo Stilton books, I spent hours on my Dell computer making each verb and interesting noun a different font and color to match its meaning.

What my story lacked in prose it made up for in personality. Every word in that story, pulled by a golden string from the deepest depths of my childhood whimsy, explained a part

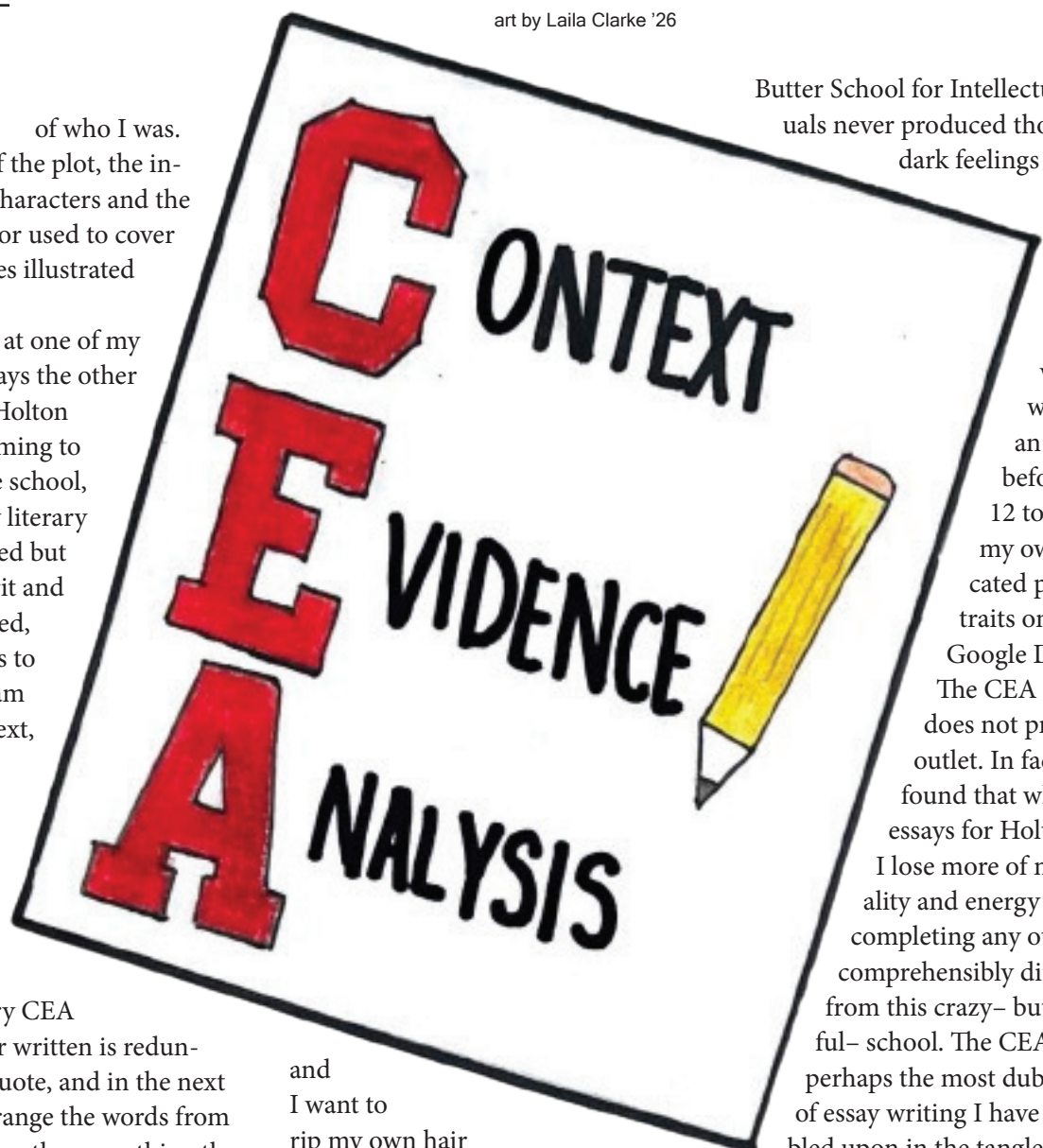
of who I was.

The absurdity of the plot, the insecurity of the characters and the obnoxious humor used to cover those insecurities illustrated my upbringing.

I took a peek at one of my more recent essays the other day, one of my Holton essays. Since coming to this divine, little school, not only has my literary analysis improved but also has my spirit and soul been crushed, too! Explain this to me, please: If I am giving you context, and then I give you the evidence, why do I have to analyze the evidence again?

Every other sentence in every CEA essay I have ever written is redundant. I write a quote, and in the next sentence, I rearrange the words from the quote to prove the same thing the quote already said itself. 800 words later, I have a headache, my eyes burn

and I want to rip my own hair out. Writing about Chippy Whippy Moo Moo Smooth Peanut



art by Laila Clarke '26

Butter School for Intellectual Individuals never produced those deep, dark feelings within me.

Although

I have no

desire to

take up

creative

writing, I

would enjoy

an outlet

before English

12 to project

my own compli-

cated personality

traits onto helpless

Google Docs pages.

The CEA format

does not provide that

outlet. In fact, I have

found that while writing

essays for Holton classes,

I lose more of my person-

ality and energy than when

completing any other in-

comprehensibly difficult task

from this crazy- but wonder-

ful- school. The CEA format is

perhaps the most dubious form

of essay writing I have ever stum-

bled upon in the tangled jungle

vines of my writing journey. Dear

CEA, I hate you.

Opinion: The New Grading System is “Hypocritical”

BY HANNAH ORDAN, MANAGING EDITOR

This year, Holton implemented a new grading system where percentage grades and point values are completely replaced by letters. According to this new policy, Holton teachers are explicitly not allowed to give their students numerical grades.

Although this new system has been gradually grandfathered in for the past couple of years, this year, percentages have been completely eliminated from grading.

In other words, when I get my next Spanish test back, I may see a B+ or an A- on my paper as opposed to an 18.5/20 or 19/20.

Not to mention, many Holton teachers equate each letter grade to a certain percentage in the gradebook.

For example, a C+ may always be inputted as a 78%. But each letter grade comes with its own range. A C+ is between 77-79%. A B is between 83-86%.

When I get a grade back, I like to know exactly where I stand, and I also would like to get credit where I deserve it.

If I get a B on a test, but it's really an 86%, and my friend Holly Holton gets a B on her test, but it's really an 83%, I would like that discrepancy to be reflected in the gradebook.

And I'm sure Holly Holton would feel the same way if the roles were reversed.

I understand the teachers' perspective. Sometimes we indeed resemble animals scratching and begging for an A-.

I also understand how stressful it can be on our adolescent minds to know we are just one mere

students care about their grades. It's that simple.

As a senior, I can attest that what may seem like a few meaningless points feels like the bricks building a wall that stands between me and my college acceptance letter.

Every point, every red mark and every x matters.

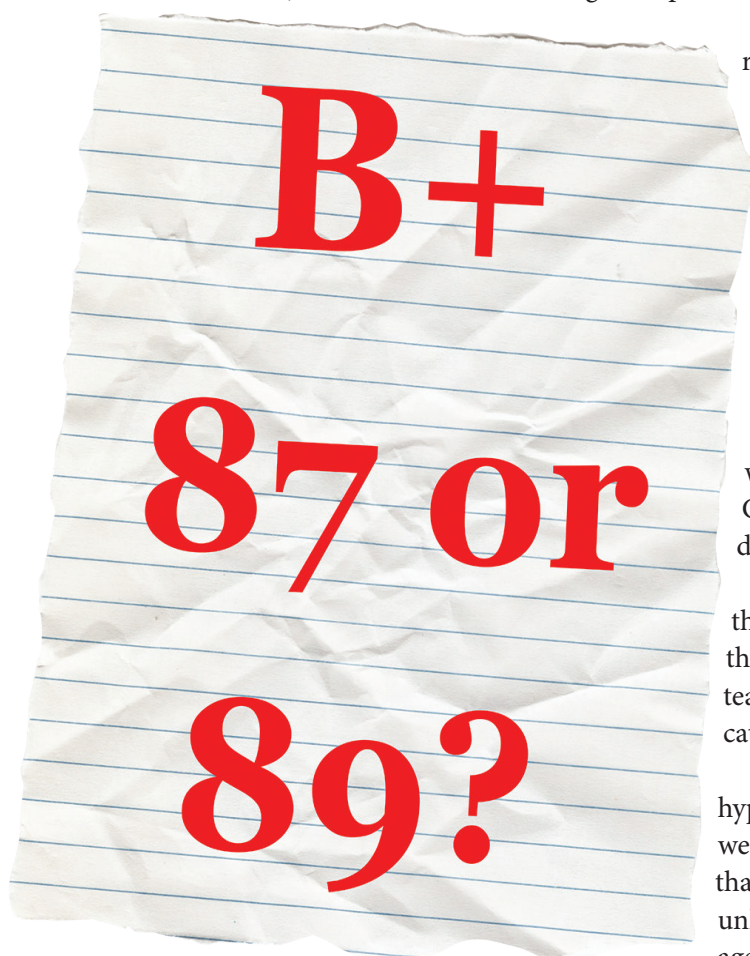
So, why would we settle for a B+ on a test when we find a potential grading error.

Why would we willingly jeopardize our report cards? Why would we accept a lower GPA than what we deserve?

If Holton takes these numbers away, they may as well stop teaching us to advocate for ourselves.

This system is hypocritical. Should we accept the anxiety that comes with the unknown percentages?

Should we speak up and take action only when it aligns with teachers' expectations? Should we only stand strong, as long as we don't disrupt the status quo?



point away from our goal grade.

However, in spite of what our grade deans and counselors like to tell us, grades do matter. Holton

OPINION: It Won't Rain at Commencement If You Step on the Crest

BY ISABELLE APPLEBAUM, MANAGING EDITOR

As I shuffled into Holton-Arms for the first time, I was immediately impressed with the white, marble floors and palace-esque stairs that seemed to be overrun with girls with plaid skirts.

I rehearsed my introduction and handshake in my mind, ready to impress the tour-guide into handing me an acceptance on the spot.

As the security guard directed my parents and me to the seating area, a peppy tour guide stepped out from behind the middle school hallway. Her face dropped as she saw me. "Oh, actually you should probably not stand there," she said.

To my horror I gazed down at the spot I had chosen to give my prewritten introduction: right in the middle of the Holton crest. I jumped off of it immediately as I spouted apologies to whomever I had just insulted.

I thought about this moment for weeks and lived in constant fear that I had thrown my acceptance away as my feet squashed the olive branch and book. Nevertheless, to my relief, I received my confetti-filled card of acceptance a couple months later.

As I entered Holton, the stories of the crest echoed throughout the school.

Hannah Ordan '25 told me that if I were to ever step on the crest it will undoubtedly, "rain during graduation." Soa Andriamananjara '25 said, "I don't think that the myth is real, but I like to participate in the tradition." Grace Curley '25 announced that she has "never stepped on the crest."

Some rebellious seniors find joy in breaking the tradition. Sophia Lekeufack '25 reported that she "stomps on it."

The weather forecast and chance of precipitation are yet to be seen for May 21, 2025. The fear that kept me up at night four years ago still radiates through my walks in the front lobby. I will continue to avoid the crest at all costs.

These Days, Where are All the Teachers Hiding?

BY MERRITT FELDNER, ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Have you noticed that your teachers seem to be hiding from you this year? Due to the construction of the Learning Commons, many teachers have been temporarily relocated.

While the Science Department did not change locations, the History and English offices moved to Dance Studio A. History teacher Chelsea Berry said that Dance Studio A allows her to continue to "bounce teaching ideas off" her colleagues, but "it does take a bit of extra planning to get to [her] classrooms on time" from the new location.

While several English teachers work in Dance Studio A, some have found unique workspaces. 12th grade Dean and English Department chair

Shay Squeglia has "claimed the sofa" in Assistant Upper School Director Kate Mitchell's office, a position allowing her to spend time with Mitchell and get "the latest news and, of course, candy" from neighbor and Head of Upper School Chris Lynch.

The World Language Department has taken over new offices on the first floor. Those spaces are far from the second and third floor hallways, so many teachers feel separated from the Upper School, including Spanish teacher Brian Reilly, who has missed saying "¡Hola!" to everyone.

The math teachers are now in Chief Financial Officer Tracey Fudge's office near the main entrance or work in their classrooms.

Math teacher Allesandra King even spends most of her time in the Lower School. Math Department

Chair Kristen Brock, who works in Fudge's office, said she enjoys "the proximity to the cafeteria and the entrance" in her new workspace, but "the climb up to the third floor for each class is tiresome."

While teachers have experienced challenges with their offices, students have had trouble finding their teachers this year. Lauren Hemann '27 claimed that looking for her teachers "takes a lot more time out of [her] day" than it used to.

Even though teachers have just found their "hiding spots," once the Learning Commons opens, they will be able to return to their offices.

Squeglia joked that Computer Science Department Chair Tucker Sowers could even get a new office, maybe "a 3D-printed yurt on the gym field."

Jordan Chiles Appeals to the Swiss Courts

BY CHARLOTTE FRITZ, A&E EDITOR

An accomplished gymnast, Jordan Chiles competed for UCLA in college and later for the US National Gymnastics Team. Chiles was essential to Team USA's success in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and the Paris 2024 Olympics.

According to Chicago 5 News, at the 2024 Paris Olympics, Chiles competed in the Women's Individual Floor Routine Event.

Following her routine, the judges gave Chiles a score of 13.666, putting her in fifth place. Romanian gymnasts Ana Barbosu and Sabrina Maneca-Voinea tied for fourth place with scores of 13.700.

Believing that the judges had not given sufficient points for a particular skill, Team USA Coach Cecile Landi appealed Chiles' score. The judges accepted Landi's appeal, and Chiles' new score became 13.766, thus plac-

ing her third as the recipient of the bronze medal for the floor routine.

After the closing ceremony, Team Romania brought concerns over biased judging to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

The International Gymnastics Federation reviewed a policy where coaches may only appeal within a minute after the judge's ruling.

Upon Team Romania's motion, the CAS decided that Coach Landi's appeal to the judges to change Chiles' score was four seconds too late and, therefore, invalid.

As a result, Chiles was stripped of her bronze medal, and her second score was revoked.

USA Gymnastics announced its plans to appeal on Chiles' behalf, however, given video evidence of Coach Landi placing inquiries at 47 and 55 seconds after the initial scoring, both within the necessary time slot, despite the appeal being submit-

ted after a minute and four seconds. Based on this new evidence, USA Gymnastics has requested that CAS reconsider its decision and restore Chiles' medal.

Caroline Peterson '26 stated, "I think that because there is sufficient evidence with the video, Chiles deserves her medal...There is proof that she submitted it on time."

Despite the difficulties, Chiles remained composed at the event and afterward.

Holton Athletic Director Graham Westerberg remarked that he "was so impressed with the sportsmanship from both Chiles and Simone Biles that day."

Additionally, Westerberg "trust[s] that the people investigating this will ensure that they do it in a detailed manner to get it correct."

The debate over Chiles' medal is ongoing, and viewers anticipate the CAS' decision.

Blue-White Night: School Hosts First Sports Game "Under the Lights"

BY SOPHIE FAMILI, SPORTS EDITOR

October 10th brought Blue-White Night, a school-wide tradition that marks the end of Spirit Week. Popular with the community for its lively atmosphere and delicious food, including a donut truck, the main event included a dance party and barbecue hosted by the Parents Association at the front circle.

The music, food trucks, treats, decorations and blue-white spirit brought a sense of togetherness for all ages.

Students, faculty and families showed off their blue-white gear.

Many fall sports teams had home games on Blue-White Night, and students went out to support and cheer on their fellow panthers.

Lower school students created posters and came to show their panther pride, a tradition that unites the community. Teams including varsity tennis, varsity and jv volleyball, jv and varsity soccer and varsity field hockey had games and matches.

Also, for the first time, this year, small chorus groups sang the national anthem before each game to boost excitement.

To celebrate the new turf field, Holton hosted its first ever night game following the varsity soccer game.

The varsity field hockey team played Stone Ridge "under the lights," to bring out the students, athletes, coaches, families and faculty who also enjoyed an ice cream truck at the turf.

Elizabeth Farland '25, president of the Holton-Arms Athletic Association (HAA) and a field hockey captain, said, "My favorite part of Blue-White Night was feeling the sense of community and energy all around me, with everyone coming together to show school spirit, cheer each other on and just have fun. The whole night was just so exciting and special."

Many teams brought home a victory, and field hockey tied 2-2 with field hockey powerhouse Stone Ridge in an energetic and lively game.

Students Collaborate to Facilitate First Pep Rally in Recent Years

BY MIRA WISSMAN, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"Honestly I always just wanted to do something that I always thought of as so stereotypically high school," said Representative Assembly (RA) Director Soa Andriamananjara '25. Beginning with Andriamananjara's creativity, the planning for Holton's first pep rally in years commenced.

A pep rally is an event that typically takes place before a sports event. It serves to get students excited and teams motivated.

Noticing a lack of spirit and enthusiasm for sports, Andriamananjara initially brought up to RA her idea of a school-wide gathering. She commented, "I was pretty nervous about running it because it was a completely student-led endeavor and none of us have ever attended a pep rally."

The group decided that the event could be planned more elaborately and efficiently with the help of additional spirit-oriented groups at school including the Holton-Arms Athletic Association (HAA) and the Blue and White team captains.

In the two weeks leading up to the event, the groups collaborated often.

The endeavor wasn't easy for a group of students to plan under a time crunch, but they divided up the

tasks: emailing out invitations to all three divisions of the school, coordinating music and games and creating banners for each fall sports team with paper and spray paint.

On October 10th, the entire student body gathered in the gym for the event. For 45 minutes, teachers sat back and watched what students had put together. Athletic Director Graham Westerberg commented that the students "did everything. All the adults did was help to support their needs."

Honor Council President Sophia Zachary '25 said, "What I loved the most about the pep rally was the fact it was an event by the students for the students."

Assistant RA Director Kate Rudge '26 said, "It was really cool to see how

enthusiastic people were in all three divisions," as Lower School came adorned in blue tutus and face paint and Middle Schoolers sang and danced to the upbeat

playlist RA had compiled.

Orchesis kicked off the festivities with a traditional pep rally cheer routine to ACDC's "Thunderstruck." Following, all varsity fall sports teams rushed in the gym doors to run through their respective banners.

The pep rally did its job, as at Blue-White Night, the enthusiasm continued.

Andriamananjara said, "Getting to see so many people at multiple games later that night was so rewarding, especially when we used the chants we practiced earlier. "People said it was the best Blue-White Night ever."

Students may hope for another pep rally in the near future because, as Andriamananjara stated, "I've never seen the entire community so excited together."



Orchesis dances at the pep rally.

2024 VMAs Featured an “Otherworldly Medley” and “Fiery” Performances

BY GRACE CURLEY, A&E EDITOR

On September 11, MTV’s annual Video Music Awards (VMAs) highlighted the music industry’s recent crazes and progressions.

Each year, the VMAs encourage artists to step outside the norm and demonstrate new forms of self-expression in their performances and red-carpet outfits.

This year’s VMAs embodied this concept.

From Sabrina Carpenter’s otherworldly medley of her top hits to Chappell Roan’s medieval-inspired performance of her chart-topping song “Good Luck Babe,” fans were left speechless.

Singers Tate McRae, Carpenter, Taylor Swift, Roan, Olivia Rodrigo and Masie Peters have all contributed to the new wave of pop this past year, and the VMAs reflected this industry surge with performances from rising pop star Benson Boone and former Fifth Harmony member Camilla Cabello.

Carpenter’s space-themed performance of her songs “Espresso,” “Please, Please, Please” and “Taste” excited fans, but some viewers did not fully grasp the concept.

“USA Today” reporter Melissa Ruggieri remarked, “It’s possible Carpenter was giving a nod to the iconic MTV VMAs Moon Person with the space theme, but it didn’t quite work.”

On the other hand, Roan’s play on Joan of Arc dazzled the audience with its fiery medieval elements. Regarding Carpenter, Sophia Lekeufack ’25 stated, “I thought it was a really fun performance. Her outfit change was really funny. I’m proud of her for blooming this year!”

Of Roan, Cecily Brooks ’25 exclaimed, “[Her performance] was amazing. I loved her Renaissance style costume, and I’m guilty of watching it at least four times.”

Swift’s newest album “The Tortured Poets Department” dominated the event. Ultimately surpassing Beyoncé’s record of 27 VMA wins Swift took home seven Moon Men for

awards including Artist of the Year and Video of the Year.

Mary Claire Gilbert ’25 responded, “I think they’re both very talented artists, but Taylor’s music has more of a general appeal, which makes it easier to sell. I also think while Taylor might be basic, she’s basic because she’s good.”

Carpenter won her first Moon Man for her hit song “Espresso” as Song of the Year, and Roan collected her first VMA as Best New Artist.

In her acceptance speech, Roan gave a shout out to the LGBTQIA+ community and stated, “I dedicate this to all the drag artists who inspire me. And I dedicate this to queer & trans people that fuel pop.”

Overall, the 2024 VMAs was a night to remember. Fans experienced a rollercoaster of emotions over the heartfelt speeches and electric performances.

As artists expand their genres and develop their personas over the next year, viewers will eagerly anticipate next fall’s VMA winners.

Students Anticipate “Lean[ing] into... Creativity” When Deciding their Halloween Costumes

BY CHLOE SPIEGEL, ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

October is filled with beautiful colors, delicious foods and an undeniably fun spirit.

The reason October stands out as a festive and fun month at school and around the country is because it is the month of Halloween.

According to the National Retail Federation, Americans spent about 4.2 billion dollars on Halloween costumes in 2023.

Although Halloween costumes were originally intended to scare bad spirits away, today’s costumes usually reference pop culture or offer humor.

Every Halloween, many people dress up as witches and ghosts in basic costumes, but others choose to lean into the creativity and fashion statement of Halloween costumes.

This variety poses an important question: What makes a Halloween costume great?

Vivienne Craig ’27, a member of PUNCH, stated, “When people not only dress up but also wear makeup and do their hair, their costumes are elevated to a whole different level.”

Hair and makeup are important elements that are key factors to great group costumes.

Merritt Feldner ’27 said, “My favorite group Halloween costume that I have done is being Harry Potter students with Talia Wissman [’27] last year! It was such a fun costume for Halloween.” Wissman and Feldner not only rocked Hogwarts robes but also had props such as wigs and wands.

As for predictions on this year’s costume trends, Craig thought many costumes will incorporate the popular 2024 trend of leopard/cheetah print.

Feldner surmised that many will dress up as Chappell Roan and Sabrina Carpenter.

There are so many elements to picking the perfect Halloween costume. No matter what people wear, Halloween is a great opportunity to practice creativity and have fun.

Upper School Fall Musical Hits the Stage

BY SOA ANDRIAMANANJARA

This fall’s theater staging is going to be a storm.

The Drama Department is currently rehearsing for its production of William Shakespeare’s “The Tempest.”

In this adaptation of “The Tempest,” Elle Flueck ’25 plays the lead role of Prospera, the

wronged him years ago and regain his lost title.

The play opens with a literal tempest, a violent storm that shipwrecks Prospero’s enemies on the is-

revenge, Prospera chooses a path of forgiveness, an act that shows her growth and humanity.

Crew member Zoe Nash ’26 is “really excited to see the set because what’s up so far looks super cool.”

When students sit in the theater for assembly, they get to watch the set develop.

Currently, the set is still being built, but according to other company members, there are construction plans for a bridge.

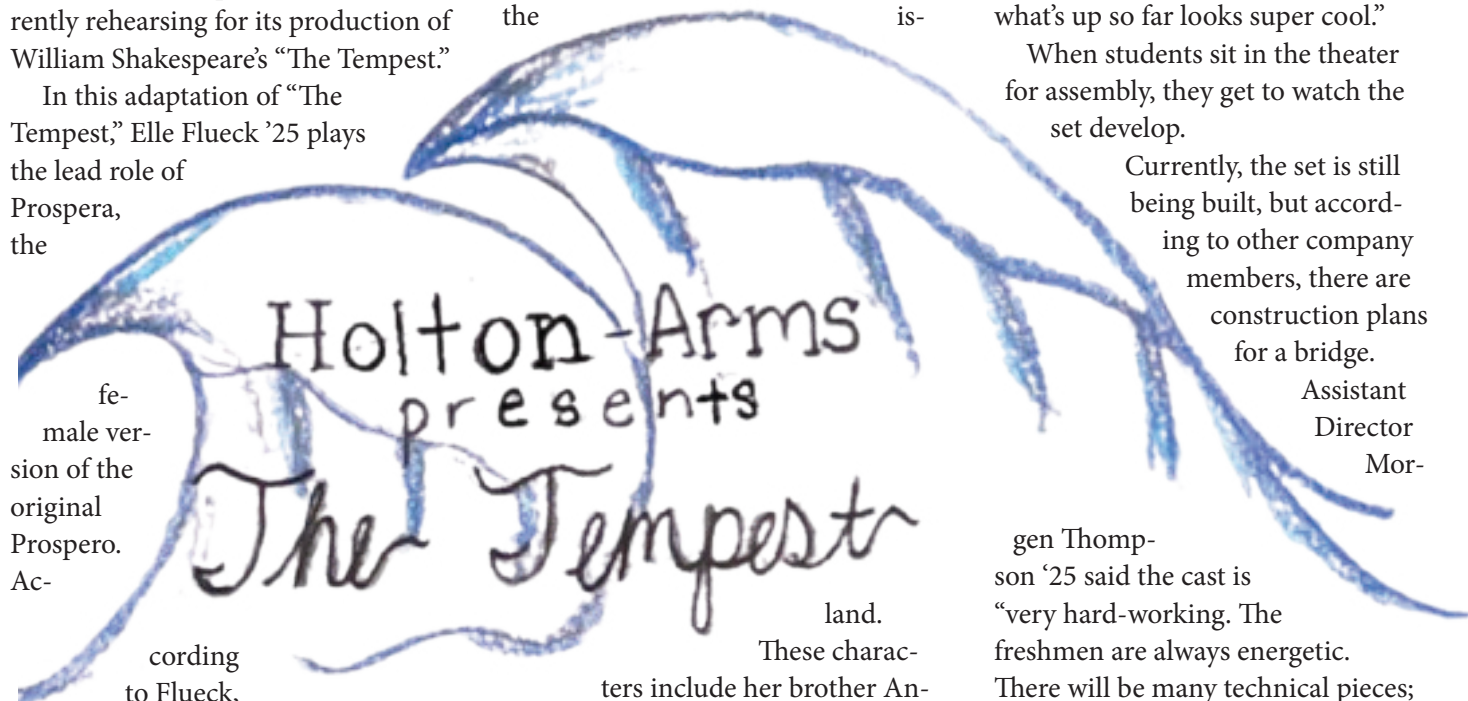
Assistant Director Mor-

gen Thompson ’25 said the cast is “very hard-working. The freshmen are always energetic. There will be many technical pieces; it’s going to be a very dark show. It’s eerie, it’s spooky, it’s creative and it’s modern.”

Make sure to watch “The Tempest” live and in person on November 7th, 8th, and 9th!

land. These characters include her brother Antonio and the King of Naples Alonso. Using her loyal spirit servant Ariel, Prospera manipulates events to his advantage ultimately by bringing her enemies to a place where they must face their past actions.

Despite the opportunity for



female version of the original Prospero. According to Flueck,

“The Tempest” is the story of Prospera, the Duchess of Milan, whose brother banished her to a deserted island along with her daughter.”

Prospera’s main goal is to orchestrate the downfall of those who



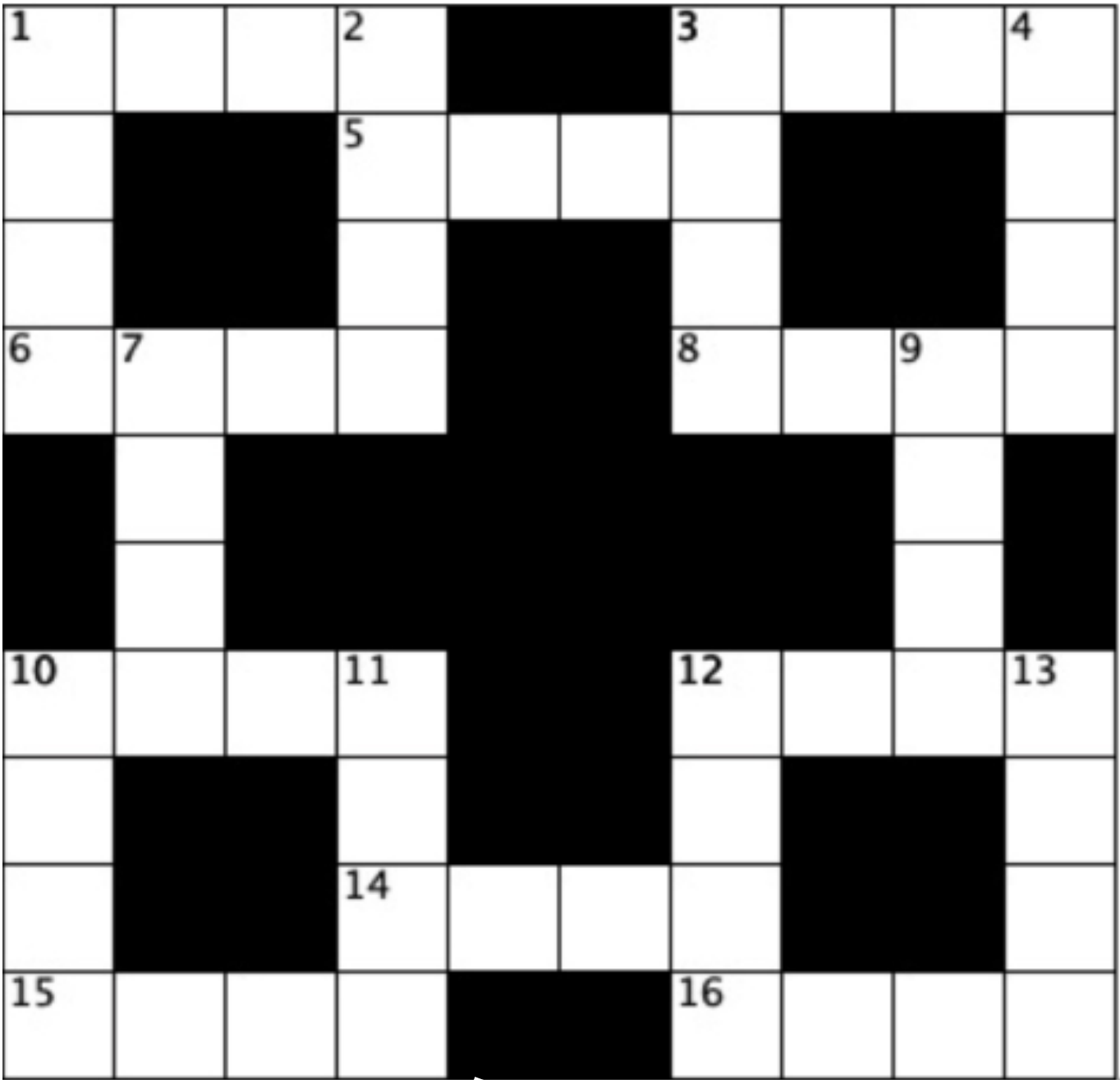
ACROSS

- 1. Formally choose between two candidates, usually on a ballot
- 3. What you do with your ballot on election day
- 5. _____ Boleyn, former Queen of England
- 6. A solemn promise that every elected president must take
- 8. The president appoints a _____ force, which creates plans to deal with national emergencies
- 10. The largest continent
- 12. Former VP Pence
- 14. Some countries have _____-presidential systems, where a president works with a prime minister and a cabinet
- 15. Repeat; reflect; ring
- 16. These keep our country in order

DOWN

- 1. What the president can do to a bill
- 2. Apiece
- 3. Find Honest Abe here!
- 4. To speak
- 7. 16 across, aka _____ of Congress
- 9. Trump and Harris _____ re-election
- 10. Possessing the power and skill
- 11. Furthermore; additionally
- 12. Instead of voting at the booths, you can _____ your ballot in.
- 13. Politicians often have big ones

CREATED BY TALIA WISSMAN, ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR



Wisconsin	Biden	Pennsylvania	Rump
Est	Arris	Harris	Adams
North Carolina	Executive	Tein	Nixon
Michigan	Senate	Judicial	House



- Swing states: WI, PA, NC, MI
- Candidates without first letter: rump, est, arris, tein
- VPs: Biden, Harris, Adams, Nixon

- Parts of the government: Executive, Judicial, House, Senate
- CONNECTIONS KEY
- 4. Talk
- 7. Acts
- 9. Seek
- 10. Able
- 11. Also
- 12. Mail
- 13. Egos

- CROSS-WORD KEY
- Across
- 1. Vote
- 3. Cast
- 5. Anne
- 6. Oath
- 8. Task
- 10. Asia
- 12. Mike
- 14. Semi
- 15. Echo
- 16. Laws
- Down
- 1. Veto
- 2. Each
- 3. Cent