THE GENERAL

October 2026



Former Prime Minister of Ireland Leo Varadkar visited campus to speak with students about his political career, human rights activism, and current work at Harvard University, CALEB SENDER / THE GENERAL

Midterms Are Upon Us

A Local and National Guide to the 2026 Midterm Elections

By COMPTON JONES

While some Thayer Academy students may take "Midterms" to mean "mid terms" (using the Gen Z slang to connote a mediocre voting experience), this year's congressional and gubernatorial elections are anything but.

Midterm elections take place on Tuesday, Nov. 3. Early in-person voting opened on Oct. 17 in Massachusetts, and mail-in voting is already open. For those Thayer Academy students who are eligible to vote, and for those who are interested nonetheless, here is an overview of what's at stake this year.

The Massachusetts midterms feature nine ballot initiatives, or referendums. They encompass the top political issues in the state right now, from housing affordability to state budget.

Question 1 would make most Massachusetts governmental records (such as schedules, budgets, and reports) publicly available under Massachusetts Public Records Law. According to Tufts University researcher Evan Horowitz, however, "there are so many exceptions that this [referendum] is doing nothing for you."

Question 2 would allow public defenders to unionize. Most workers in the state of Massachusetts currently have the right of collective bargaining, except for employees of the Committee for Public Counsel Services (public defenders).

Question 3 would replace the party primary system with a general primary election. In other words, Massachusetts primary elections would not be organized into separate Democratic and Republican races; instead, one primary would take place with a larger pool of candidates from both parties. In effect, this initiative would make general elections in Massachusetts more competitive, with more than one Democratic candidate on the ballot come November.

Question 4 would allow Massachusetts voters to register to vote on election day, as opposed to the current standard of 10 days prior to the election. This is already an active policy in 23 U.S. states, and supporters argue that it would lower the barrier-to-entry for voting.

Continued on PAGE 7



This past October, Thayer had its annual club fair. Here we see Emiley Tormey pitching the Thayer's New Record Club to Orlando Saores and Henry Holmes, CALEB SENDER / THE GENERAL

Inside Thayer's Merch

By KATIE DONAHUE

Nearly every Thayer Academy student owns some form of school merchandise, be it sports jackets, oversized sweatshirts, or even just the 1877 shirt and tiger-striped socks the admissions department gifts to new arrivals. However, the process behind these products — from designing to crafting to shipping and, finally, to purchase — is a lot more complicated than most of us might imagine.

"Thayer merch" actually refers to three distinct categories of items: sports merchandise, general merchandise, and Thayer's own school store merchandise. This article will focus on the first two. Sports merchandise is managed by the Thayer Athletics Department and sold online in the team stores. Equipment Manager Marley Flatley oversees this process, working with coaches, captains, and sales representatives at partner brands to create custom products for each team. First, Flatley, the coaches, and the captains come up with proposals for items. "I have a slideshow put together [...] with all of the popular items, but I also try and recommend different things depending on the sport," Flatley explained in an interview. "I also try and look at what coaches might like as a coach myself. I watch a lot of college and professional sports and I like to see what those coaches are wearing on the sideline that looks really sharp."

Continued on PAGE 5

The Macklemore Debacle

A Look at Why Macklemore Really Got Cut from Ed Sheeran's Tour

By OLLIE BERDIK and DAN KING

On Sept. 4, Macklemore performed as one of the opening acts for Ed Sheeran's Loop Tour during its first of two nights at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey. During his set, the "Thrift Shop" rapper declared, "Free Palestine," and sang "Hind's Hall," a song that Macklemore named after a 5-year-old Palestinian girl who fell victim to an attack by Israeli forces in 2024. Macklemore then spoke further about liberating the Palestinians whilst images



of destruction in Gaza played on large screens behind him.

Macklemore's speech evidently angered Gillette Stadium owner Robert Kraft, who called Sheeran's promoters, Messina Touring Group, and accused Macklemore of antisemetic "hate speech" against Israel; Kraft threatened that he and other NFL stadium proprietors would cancel Sheeran's tour dates if Macklemore stayed on the Loop Tour.

Continued on PAGE 8

Tigers Show Up and Show Out

A Homecoming 2026 Recap

By OLIVER MASSEY

With additional reporting by
Tea Walton, Caroline Wolford, Kira Gleason, Ana Sullivan, Compton Jones, Dan King, Andrew Hernandez, Lily Richardson, Tatianna Calvillo, Lyla Carlin

No matter where you were on campus on October 3rd, there was something to celebrate during Thayer's annual Homecoming event. With a total of eleven sporting events to see, we sent writers to capture the highlights from each game to give you a general idea of what went down on the fields, courts, and courses. Go Tigers!

Continued on PAGE 14

Editors' Note

A Letter From The Editors

Moving onto the Global Stage!

By COMPTON JONES and DAN KING

Let it be known: on Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2026, our Head of Design Dan King and two-time former Prime Minister of Ireland Leo Varadkar stood back-to-back to compare their heights.

The battle was a close one. Onlookers pointed out Varadkar's stature on the world stage, including his role in the legalization of gay marriage in Ireland and his ongoing support of Irish unification. Supporters of King noted the extra inch-or-so that the volume of his hair added.

The General has deployed its most seasoned height analysts to resolve the question. Both men claim to stand at 6'3", though both decline to provide additional significant figures.

On the day, Varadkar sported a pair of dress shoes (estimated to add about an inch to his height), while King donned a pair of navy blue On Cloud 6s, which tend to add an average 1.25 inches to one's stature.

With only the photo and scant circumstantial evidence provided, the contest remains too close to call. Regardless of the outcome, however, it is evident that The General is moving beyond the scope of Thayer's campus and onto the world stage.

Indeed, October's issue packs quite a global punch. The General's writers analyze artists' movements for social justice from Cambodia to Hong Kong. They explore the geopolitical factors that led Ed Sheeran to cut Macklemore from his tour. They explain 2026's midterm elections and their significance. And, of course, Manny's geography quiz is here to stay.

Never fear: good old-fashioned campus reporting is equally apportioned in this issue. You will read a behind-the-scenes account of Thayer's merchandise operation. You will read a profile of Thayer's oft-overlooked kitchen staff. You will read a play-by-play report of this year's Homecoming festivities.

We are entering the busiest season of the school year, and we thank you for once again giving The General a read. This issue comes out right around the infamous November 1st deadline for college applications. As your editors, all we can say is AAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHH!



Dan King sizes up former Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar at the battle of the century! DAN KING / THE GENERAL

THE GENERAL

Compton Jones
Editor in Chief, Co-President

Dan King
Head of Design, Co-President

EDITORIAL TEAM

Isabella Kahn
Campus News
Seamus McFarland
Campus News
Ana Sullivan
Global News
Oliver Massey
Sports
Katie Donahue
Opinion
Ollie Berdik
Copy Chief
Caleb Sender
Photo Chief
Andrew Hernandez
Social Media Chief
Sahil Patel
Broadcast Chief

STAFFERS

Quinn Bartling
Tatiana Calvillo
Lyla Carlin
Manny Chikwendu
Jimmy Dawley
Aashrita Joga
Ronan Lyman
Sahil Patel
Lily Richardson
Elijah Scott
Anne Suwastawan
Emily Tormey
Caroline Wolford
Aarav Vaghela
Giavanna Christiano
Téa Walton
Maddie Mano
Maddie King
Zoë Rudolph
Amaro Harrington

FACULTY ADVISOR

Brandon Springer

BROADCAST ADVISOR

Emmett Knox

Contact the newsroom, send a confidential news tip, submit a letter to the editor, or report a correction at:
TheGeneral@thayer.org

"More than a club; an institution"

Top Headlines

- Kitchen Staff: Getting to know Molly and Krissy
  By MANNY CHIKWENDU-**Page 4**
- Homecoming
  By OLIVER MASSEY-**Pages 14 and 15**
- Remembering Mr. Clarke
  By CAROLINE WOLFORD-**Page 12**

Quote of the Month

I could choose to be Buddha, or I could choose to be Jesus Christ, or I could choose to do what [the Khmer Rouge] taught us to do, or [even be like] Hitler. It's all inside me, but I have to choose love.
- Arn Chorn-Pond

Geography Quiz Answers

1. Baltic Sea
2. Pacific Ocean
3. Munich
4. Kazakhstan
5. Mexico

Corrections for September 2026 Issue

- Isabella Kahn's piece on Summer Reading and Emily Tormey's article on Gen Z phone use were both mistakenly attributed to the Opinion section (they were Campus News and Global News stories, respectively) (pgs. 7, 19).
- The student government vice president is Maddy Call, not "Maddie" (pg.16).
- The football piece Jaiden Johnson's was misspelled as Jayden Johnson (pg.13)
- The house-museum in Bosnia where Thayer students enjoyed coffee was a traditional Bosnian house — it was not Ottoman (pg. 8).
- In the diagonal crossword puzzle, Clue 16 Down/Right should have referred to Clue 61 Up/Right (as opposed to Clue 60).

Art's Worth: An Interview Series

Artists from Thayer and Beyond Speak to the Influence and Value of their Crafts

By OLLIE BERDIK

The iconic twentieth century feminist Emma Goldman once declared, "If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution." Across the world, artists play key roles in social and political movements as orchestrators of change and illustrators of our shared humanity. However, the arts are continuously under attack by groups and individuals who wish to silence dissent and inhibit necessary reform. Now more than ever, artists are demanding to be heard. With this in mind, I asked two artists from Thayer and beyond to lend some insight regarding the role of art and artists in society. Here's what they had to say.



Arn Chorn-Pond plays a Khmer Rouge propaganda song for students to hear, THAYER COMMUNICATIONS

Abby Browne '19

Even before I sat down with Abby Browne '19 for an impromptu interview in the audience of the Hale Theater, I knew she possessed a treasure trove of information. Browne, who is the daughter of Upper School Theatre Director Kelly Hines (P '18 '19), is serving as the dramaturg, a literary and historical consultant, for Thayer's fall musical, Les Misérables, which will premiere on Thursday, Nov. 19. In addition to her insightful dramaturgical work, Browne is also helping direct the production's solo numbers. Indeed, during our conversation, Browne made sure to emphasize the importance of diving into each character she directs: "Everybody has a story."

She is not wrong: Les Misérables is rich with interconnected character narratives. "Ultimately the thing that makes [this show] so compelling to me and to everybody is that it's so deeply human. It's a really political story told through the lens of really individual, small moments of fathers and daughters, impoverished students, and women, and people who are suffering, and all of those really human relationships. I think [that is] what makes it translate so well to today, because it's still so relatable."

By Browne's logic, it is unsurprising that Les Misérables — in particular, its rousing, pro-democracy anthem "Do You Hear the People Sing" — has become a vehicle for protest in recent years. In 2019, for example, anti-authoritarian protesters in the streets of Hong Kong chanted the memorable lyrics, "Do you hear the people sing? Singing the song of angry men? It is the music of a people who will not be slaves again. When the beating of your heart echoes the beating of the drums, there is a life about to start when tomorrow comes." These protestors' decision to sing, not insult or jeer, in the face of real danger demonstrates how even a work of historical fiction can come to hold real meaning in the hearts and minds of young revolutionaries.

Everybody, from 1832 France to 2019 Hong Kong to Thayer Academy today, has a story. Browne says that hers has been intertwined with Les Misérables from the beginning. "It has been my favorite story my whole life … France, in the early 19th century, feels very distant from where we are now, but it's still the same social and political issues going on." Les Misérables, Browne maintains, allows us, "at a very basic level, to see each other as human beings. People come from so many different backgrounds, but being able to just acknowledge that this is still just a person in front of me, despite their economic background, their political beliefs and everything. And, instead of immediately trying to wage a war against somebody you disagree with, just being able to meet people at a human level."

That seems like a heavy lift. Does she think Thayer can manage a show like this?

A resounding yes. After all, Les Misérables graced the CFA stage just 10 years ago — starring Browne herself as Eponine. She commented, "It's so amazing to be back 10 years later. It's so full circle. And this group of kids is so, so talented … Everybody is so focused and so present and it just is such a gift to get to work and teach, but also learn from you all." In her art, Browne is most concerned with how the accrual of small, key details can enrich a story, whether that be Les Misérables or the cast and crew that make it happen. Similar to her work with the characters in the show, Browne knows that every cast and crew member plays an integral role. After all, what is a puzzle without its many pieces?

Arn Chorn-Pond

"Be responsible."

When I watched his presentation at Morning Meeting on Oct. 5, I could tell that Arn Chorn Pond has been embodying that message his entire life.

"Art is respect. It's dignity. It's for the heart."

"I want to create something," he told me in an interview later that day. "I never thought I could help anyone in my life, but now I've started Cambodian Living Arts … I'm merely just paying back with my respect the art that saved my life."

Pond is not exaggerating in the least. He is a survivor of the Cambodian genocide, the systematic execution of Cambodians under the despotic Khmer Rouge regime, which ruled the country from 1975 to 1979. The mass killings were helmed by the dictator Pol Pot, who intended to transform his country into an agrarian socialist republic inspired by the policies of Mao Zedong in communist China.

During his morning meeting presentation, Pond explained that, before the Khmer Rouge took power, Cambodia had been experiencing a "Golden Age" of arts and culture. Per our speaker, "In [its] golden age, Cambodia was known as the Singapore of southeast Asia, like the little Paris of southeast Asia, [with] beautiful artistic culture." According to the Brookings think tank, when the Khmer Rouge took over and purged all "Western" influences from Cambodia, it killed off 90% of the artists, a figure that Pond emphasized throughout both his presentation and our interview. Pond himself was shuttled into a Khmer Rouge labor camp. He then became a child soldier and was forced to play propaganda music, but he eventually escaped to the jungle. Luckily, he was eventually discovered and sent to a refugee camp in Thailand where he met his foster father, an American who brought Pond to live with him in New Hampshire.

Although Pond had journeyed far from his home country and had seen Cambodian artistry decimated by the Khmer Rouge, he never forgot his personal inspiration. For instance, in our interview, Pond recalled the influence of the "Elvis" of Cambodia, Sinn Sisamouth: "When you listen to his song, you love a girl, you know? It doesn't matter whose girl it is. When you hear his words, you fall in love. That's how powerful it was." Additionally, Pond's mother and father owned their own opera company — although Pond never had the chance to deeply know his parents, he says he experienced their legacy all the same. "They died early. I don't know them. I never remember my dad. But, when I ask people who are older than me in the province, half of Cambodia knows of him."

So, with all of this as his inspiration, Pond set out to create Cambodian Living Arts, an organization that would attempt to restore the art and culture that had been lost during Pond's childhood. "We started Cambodian Living Arts from the ashes, as you know. Nothing existed. The Khmer Rouge had killed 90 percent of all the artists …" In the wake of this destruction, Pond described the organization's beginnings as "an emergency kind of restoration. We are focusing on helping the young generations create markets … opportunities for them to be professional in the arts that are traditionally almost unknown [in Cambodia]. They, in turn, share their skill, their profession with other young artists." Pond hopes that, through this domino effect, Cambodian Living Arts can revitalize Cambodia's art industry by engaging the youth of that country. "We have the whole staff who are Cambodians, Cambodian young people now. I'm getting older, but they are your age, managing Cambodian Living Arts … multimillion dollars. It's the most successful art institution on this planet."

Even with all of this success, Pond says his organization still needs more engagement from people and schools like Thayer. "Come to Cambodia and enjoy yourself. Meet those young emerging artists, and find ways to support us. You have plenty of resources here. We don't have it in Cambodia. We don't have anything. If I cannot fundraise in America, where? Where on earth?"

Near the end of our conversation, I asked Pond to share his personal philosophy. "I commit my art and my love. What does that mean? We can all find out through performance, through love, from the audience, through laughter … I play music, you know, it keeps me from shaking … those senses … that's what's supposed to make you human." Pond's love for playing music was especially evident when he performed a dulcet strain on his flute to the delight of his lucky Thayer audience.

What is art, then, if you had to describe it? "Art is respect," Pond replied. "It's dignity. It's for the heart." And finally, when the school bells began to ring our interview to a close, Mr. Pond stood and gave all of us in the room a call to action: "Who knows, one person, what one person can do?" ■

Profile

Staff Profile: Kitchen Staff

Meet Molly and Krissy, the Friendliest Faces at the Cafeteria Counter



CALEB SENDER / THE GENERAL

By **MANNY CHIKWENDU**

For me, lunch is the most important part of the school day.

After two or three hard classes, it's always nice to sit down, talk with friends, and eat a refreshing meal before embarking on the rest of the day. At the end of lunch, when putting away my plates and cups, I always enjoy seeing members of the kitchen staff, especially Malvia Bryant (Molly) and Kristina Nuttry (Krissy). Despite the multitude of plates coming at them as students pass by, they always greet me with warm smiles, and we talk about virtually anything — school, family, food, and more. What strikes me most about them is their personality. In spite of their clearly stressful job, they are always optimistic, jovial, and very hardworking.

After talking with them earlier this month and getting to hear their individual stories, these positive attitudes are even more striking.

Growing up as a young student in the small Caribbean nation of Jamaica, Molly remembers enjoying math and science a lot. She reminisced, "math was called arithmetic back then," and that she really enjoyed solving problems and using critical thinking. During the summers of her young adult years, Molly often traveled to the U.S. for vacation and enjoyed it. Nonetheless, she was comfortable living with her family in Jamaica, so she never considered moving here full time.

However, the tragic death of her sister prompted worry and speculation about her family's future.

"One day, she said she felt sick, so she went to the hospital. By the next week she was gone."

It was so sudden, Molly said. It shook her and her family. For the first time, there was the possibility that Jamaica might not be the safest place for her family to stay in the long run.

Eventually, the rest of her family moved to Canada, and suddenly, Molly and her young kids were the only ones left in Jamaica. It was time for her to "step up" and set a good example for her children, Molly said, so she decided to move to the U.S. in pursuit of a better life.

Upon arriving in the U.S., life was "very hectic," and there were "lots of things to take care of." However, Molly notes that she learned the lesson that "success isn't easy, but you must work for it every day, even when you're tired."

Similarly, Krissy's path to Thayer wasn't the smoothest. Growing up here on the East Coast, Krissy was not the biggest fan of school. In fact, she "used to look forward to lunch and recess" more than anything. If she had to choose a favorite class however, Krissy would also choose science because she liked doing "hands-on experiments."

Apart from school, life for Krissy was quite hard. She didn't have the luxury of being raised by her parents. "I basically raised myself since I was 16," she says. Indeed, Krissy was in and out of the foster care system, and she struggled emotionally with identity and family issues. Even into her adult years, Krissy recalls "going through some hard times," especially as she struggled to find employment. In the end, Krissy says she "turned out okay," and that her formative years helped her become an advocate of strong-mindedness and approaching life with a positive attitude.

When she applied for a job at Thayer in 2023, Krissy remembers getting called for an interview, and liked the warm vibe that emanated from faculty and students. Ultimately, Krissy chose Thayer because of the solid financial stability it offers, along with a paid time off policy, which is especially helpful for a single mother of two kids.

Before finding her way to Thayer, Molly worked as a patient care assistant, but she eventually began to look for new options for more convenience in her work-life balance. During her interview, Molly specifically mentioned that the head of the kitchen, along with other kitchen staff members, seemed welcoming and kind, so she already perceived a positive vibe within the Thayer community.

Along with these, Molly ultimately chose Thayer for its convenient benefits, like "paid time off, and healthcare."

After joining Thayer, Molly and Krissy both found their way to the utility sector of the dining crew. According to Molly, she and Krissy are responsible for organizing the food and cutlery, cleaning the dishes, and, in general, "making sure that everything works properly." Molly also detailed the other sectors of the dining crew, which includes the prep chefs who are responsible for preparing the food, and the head and sous chefs who do the cooking.

In Krissy's opinion, the utility sector is the most important because, without clean dishes and available materials, you can't make the food, let alone serve it. She also says that the utility position in general can be overlooked, and deserves more recognition. Nevertheless, the Thayer dining crew is really a team effort; each sector depends on the others, and the team only succeeds when everybody delivers.

However, the resilience of Thayer's dining team was challenged following a change roughly two years ago.

The news arrived on one normal morning in the summer of 2024. As Krissy recalls, a member of Thayer's business office informed the dining team that they would no longer be Thayer Academy faculty members. Instead, they would become part of an independent organization called FLIK. FLIK is an independent school organization that utilizes local ingredients and specialized chefs to put together wholesome meals, and generally enhances the dining experience.

"The team only succeeds when everybody delivers."



Kristina (left), and Molly (right) pose for a selfie, SUPPLIED BY MANNY CHIKWENDU

This change meant a new H.R. and boss, and the staff was told that they could choose to either work for FLIK, or leave. Characteristically, Krissy says that, in this tough time, the crew really "stuck together" — only one employee decided to leave. In the end, the change ended up being for the better, as Krissy says "there's more variety" now in terms of food options.

Fast forward to today: Molly is approaching 15 years as part of the Thayer kitchen staff, and Krissy around four years. When asked what keeps them going, both Krissy and Molly said that it's the warm community that they look forward to each day. Molly remarks that the "students are adorable," and that she loves to "chit-chat" with students and teachers, even about little things. Likewise, Krissy notes that "when people take the time to say hi, I feel appreciated."

It is truly a privilege each day to have such dedicated staff members working to prepare our food each day. As members of the Thayer community, it's our duty to make everyone feel welcome and appreciated. It's easy when you're around your friends or teachers, but welcoming every individual requires you to go out of your way and interact with people you normally wouldn't interact with.

I challenge you to say hello to the janitors, the construction crew, and, of course, the kitchen staff. They're some of the sweetest people you'll ever meet. ■

Who Paints the Tiger's Stripes?

Continued from PAGE 1

Then, Flatley shares these design ideas with the sales representatives who create a draft of the product. Once Flatley approves all the prototypes, the online team store goes live, and members of the team can shop from the customized catalogue of items. Following the orders, the merchandise partner companies produce and ship the orders directly to Thayer, where students can pick them up at the Campus Store (otherwise known as "the Cage").

Meanwhile, another portion of Thayer's merchandise — what's sold at Homecoming and at the holiday store in the Commons before winter break — falls under the domain of the Thayer Academy Parent Association (TAPA). TAPA Vice President Rebecca Baker is a member of this small but mighty subgroup of the association (alongside fellow Thayer parents Laura Query and Jessica McFarland, mother of General editor Seamus McFarland), which works with both local and international businesses to order and create the custom items. Baker shared that, with the advent of direct-to-garment (DTG) transfer (as opposed to the older "silk screening" method, wherein each color of ink is applied individually using a silk stencil), as well as the TAPA merch committee's new purchase of a heat press, the team has been able to produce more items at a higher rate.

However, unlike sports merchandise, the TAPA merch committee only gets to sell their products twice per year, so they need to order in bulk beforehand (rather than only the exact products customers preorder). This is a bit of a guessing game, Baker elucidated, as the committee must order not only what they think students would like — "which is sometimes the hardest part" — but also make decisions with parents, middle schoolers, and alumni in mind, all months in advance and with limited ability to poll the community. Sometimes, they "strike gold," with a product selling out almost immediately, while other times an item is not as popular as expected, and it becomes part of the organization's inventory, hopefully to be sold again at a later event. "Inventory for a regular store is great, but we're not a regular store," Baker explained. "We want everything to sell."

The stuffed tigers that made an appearance at this year's Homecoming were one such "golden" item, snatched up by younger siblings and Thayer middle schoolers (and likely the occasional Upper School student, parent, or alumnus, too). Their numbers were limited, though, due to the flood that had ravaged the basement of Thayer's alumni building — the storage space for most of the merch — the Sunday before.



CALEB SENDER / THE GENERAL

> "Those little stuffed tigers are like sponges"

"Those little stuffed tigers are like sponges," Baker laughed.

The team plans to sell the emergency orders of tigers (which did not arrive in time for Homecoming) at the holiday sale before winter break. Moreover, the holiday sale, in addition to its own exclusive merch, will also have a table with some clothing items that were dampened in the flood but are otherwise in good condition. These products are clean and have been laundered, but they will be sold at discounted prices. Ultimately, while some items were salvageable, between the ruined and discounted items, the flood was still a massive financial blow to the team, Baker lamented.

However, Baker does believe that the merch team could improve their return by deepening their connection with the Thayer community. Knowing what shoppers are looking for would help the team shape their ordering in advance, reducing waste and allowing for a more tailored selection of items. Although the TAPA store is significantly larger than the Athletics Department's individual team stores (because it sells to the entire Thayer community, rather than just that season's sports teams) and could not manage the same direct order-create-ship timeline, Baker suggests a survey "that would give the students an opportunity to give their feedback."

"Obviously, at the end of the day, we want to do what you guys will enjoy," Baker concluded. "We want to create things that will excite you and make you happy and feel proud about your school. Because that's really what school merch is about, right?

It's about sharing your pride and feeling connected to the school and part of that school community." ■

VMA Awards: The Grammys' Forgotten Cousin

By EMILY TORMEY

Since the MTV Video Music Awards began in 1984, they have featured some iconic performances. However, over the past couple of years, fewer and fewer people are watching the VMAs. This year, the VMA's were on September 27th, with an increase in viewership since the streaming switch to CBS. Although overall viewership did increase in the past few years, it didn't compare to its viewership at the 2001 awards, an iconic performance by Britney Spears was made and never forgotten. Near the end of her song, "I'm A Slave For You," Spears started dancing with a live 7-foot Albino Burmese python.

Other famous performances included Nirvana's 1992 performance of "Lithium," Madonna's "Vogue" in 1990, and Michael Jackson's performance of "Medley" in 1995. With all this being said, very few of today' s most popular artists were in attendance at the 2026 VMAs, compared to the A-list attendees of the Grammys. Are the VMAs necessary when the Grammy Awards are so popular?

The Grammys are known as the biggest music awards of the year. What is the purpose of the VMAs and what kind of audience does it attract? In order to win at the Grammy's, the artist has to win votes from thousands of people who are in the Recording Academy. In order to get into the Academy, there are certain music requirements, such as being recommended by someone in the music industry and submitting a portfolio of your work. VMA nominees win from public votes. This causes the Grammy's to have more respect in who is chosen as their winner, rather than the winner of the VMA's which are not chosen from official music people.

Thayer Academy Media Lab faculty Shiva Natraj was interviewed as being a part of the Grammy academy. As one of the chosen voters, he said, "The Grammys are a lot more popular and considered prestigious. They're more respectable because anyone can vote." There's less of a reason to watch two award shows if one is more "official," he said.

Thayer Academy students were also interviewed on the VMAs and there was a consensus: no one really knew what it was. Although overall viewership went up, the VMAs were largely not on students' radars. Sophomore Tripp Lally went so far as to say, "Never heard of that in my entire life." Sophomore Maddie Mano also stated, "I don't know what those are." One sophomore, Anne Suwastawan, did watch the 2026 VMAs. Anne clarified, "I didn't enjoy the VMAs this year, but I enjoyed the VMA performances in the past."

With any award show comes debates on who deserves to win. The answer depends on who you ask. However, when the 2026 VMA's came and went, there was an elephant in the room. Madonna, a celebrated artist from the 80s, won seven awards at the VMAs. It's not the 80s anymore, so what caused Madonna to win against modern artists such as Ariana Grande, Taylor Swift, and Olivia Rodrigo? When Suwastawan was asked about if she had any opinions on who should have won at the 2026 VMA's she strongly said, "Maybe I'm not, like, up with the times, but I did not know that Madonna, like, even released music this year." The question of who is deserving of an award is something no one person can answer, but Madonna's comeback was definitely unanticipated.

The VMAs also featured a heartfelt "in memoriam" honoring artists who made an undeniable impact on the industry; among those celebrated were Dolly Parton, Nirvana, and George Michael. Kacey Musgraves sang "I Will Always Love You" as a video of Dolly Parton played behind her. Nirvana won the Video Vanguard award while the screen played a bittersweet video compilation of the band in its years of popularity. Then, to receive the award, Krist Novoselic, Dave Grohl, and Pat Smear (the only remaining band members) went on stage. While in front of the audience Novoselic noted, "Nirvana continues to resonate so deeply because people are still hungry for authenticity. For something real, something uncompromising." As one of the last performances, the artist sombr strut out on stage singing his heart out to "Faith" by George Michael, and continuing on to "Father Figure." As the performance continued he was accompanied by Adam Lambert, RAYE, and Teddy Swims. However, this tribute faced backlash. Suwastawan felt as though the tribute could have included more LGBTQ representation to celebrate that part of Michael's identity.

From touching tributes to surprising wins, there was one more important thing many viewers anticipated. Taylor Swift debuted her newest music video live at the VMAS for her recently released song "Patient Zero." This music video featured actors Dakota Johnson and Colin Farrell, while also being directed by Swift herself. The music video was reported on positively from sources such as Variety and the Los Angeles Time. Sophomore Avery Foley xq, "think that music videos are a great way of expressing the feeling of a song,"

While some members of the Thayer community may not know what the VMAs actually are, they're a beloved tradition in the music industry. Respecting all artists who have the chance to win an award is important. Many big events happened at the 2026 VMAs, and many iconic performances have happened before. Therefore, next time the fall season rolls around, think about all the musicians you like. Maybe, they might be the next winner of a VMA. ■

The Tree is Coming Down. What Are We Losing?

By ISABELLA KAHN and COMPTON JONES

"I love this tree so much. I've always felt like it watches over people," said Upper School Theater Director Kelly Hines, sitting in a library study room overlooking the giant oak at the center of campus. "It has absorbed so many stories."

That great big tree outside the library is going away. Head of School Chris Fortunato confirmed in August that the tree will be cut down to make way for Thayer's first new building in 18 years, a center for innovation and collaboration that will house the Center for Business Studies, the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence, and the Center for Global Engagement.

The building of "about 20,000 square feet" will be "contiguous with the library." Of the decision to break ground outside the library, Fortunato said, "There's really no other space to make that work." In light of this news, many Thayer students and faculty are reflecting on what the tree means to them.

For Hines, the tree has been a grounding presence throughout her years at Thayer, as well as the centerpiece of two very memorable events: her wedding in 2018, and Thayer's production of A Midsummer Night's Dream in 2023.

Hines shared that having her wedding at Thayer was the plan "from the very beginning." "It just made sense," she said. "The foundation of my life is right here on this campus." Standing with her husband in front of family and friends, Hines recalls the feeling of "shelter" the tree offered. "When I think about my wedding and the foundations of my marriage and my life, that tree is very symbolic to me for what it represents," she said. "Roots into the ground, awareness, protection, peace, light, the changing of the seasons... the tree really tells the story of that for me."

Five years later, the tree once again played a key role in Hines's life — although the planning for A Midsummer Night's Dream began long before the show actually took place in 2023. On the night of the performance, however, the first few scenes had to be moved inside due to a sudden rainstorm. Even in that moment, Hines "knew in her heart that that tree was not going to let her down, that the show was going to happen." Just as she predicted, a beautiful rainbow soon replaced the storm above. "When I look back on my whole Thayer career, that particular production will always be one of my favorites," Hines said. "And it's because the tree was the heart of that story."

For Stephanie Rando, Upper School Librarian and Director of Senior Projects, the tree has been a constant throughout her whole life. She recalls being at Camp Thayer when she was as young as three years old,



Upper School Theater Director Kelly Hines hosted her wedding in 2018 under the tree, PROVIDED BY KELLY HINES / THE GENERAL

"gathering around [the tree] after lunchtime, coming together to have community." As she spends most of her time in Southworth Library these days, Rando says she's likely passed the tree "a million times," and always appreciates its beauty. In many ways, the tree has grown up alongside her. "It's just a big, beautiful part of our campus," Rando said.

Last spring, this very same tree was the focus of Senior Avery Catalano's Minor Notes piece, an 18 x 24 drawing inspired by a sketch she found at the MIT Rare Books Library. According to Catalano, her love of the large oak began in freshman English, where she could see the tree perfectly framed through the classroom's windows. "All of my notes sheets from English had drawings of the tree on it," Catalano recalled with a laugh. Walking home from practice, she added, her camera roll was filled with photos of the tree as well.

Allyn Lodge, Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence and Upper School Spanish Faculty, had advised Catalano on her Minor Notes project. Lodge, for her own part, will miss how the tree keeps Thayer's campus in touch with nature. "I love being in nature. Whenever I walk through campus, I feel like I've always gravitated toward [the tree] or looked to it. I've just wanted to feel peaceful or connected."

As a leader of one of the new building's academic centers, however, Lodge notes that cutting down the tree is "making way for something new and something that'll benefit the students. But," she added, "I hope we can just remember that nature has its benefits as well." ■

"An Evolution Versus A Change"

What Is Going On With OMEGA?

By SEAMUS MCFARLAND

Founded in the nineties as a Black Student Union, OMEGA (the Organization for Minorities through Education, Growth, and Advancement) has long served as a space for students of color and of other marginalized backgrounds to connect and find community at Thayer. Over time, the club expanded to welcome students from a wider range of backgrounds. Now, as affinity groups have become an established part of the TA community, OMEGA is entering a new era. Beginning this school year, OMEGA has shifted from a traditional student club to an expanded board that brings together the leaders of Thayer's affinity spaces to discuss goals related to engagement and belonging.

This transition follows a gradual decline in OMEGA's meeting attendance that began after affinity spaces – such as Mi Gente, ASA, and QUEST – were introduced to Thayer in 2018. As these spaces developed, they increasingly fulfilled the role OMEGA had originally served, leaving the club struggling to find an audience.

"I think that this was kind of anticipated as soon as we formally recognized affinity groups. I think there was a fear. It was a concern that OMEGA would kind of lose its standing in the community," detailed Thayer's Dean of Engagement and Belonging Matt Ghiden.

"I think that this was kind of anticipated as soon as we formally recognized affinity groups"

Last year, OMEGA's student presidents met with Ghiden and Assistant Dean of Engagement and Belonging Olivia Pena to discuss the club's future. Pena recounted, "Lyla Martel, Gabby Montero, and Eliana Soares had a meeting with me and Mr. Ghiden, and they said, 'I don't think [OMEGA] can continue to function as it has because it's not fulfilling the original purpose of the group.'"

Therefore, as Pena explained, the group came to the conclusion that, "If people are already doing that work, let's bring in those people to be OMEGA."

Hence, OMEGA has become a board of affinity group leaders who could guide inclusion and belonging at Thayer at a greater level. OMEGA's principal facilitator, senior Lyla Martel, hopes that "OMEGA will [be] more impactful to the school now than when it was just more of a club."

Rather than viewing the transition as a departure from OMEGA's original purpose, the administrators emphasized that the club was building upon its existing mission. Ghiden elucidated, "it's an evolution versus a change, because the bones of OMEGA remain the same."

Martel highlighted how some of OMEGA's most important traditions will remain intact. "We're still planning on doing the OMEGA potluck!"

For any students who are afraid of losing the community they had found in OMEGA, Martel delivered an important message: "They shouldn't be scared at all because there still are so many affinity/alliance groups that they hopefully can find to join. If not, they can always start one, and OMEGA will be there to support them and help that group grow strong."

By bringing affinity space leaders together, OMEGA hopes to create an environment for collaboration across groups that would have otherwise pursued their goals separately. The board, which plans to convene a couple of times per month, will give student leaders an opportunity to discuss common concerns and work towards broad inclusion goals, while simultaneously ensuring that the members of their respective groups feel the effects of those goals.

Although its structure has changed, OMEGA's purpose remains the same: to raise awareness for marginalized groups, help their growth and advancement, and make Thayer a more inclusive place. The new format will, in the hopes of OMEGA's leadership, respond to Thayer's changing needs while still continuing the work that inspired its founding over three decades ago. ■

Time to Vote!

A Local and National Guide to this November's Midterm Elections

Continued from PAGE 1

Question 5 would set a new maximum state revenue collection. State revenue includes all the money Massachusetts collects from income taxes, sales taxes, and fines and fees. The initiative would ultimately decrease the state revenue limit, potentially reducing public services but also increasing taxpayer refunds.

Question 6, introduced by the Audubon Society, would create a "Nature for All Fund," which would use state money for nature conservation. Although ballot questions cannot directly order how the state legislature spends money, they can create a pool of money with an encouraged purpose.

Question 7 would overrule local zoning laws to create more housing. It would allow construction of single-family homes on lots of 5000-square feet or more in residential areas, excluding Boston.

Question 8 would ban the sale of recreational marijuana in Massachusetts. It would undo the drug's recreational legalization in 2016, and would be the first repeal of its kind in the United States.

Question 9 defends a 2024 law that more tightly regulates gun ownership in Massachusetts. A "no" vote would repeal the law, loosening gun control, whereas a "yes" vote would keep the restriction in place.

Massachusetts's elections are largely noncompetitive this year. Incumbent Democratic senator Ed Markey, after defeating challenger Seth Moulton in the primaries, is up against Republican John Deaton. Markey holds a comfortable lead. Similarly, incumbent Democratic governor Maura Healey holds a sizable polling advantage, according to a UMass Amherst poll, against Republican candidate Michael Minogue.

While Massachusetts is a securely blue state, senate races in other states are more competitive. Two years into a period of Republican domination over the presidency and both legislative houses, Democrats are aiming for a Senate flip. To do so, they need to win senate races in at least two of the red states that President Donald Trump won in 2024, while also retaining all their current seats.

Upper School History Faculty Tim Hirsch says that, ahead of November, "the polling suggests that there's going to be a possible blue wave this year."

Indeed, in certain key red states, Democrats are successfully challenging Republican supremacy. In Kansas, for example, Democrat Adam Hamilton currently holds a narrow lead of about 1 percent according to the New York Times. A pastor and relatively moderate candidate, Hamilton has won favor with working class Kansans and Republican traditionalists, who may distrust Republican incumbent Roger Marshall. Hirsch points out that this level of Republican spending in such a deeply red state is unheard of. He adds, "Kansas hasn't had a blue Democratic senator in over 100 years."

Many Republican voters are dissatisfied with President Trump's actions thus far. While they had voted for affordability and lower foreign intervention, the nation is facing an affordability crisis and is newly entrenched in a global war with Iran. The president's approval rating currently sits at just 35 percent, according to The Economist. As a result, moderate Democratic candidates who use economic populist messaging and appeal to voters' morals are succeeding in traditionally Republican areas.

> "In certain key red states, Democrats are successfully challenging Republican supremacy."

The Texas senate race is another notable example. Democratic candidate James Talarico has eked out a narrow lead, with a 3-4 percent lead according to a poll in USA Today. Talarico's success on the campaign trail depends partially on Republican Ken Paxton's extreme unpopularity. Paxton has been impeached by his own party, has faced federal investigation, and is in the midst of a public divorce. The Democrat Talarico has a resultant optics advantage, as well as a large Latino majority that opposes Trump's immigration crackdowns. Given the state's large population, Hirsch emphasizes, "If Texas becomes a swing state, that would shake the political world."

While the polls are trending blue right now, Hirsch cautions that polls can exaggerate, pointing out the predicted blue wave prior to Trump's 2016 win. "In 2016, they were wrong. I'll be interested to see if the polls are correct this time."

Meanwhile, Democrats are unexpectedly struggling in traditionally blue or purple (mixed Democrat and Republican) states. In Maine, for example, Republican Senate veteran Susan Collins is leading in the polls against Democrat Troy Jackson by 6 percent, according to NewsWeek. Collins has amassed decades of conservative support in Maine, but her candidacy is aided by the controversy that has tarnished the Democratic ticket this year. Jackson replaced candidate Graham Platner in July, after Platner dropped out due to a sexual assault allegation and dispute over a tattoo that had an antisemetic connotation.

Democrats are also struggling in Michigan. While Dr. Abdul El-Sayed leads polls by 1-2 percent according to the Guardian, the race against Republican Mike Rogers remains extremely tight. El-Sayed comes from the progressive wing of the Democratic party; he aligns with the messaging of Democratic Socialist candidates. While he has garnered unusually enormous support from young voters, he is struggling with Black would-be constituents and older, more moderate Democrat voters.

It is clear that the Republican ticket is generally less popular in 2026, as is usually the case with unpopular incumbent parties. Nonetheless, the dissension within both parties is leading to unpredictable results.

In Thayer's classrooms, Hirsch is trying to foster healthy disagreement among students. As an AP Government & Politics teacher, Hirsch sees political conversations between students all the time. While many student discussions have been worthwhile, Hirsch says it was difficult when students weren't working from a shared set of facts. "Last year, we had some really intense conversations about what happened in Minnesota with ICE. It was hard to get to a consensus when people were really just getting fed one perspective. That's where I've seen it be challenging in the classroom."

Hirsch encourages high school students to pursue a political education. "Politics affects their lives. Even if they're 16, they're gonna be voting within a year or two. So they absolutely should be attuned to local and national politics."

Indeed, the issues of housing policy, healthcare, and affordability in Massachusetts and the South Shore will all hinge and the difference between a Democratic or Republican hold on congress. ■



Right on Route 3 North on Oct. 3, protesters were seen in support of keeping the firearms regulation that is currently being debated and voted on this misterm election, DAN KING / THE GENERAL



On the overpass of Route 3 North in Weymouth, Massachusetts, people were seen in support of the candidate Mike Minaoge, DAN KING / THE GENERAL.

The Ed Sheeran Debate:

Continued from PAGE 1

However, during New Jersey night two, Macklemore issued a similar proclamation. He also clarified that his comments against the actions of the Israeli government and armed forces do not constitute an attack on all Jewish people: "To all of my Jewish brothers and sisters. Criticism of Isreal, criticism of apartheid, being against genocide in no way is a criticism of you. My message is peace, love, and all human beings to be treated with dignity, respect, and equality." He concluded the statement by stating, "no one is free until we are all free." Macklemore's actions saw both approval and disdain from celebrities and political organizations alike, including the Israeli-American Council, which called for Sheeran to drop Mackelmore, his longtime friend and colleague, from the tour.

Amid the controversy, on Sept. 14, Messina Touring Group announced that, "After discussions with stakeholders, Macklemore would not be performing on the remaining support dates for the Loop Tour." This development prompted reactions on social media from key figures who were directly involved in the drama — Kraft, Sheeran, Macklemore, and Sheeran's other openers — as well as those simply observing from the sidelines.

For his own part, Sheeran shared on Instagram that he was "appalled by the conflict between Israel and Palestine. The suffering and pain caused on both sides is a human tragedy. There are too many wars across the world causing immeasurable pain, none of which should be tolerated." Meanwhile, Macklemore explained that he knows that "taking a side can cost you ... but there is no neutral position between the oppressor and the oppressed."

In solidarity with Macklemore, all of Sheeran's other openers, Finneas, Lukas Graham, Aaron Rowe, and the Irish folk band Beoga, soon dropped out of the Loop Tour, and Sheeran and Kraft faced large public backlash for the debacle.

A BREIF HISTORY

While religious and political tension has existed in the region of Palestine (the state of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory) for centuries, the current Israeli-Palestinian Conflict began in 1947, and can be reductively summarized as two groups with opposing ideologies fighting over the same land.



In the late 1800s, Zionism — the idea that Judaism was not simply a religion but that the Jewish people held a national identity — rose among European Jews who were facing persecution in Europe. Moreover, many Jews believed that the only way to secure the safety of their people was to create a sovereign Jewish state, Israel, on land that had long been settled by Palestinians and other Arabs. Since World War I, the region had been the British Mandate for Palestine; thus, although its inhabitants were largely not British, Britain controlled how Jews and Palestinians might split up the land. Indeed, further complicating the issue was Britain's Balfour Declaration of 1917, which had effectively promised the same land to both factions during World War I.

After World War II and the Holocaust, a surge of Jewish immigration to Palestine led to increased efforts to create a Jewish state. In an attempt to resolve the tension, the United Nations partitioned the land between Jews and Muslims in 1947.

In 1948, Jews declared the independent state of Israel. Jewish settlers moved into Palestinian land and displaced some 700000 Palestinians. This perceived incursion amplified Palestinian nationalism and caused militant groups such as the Palestinian Liberation Organization to spring up in opposition. The day after Israel declared its independence, the neighboring Arab states of Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq invaded in opposition to the U.N. partition plan. Their invasion marked the start of a decades-long struggle for rights to the land. Fast forward to 1987, and the First Intifada (Palestinian resistance against Israeli occupation) catalyzed the creation of Palestinian terrorist groups including Hamas, which would come to govern the Gaza Strip in 2007.

On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched a terrorist attack into parts of Israel, killing about 1200 people. In response, Israel, under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, launched a bombing campaign on Gaza, lasting from October 2023 through a ceasefire on October 10, 2025. As of November 2026, the conflict has killed over 75,586 Palestinians, including civilians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. On September 16, 2025, the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry declared Israel's actions in Gaza a genocide, citing targetting of civilians and blocking of aid.



Netanyahu and Kraft exchanging a handshake as Kraft wins the Genisis Prize, SEBASTIAN SCHEINER / ASSOCIATED PRESS

KRAFT AND NETANYAHU

Understanding Kraft's response also requires examining his relationship with Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. According to Al Jazeera, Kraft has visited Israel more than one hundred times. He has brought with him famous football New England Patriots players, most notably the famed quarterback Tom Brady. Moreover, in 2019, Kraft won the $1M Genesis Prize, an annual award known as the "Jewish Nobel Prize," for professional excellence and contributions to the Jewish community. Furthermore, at that ceremony, Prime Minister Benjamin Netyanhu said, "Israel does not have a more loyal friend than Robert Kraft." Ultimately, this raises the question of whether Macklemore's removal was truly a response to his past actions or an attempt to silence criticism of Israel.

SHEERAN'S EXACT WORDS

"This is not usually how I open a show, but before I play some songs tonight, I hope it's OK if I say a few words about this last week.

... This week the criticism was about something much more important. And I've had to take and make difficult decisions, and I am making mistakes, and I'm so sorry. I don't want to disappoint fans, and I've never wanted to be an activist musician, but this put me in the middle of an important and passionate argument about freedom of speech and the most complex political issue on the planet.

... Honouring my commitment to my fans is also completely central to who I am, and that is why I'm here tonight on my own and continuing my current tour.

But I am deeply worried about the idea of venues pre-approving content of performers. This happens in so many places I perform around the world, but it should never happen in the free world.

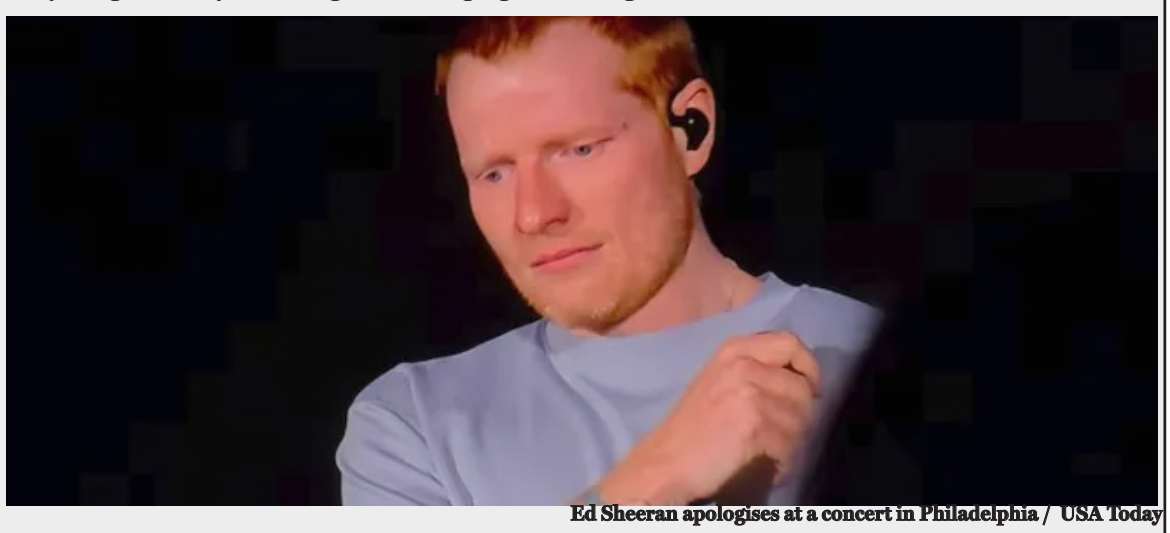
Now, I want to address the question of where I stand in the situation in Israel and Palestine and whether my doing this concert here tonight implies where I stand. I've tried in my career not to be a political commentator of any kind because I want my music and shows to be about unity not division, about humanity not politics.

But this is a humanitarian issue, and I cannot hide how I feel about it anymore. What happened in Israel at a music festival on Oct. 7 was horrific and compounded centuries of Jewish pain. What is happening in Gaza is catastrophic and unjustifiable and disproportionate.

My heart has been broken by the scale of devastation and loss of civilians' lives; of children's lives and the systemic justice we're seeing unfold in the West Bank cannot be overlooked.

I am already speaking to people across the spectrum to work out how to make a contribution that helps victims of these terrible times and listening and learning because I do not know enough.

... This concert is still a place where everyone is welcome, and everyone here can stand beside people who have opposing views, and everyone here can stand by people that they don't agree with on everything, but they can all agree I'm singing these songs.



Ed Sheeran apologises at a concert in Philadelphia / USA Today

What Gets You "Cancelled"?



The costumed Macklemore performed at the opening night of an exhibition in 2014 at Seattle's Music Project Museum, ASSOCIATED PRESS

MACKLEMORE'S RECORD OF CONTROVERSY

For many people, the decision to cut Macklemore from the tour was attributed to his history of "anti-Jewish caricatures" (as described by critics). In 2014, Macklemore performed at the Music Project Museum, now known as the Museum of Pop Culture (MoPOP), in his hometown of Seattle, Washington. There, he took to the stage in a wig, fake beard, and stylized nose, wearing a gold T-shirt and a black suit on top. Media outlets began swarming the pop star, declaring the outfit anti-Semitic.

Macklemore denies these claims; he later issued an apology that has since been removed from his website. He stated, "Earlier that day I thought it would be fine to dress up in a disguise and go incognito to this event ... I picked up a bunch of fake mustaches and beards and grabbed a leftover wig from my recent trip to Japan ... As it turns out, the fake noses they sell at costume stores are usually big (my nose did not fit most of them). So I ended up with a big witch nose. I went with a black beard because that's the furthest from my natural hair color..." He goes on to claim that he did not portray any "type of person," and some people at the concert claimed he looked like Ringo Starr or Abe Lincoln.

Macklemore continued, "I acknowledge how the costume could, within a context of stereotyping, be ascribed to a Jewish caricature." "I am here to say that it was absolutely not my intention and unfortunately at the time I did not foresee the costume to be viewed in such regard."

Whether Macklemore had malicious intentions or not, Robert Kraft still referenced this incident when he posted online about the current controversy, stating, "Based on Macklemore's recent actions, material shared from the stage during Ed Sheeran's shows in New Jersey, and a broader history of antisemitic rhetoric and imagery that we believe has been deeply offensive and hurtful to the Jewish community, we determined that his participation in the September 25th and 26th concerts at Gillette Stadium would cross that line."

Regardless of Macklemore's intention, Kraft's reference to the incident from 2014 shows how past controversy can follow a public figure for years. Even after Macklemore's apology, the incident remained part of the public discussion surrounding his actions. This raises a broader question about cancel culture, and whether individuals should continue to face professional consequences for past actions, particularly when they have acknowledged the harm they may have caused.



Macklemore speaks out at a live concert / @Macklemore: FACEBOOK

ACCOUNTABILITY OR PUBLIC HUMILIATION?

Aspiring music artists, Sophomores Emily Tormey and Charlie Bennett, question how far cancel culture should go, and whether it can become more about humiliation than accountability.

Charlie Bennett argued that "cancel culture should be more like boycotting rather than humiliating," explaining that people can choose to stop listening to an artist without attacking them online for years. Both agreed that, in post-COVID society, cancel culture may have gone too far and that social media has become a battleground for people with differing beliefs.

Emily stated that cancel culture "[can] ruin people's careers over [something they did years ago], [and sometimes they] might deserve it, but sometimes not. It can ruin people's lives and careers."

Their perspectives highlight the distinction between holding public figures accountable and attempting to destroy their careers. While audiences have the right to withdraw their support from artists whose actions they find objectionable, the lasting effects of online criticism may not always be proportionate to the offense.

Although Kraft cited Macklemore's past controversies as part of the decision, the incident involving his costume had occurred more than a decade earlier, and Macklemore had apologized for the harm it caused. If cancel culture is meant to hold artists accountable, should an apology and the passage of time reduce the consequences they face in the future? Macklemore's removal demonstrates the tension between holding artists responsible for their actions and allowing them the opportunity to move forward.



Protesters gather outside of Ed Sheeren's Philadelphia concert at Lincoln Financial Field / ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAN ARTISTS AFFORD TO STAY NEUTRAL?

Beyond the consequences of cancel culture, the situation also raises questions about artists' responsibility to express their beliefs publicly. Bennett believes that artists "Have their own beliefs and they have the right to share them, whether the audience agrees or disagrees with them."

Her perspective contrasts with the pressure many outspoken commentators face. Mark Simone of The Mark Simone Show addressed Macklemore on September 16, 2026, days after the controversy: "You're there to entertain people. This is not about Palestine. This is not about Israel. You're just there to entertain people." To Simone, neutrality is what gets you fame.

Even more, during his apology speech at Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia, Ed Sheeran stated: "I've tried in my career not to be a political commentator of any kind, because I want my music and shows to be about unity, not division, about humanity, not politics." Even when someone consciously tries to remain neutral, public pressure might not allow it, and it may not be the right thing to do. ■

Nonogram

By TÉA WALTON

Directions:
All the numbers listed above each row or column tell the number of consecutive boxes to fill in. Between each group of boxes there must be at least a one box space. Shade in the marked boxes and put X's in the spaces to see the picture formed. Ex: If a row is 3 2, there must be a series of 3 boxes filled in and a series of 2 boxes filled in separated by at least one space throughout the row.

13 × 13														
							2		3	1	1			
					2	1	1	3	1	1	2			
					1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1		
				1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	
				4	7	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	7	4
				5												
			3	1												
				7												
			2	2												
	1	1	1	1												
	2	3	3	2												
		2	1	2												
		2	3	2												
	2	1	1	2												
		1	5	1												
		2	1	2												
			3	3												
				7												

Geography Quiz

Welcome to the second Geography Quiz of the year for the October Issue!
These 5 questions test your geographical knowledge related to current events and seasonal traditions.
Good luck!

By MANNY CHIKWENDU

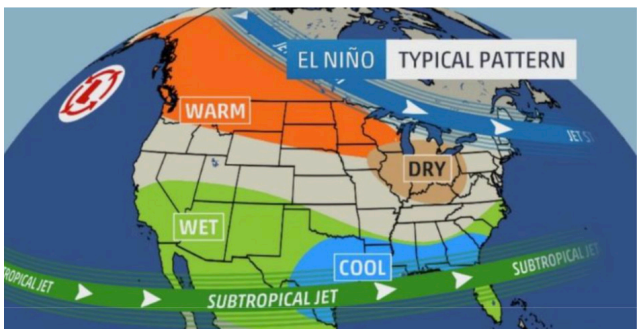
1. In a series of drone strikes in this ongoing Ukraine-Russia war, Ukraine targeted Russian city St. Petersburg (Санкт-Петербург) because of its strategic importance, as it serves as an important hub for oil and petroleum exports. Saint Petersburg is a major export city because of its location on the Gulf of Finland which leads to what northern sea that gains its name from the three smaller countries (or sometimes referred to as "states" in this context) that also border this sea?

A. The North Sea
B. Norwegian Sea
C. Baltic Sea
D. Black Sea



2. El nino is a well-known weather phenomenon in which sea-surface temperatures in a major ocean become significantly warmer than average. The current el niño is astronomically strong, and strong el ninos create intense, unpredictable winters across the United States by shifting the west to east jet streams south of its usual path. In what major ocean does el niño start in?

A. Pacific Ocean
B. Atlantic Ocean
C. Arctic Ocean
D. Indian Ocean



3. In Germany, October marks the festival of Oktoberfest, the world's largest beer festival. In which German city and capital of the southern state of Bavaria does this festival take place?

A. Berlin
B. Munich
C. Hamburg
D. Leipzig



4. Apple picking is one of the most common things people do in October. Apples originate in what central-asian country with a capital of Astana and a language using the cyrillic alphabet?

A. Kazakhstan
B. Tajikistan
C. Russia
D. Uzbekistan



5. In the autumn, millions of monarch butterflies migrate south from the US to what Spanish-speaking country just south of the US border?

A. Guatemala
B. Belize
C. Mexico
D. Cuba



Answers on **PAGE XXXX**

Opinion

Stop Saying "Ladies and Gentlemen"

Why Gender Inclusivity Matters: My Case for Acceptance

By **OLLIE BERDIK**

In his first month in office, President Donald Trump signed Executive Order #14168, which states: "[The road to gender inclusivity] is paved by an ongoing and purposeful attack against the ordinary and long-standing use and understanding of biological and scientific terms, replacing the immutable biological reality of sex with an internal, fluid, and subjective sense of self unmoored from biological facts."

I firmly and unequivocally dissent.

In my opinion, Mr. Trump's claim is illogical and, as much as he asserts otherwise, not based in science. In fact, it is so damaging to communities across the country — including this one — that I have decided to disprove it plainly and publicly, even though Thayer Academy itself does a fine job at gender inclusivity. In this essay, I hope to demonstrate two things. First, that gender exclusivity is a myth born from centuries of human self-classification. And, second, that gender inclusivity is easy and intuitive.

Aren't sex and gender the same thing?

No — they are entirely separate concepts! This misconception is a key barrier to gender inclusivity. Before I explain the difference in full, I'll begin by defining some terms. At birth (and, with modern technology, often before then), most humans are assigned a "sex" based on their genetics. By and large, humans are either female — they have XX chromosomes — or male — they have XY chromosomes. This difference is relatively binary (although certain prenatal medical conditions can cause a person to be born intersex).

Furthermore, any given person may or may not identify with their sex assigned at birth (SAB). An individual's "gender" is how they choose to identify themselves in relation to either or neither sex. While, at its core, gender does not have much to do with physical anatomy, it is just as scientific as sex is; Trump's labeling of psychology as an inferior science is factually incorrect and indicates how Trump rejects the ability of humans to define themselves.

Through millions of years of social conditioning in Western civilizations, males and females have assumed separate archetypal identities, leading to the de facto merging of sex and gender. However, gender has existed as a concept separate from sex from the jump — it is by no means new or "unordinary." It has only been suppressed by fixed gender roles that decree that certain characteristics are "masculine" whilst others are "feminine," leaving no room in between. By contrast, the Human Rights Campaign elucidates that "more than 150 pre-colonial Native American tribes acknowledged third genders in their communities."

Lastly, a person who does not identify with their SAB is transgender or gender-queer (it does not matter whether or not they have undergone a physical procedure — changing a name or a haircut can also help trans/queer people feel at home in their gender identities). Those who are not transgender are cisgender. Put simply, gender is not sex, and sex is not gender. Sex is binary, and gender is a spectrum, but they are both scientific and neither is superior to the other.

Then why does President Trump claim that gender isn't "biological"?

Our president is far from alone in his thinking. Humans have long been obsessed with the binary because it offers a simple explanation for complex things. The correct term for illustrating such drastic opposition is a "merism": light versus dark, Democrat versus Republican, Christian versus heathen, and so on. This is how Trump would like to have you view people. Historically, as cisgender people have predominated, the false equation of gender to sex has anchored traditional gender roles in present-day society. Indeed, Trump and his followers often claim to want to "defeat the toxic poison of gender ideology and reaffirm that God created two genders, male and female" (NPR). Frankly, conflating sex and gender like this is an archaic excuse to be socially exclusive in a world that desperately needs more inclusivity.

Obviously, none of the above information should dissuade you from holding firm beliefs about your personal gender identity. Whether you are cisgender or transgender (or identify some other way), the simple acknowledgement of a gender spectrum should enable you to greet others with more respect. Think of it this way: what if your favorite ice cream flavor were cookie dough and you thought that anybody who disagreed belonged to some subordinate "mint chip" group. What happened to coffee oreo and chocolate brownie and [insert flavor here]?! Defining one's opinion like this, in opposition to everyone else's, makes it easy to ignore the plentiful spectrum in between.

What about Thayer Academy? Is this play about us?

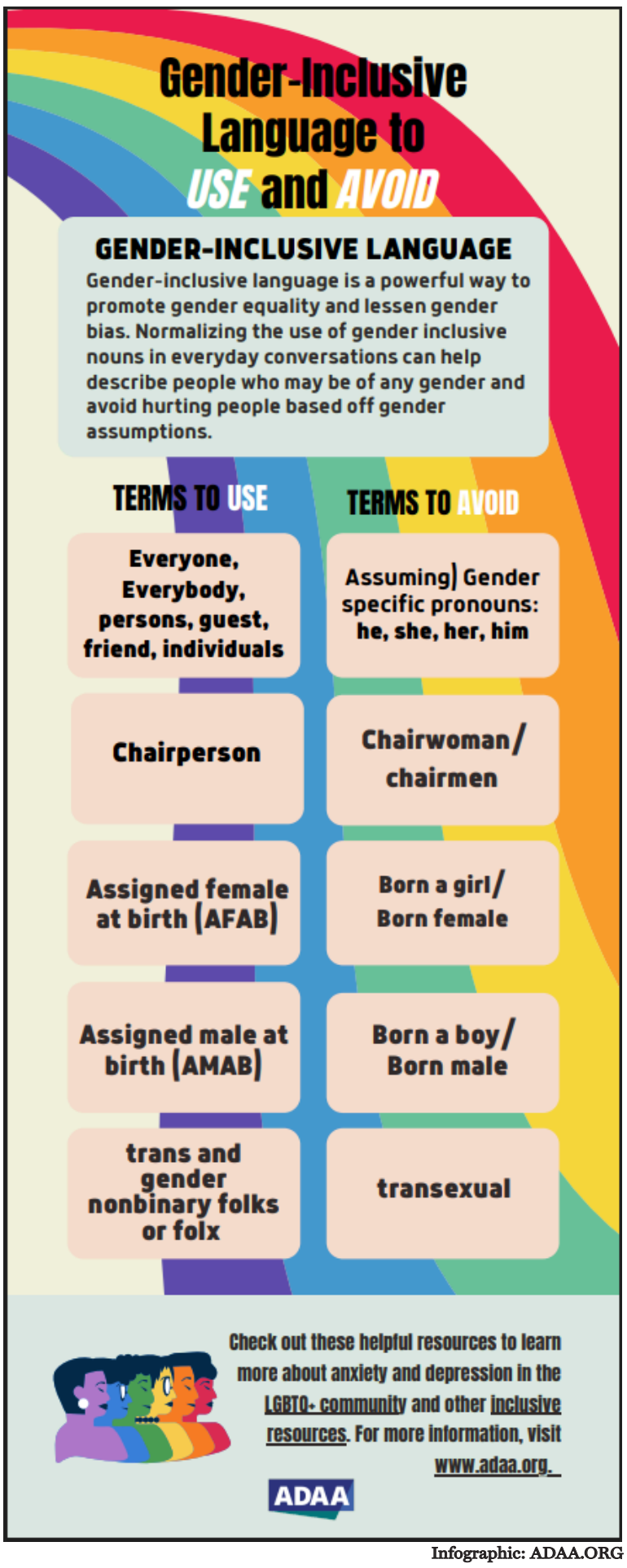
In general, Thayer Academy as an institution does well at gender inclusivity. One third of ninth graders read "Pet," by Akwaeke Emezi, a book whose diegesis is devoid of traditional gender norms. The main character is a transgender girl whose identity is accepted without second thought. Some teachers include statements around gender/sexuality inclusivity in the classroom in their syllabuses. Additionally, the very end of Thayer's student handbook (Appendix B) contains the school's "student gender diversity guidelines," which "are intended to assist the Academy in helping students and their families navigate Thayer's practices that may uniquely impact transgender and gender non-conforming students."

Dean of Engagement and Belonging Matt Ghiden and Director of the Peer Education Collaborative Leigh Loschiavo offered some insight into how Thayer is continuing to provide education and safe spaces for gender queer students and allies. Ghiden affirmed that, in light of recent attacks on gender inclusivity, Thayer has had to change some nomenclature (most notably for DEIB), but that the school remains committed to protecting students of oppressed gender identities. "It's about continuing to do the good work. Continuing to have a gender and sexuality alliance in both [school] divisions, continuing to have QSTP (QUEST Student Teacher Program), for example, push into ninth and tenth grade classes." Meanwhile, Loschiavo explained how she uses the Power House framework, which "lists all the systems of oppression that exist in society," in her Peer Leadership Fellowship classes. Loschiavo also sent me a helpful flyer for gender inclusive phrases, alongside this article.

Being actively gender inclusive is especially important at schools. A 2021 study in the National Library of Medicine revealed that 9.2% of students in the Pittsburgh public school system did not identify with their SAB. Therefore, in order to avoid alienating that substantial percentage of students, gender inclusivity in school is a necessity. An anonymous gender-queer Thayer student agrees. They matter-of-factly state, "it does not [cause] you any harm to be kind."

How can I be gender inclusive?

First, another definition: Loyola University Maryland defines gender inclusivity as "actions and policies that build a world in which humans of all gender identities can live authentically, feel a sense of safety, and thrive." Being gender inclusive is a conscious act, and a simple one.



Infographic: ADAA.ORG

As the title of this article suggests, the key to gender inclusivity is being aware of one's smaller actions. For example, replace the traditional "ladies and gentlemen" or "boys and girls" with "students," "folks," et cetera. Make groups based on birthday month, favorite ice cream flavor, or other categories that are independent from predetermined, SAB-based appearance characteristics. Just because someone participates on a certain sports team or performs as a specific character does not mean that they themselves identify with whatever labels are assigned to them in those roles.

Alternatively, intentionally include gender non-conforming people! Make them feel "known, connected, and prepared!" This might sound like "boys, girls, and non-binary friends." "His, her, or their weekend." If you accidentally misgender someone and they correct you, apologize and move forward as normal. Such small gestures hold great promise as we try to be more inclusive and welcoming to all.

All of us will certainly encounter individuals with gender identities that fall outside of the societal norm. When you do, I implore you to be respectful — it costs you nothing. Do not be the person who, like Mr. Trump, intentionally avoids complexity to satisfy their own political convenience. Instead, meet diverse identities with intellectual curiosity and acceptance. Use Thayer as an incubator to kickstart your actionable gender inclusivity. At this school, all persons of all genders must be respected and included. It is their education, too — not just his and hers. ■

Obituary

Michael Clarke, 82, Noted for Mentorship, Dedication, Photography



SUPPLIED BY ERICA DUNNE / THE GENERAL

By CAROLINE WOLDFORD

There is no way to do a person like Michael Clarke justice in a single obituary. Known as Mike to faculty and Mr. Clarke to students, he served as Head of the Upper School for fifteen years. Mr. Clarke was married to his wife Amy for almost 61 years, after they met at The College of Wooster in Ohio. They never had kids, but as observed by Mr. Chiari, "I think he really thought of the students as his kids."

However, Clarke's impact stretched far beyond students: teachers such as Mr. Chiari, Ms. King, Mr. Cedrone, Ms. Dunne, and Ms. Hayman all emphasized Mike's impact as a mentor. "Mike knew who I was as an educator and believed in me, and I never lost sight of that," said King.

Similarly, Dunne described him as "the best mentor I've ever had," who "would tell me how I could be better, while also praising when I did something well. He wanted to know what I wanted to do to become better at my job."

Chiari also commented on Clarke's impact, describing him as "the most influential professional mentor in my life."

Furthermore, Cedrone remembered Mr. Clarke as a "someone who led with strength, but also with compassion."

Hayman recalled the professional guidance Mr. Clarke provided to her, and how he was "very supportive of young teachers." Beyond professional guidance, Clarke took the time to get to know faculty personally. He remembered the names of their children, recognized when their personal lives were affecting their work lives, and, perhaps most importantly, understood who they were as people.

Alongside mentorship, two recurring ideas that faculty illustrated when talking about him were photography and hand-written notes. In fact, Mr. Carlson described Mr. Clarke as an "outstanding photographer." At school events and athletic games, Mr. Clarke could often be found capturing candid moments. Not only would Mr. Clarke take these pictures, but he would find time in his busy schedule to develop the photos, paste them on a piece of paper, write an individual message, and mail them to the people featured in it. These small but meaningful acts reflected Clarke's thoughtfulness and genuine interest in the Thayer community.

Even though he lived over an hour away in Westport, Massachusetts, Clarke was the kind of person who got to campus early and did not leave until most others were long gone.

Mr. Clarke also cared deeply about listening to others' ideas; for example, Dunne recalled that he was always willing to hear out her proposals. Indeed, when Dunne first developed the idea of sTAnd Speeches, now an honored freshman tradition, she first brought the proposal to Mr. Clarke, who enthusiastically encouraged her to start the program. Mr. Clarke was also instrumental in the creation of the Hale Learning Center and, later, the Benelli Writing Center. He wanted Thayer to have the same academic reputation as other independent schools in the area, so he took steps towards improving those programs.

Mr Clarke deeply impacted many students.

One student, Kendra King '02, is a former Thayer teacher and current president of the Alumni Association Board. During her years at Thayer, Mr. Clarke and Kendra formed a close bond; she described him as an "unofficial advisor." "I would go into his office a few times a week just to pop in and chat about anything," she recalled.

Surprisingly, Thayer's beloved tradition Winter Wars originated from one of those conversations. Kendra felt that winter at Thayer needed something to liven it up, so she shared her idea with her mentor who, "in classic Mr. Clarke fashion," listened without making her feel like her ideas were unrealistic. With the help of other faculty members (including Mr. Schneider), King's ideas became Winter Wars. The event, a highlight of many students' years, began with Mr. Clarke's willingness to listen to a student, and demonstrates how he was willing to enact change to better the school.

Thayer students today may not have known Mr. Clarke personally, but, as Dunne put it, "There's so much of Mike in everything all the time." When you stop by the Hale Learning Center for help on your math homework, or book an appointment at the Benelli Writing Center to perfect that English essay, Mr. Clarke's influence is there. When you nail your sTAnd speech performance in front of your freshman class, Mr. Clarke's influence is there. When you celebrate with your classmates after a thrilling Winter Wars win, Mr. Clarke's influence is there. Mr. Clarke will be missed dearly, but the programs, traditions, and relationships he helped build continue to shape the Thayer community, even for those who never got to meet him. ■





Mike Clark attends Mr. Kate Hayman's wedding, SUPPLIED BY KATE HAYMAN / THE GENERAL

Is It Still So "Marvel"-ous? The Alleged Decline of the MCU

By RONAN LYMAN







DISNEY

In the last twenty years, there has been one movie franchise that has broken over fifty international box office records and changed the landscape of entertainment nearly everywhere. This franchise is the Marvel Cinematic Universe, a collection of interconnected sagas set in a fictional world based on Marvel Comics.

Since 2019, however, Marvel has faced criticism over turning their movies from meaningful stories into desperate grabs at relevancy and cash.

Before this, Marvel started out with a bang, producing Iron Man in 2008, a highly experimental and expensive film using a new variation of CGI techniques, having a portion of the script left to improv, and new kinds of visual shots such as the in-helmet perspective.

In the following years, more movies were released, including Captain America: The First Avenger, a movie set in the past; Thor, which takes place in a world where high fantasy meets reality; and Iron Man 2, a sequel that added to Iron Man mythos and the general world building. This phase (as stages of the cinematic universe have come to be called) was more focused on origins of foundational characters and just starting to reveal its wider potential. The last movie of Phase One closed it amazingly, being one of the most ambitious and epic crossover events of its time: The Avengers. This event proved that Marvel's new approach could actually work, and uniting different heroes into one massive blockbuster film that received great praise.

After Marvel figured out what people desired in superhero movies, they meticulously crafted some of the best and most highly praised films in the eyes of fans and even casual viewers. Everything was connected but still separate, leading to an expansive world that allowed for many intersecting plot lines and stories.

One example is the Black Panther movie, which introduced a new technologically advanced nation while backing up earlier movies such as the original Captain America by explaining more of the backstory of the material of his shield (Vibranium, a fictional metal only found within Wakanda's borders). The film also provided a jumping off point for future plots, settings, and even whole films.

Another technique Marvel used, and still does use, is teasing new, major characters in bigger crossover movies to be expanded on in future projects, such as Spider-Man and Black Panther in Captain America: Civil War. This was incredibly surprising and exciting for people who knew these characters outside of the MCU in other media.

Many concepts were more indirectly hinted at through "Easter eggs" or post-credits scenes. Many of these strategies culminated in a massive crossover event consisting of, in my opinion, two of the best movies in the history of cinema: Avengers Infinity War and Avengers Endgame. The two are regarded as the highest peak of the entire Marvel Cinematic Universe.

Infinity War and Endgame were built upon aspects from nearly every movie, acting as the climax of this decade-long interwoven story. The film producers at Marvel executed the concept of this movie flawlessly through the plot and the impact of different scenes. Some aspects that really buttressed the films were the great balancing of a giant cast, balanced pacing, and impactful endings.

Infinity War featured around 76 prominent characters who had room to forge new dynamics and have different moments to shine throughout it. Additionally, between intense action scenes, there were moments where the characters could reflect on past moments or provide buildup for later scenes.

The finale of Infinity War is one of the most daring narrative choices in superhero movie history, completely going against the usual formula where the heroes always win. When I originally watched Infinity War, the ending left me at the edge of my seat, left wanting and waiting for Endgame to be out in theaters.

As Middle School Math Faculty Andy Gibson points out, "the entire country was - or the world was - entirely waiting for Endgame."

My high expectations for Endgame definitely didn't fall short, with Endgame delivering one of the most distinctive and epic battle scenes in the entirety of the superhero genre, having nearly all the characters assemble for one last final fight. The ending of Endgame also was satisfying as it felt as if it truly concluded this phase of Marvel while also delivering permanent change and possible strands to pull on in future movies and shows. These two movies marked the absolute peak of Marvel, an achievement that encapsulated the best aspects of more than a decade of interconnected storytelling.

This pinnacle of Marvel movies is one of the factors that ultimately made the movies afterwards not as impactful. Endgame set the expectations for the future so high Marvel simply couldn't really follow.

Another reason for the decline of interest is due to the shift and loss of some of the most important characters. One example of this is the show Hawkeye; while it featured good writing, acting, and character scenes, it left many fans feeling uneasy. As Aashrita Joga points out, "from a general point of view, it does just look like Hawkeye is getting replaced by this younger version of him. Which is kind of iffy, because you're sort of erasing these characters that you love so much with these, other new characters."

By shifting out the original heroes who served like emotional anchors for the franchise, Marvel has left audiences struggling to connect with this universe that feels bare without its original stars. Additionally, more recent films such as Eternals and Captain America: Brand New Day have focused more on building the lore of the MCU making for the films to feel rushed and narratively overwhelming.

When talking about Captain America: Brand New Day, Seamus McFarland commented "I think they've been rushing it a lot ... they've just kind of been shoving the scenes in."

Especially in Eternals, Marvel introduces ten new primary characters and recontinuations to the lore of their history, like furthering the motivation of Infinity War and Endgame's main villain. The main problem of directly introducing lore like this is that it often needs a lot of explaining, detracting from the overall story and emotional connection to the characters.

Similarly, the Easter Eggs that used to be a fun nod to comic readers have transitioned into the territory of being future promises. Because the MCU has grown so big, it no longer needs to use these hints to subtly build up the lore of the world. Marvel constantly prioritizing these easter eggs leaves viewers feeling overwhelmed and detached.

For example, in the film Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness, a character known as Clea appears in the post-credits scene out of nowhere. This happens with zero build-up, turning what would have been the exciting debut of a cool new character into a stilted plug for the next movie.

Although critics often blame poor writing and bad CGI for this decline, these technical flaws are not the main problem. This type of bad writing and CGI has been present in many different eras of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. For example, the bad visuals of early Hulk movies didn't stop the audience from loving the early phase; with its massive scale and credibility, Marvel's new films are more heavily critiqued for this than in the past.

The modern era of the MCU does have some major successes nonetheless. Tom Holland's Spiderman movies each deliver new and interesting stories and plot lines. The Thunderbolts has a more down to earth team that contains an emotionally powerful message. Meanwhile, the WandaVision trilogy has pushed cinematic boundaries by experimenting with completely different genres and unique formats. Ultimately, these different triumphs prove that while the franchise's general momentum has slowed, the studio still has potential.

While the recent era has yielded a mix of positives and negatives, Marvel is looking to recapture its original hype with its upcoming Avengers: Doomsday. Marvel has been actively marketing its upcoming movie, especially with the surprising casting of Robert Downey Jr. as Victor von Doom sending a wave of excitement and speculation through the fanbase.

However, to truly recapture the traction of its best era, Marvel should avoid the trap of letting the film become too stuffed with setup for future projects and retconning past projects. If Marvel can prioritize genuine character relationships and cool team up scenes, I believe that Doomsday has the potential to prove that Marvel's Cinematic Universe still does have its best days ahead of it.

We'll find out when it releases on December 18th. ■

It Takes a Team: Highlights from Homecoming

Continued from PAGE 1

XC BOYS AND GIRLS: For a running start to the weekend of fun, Thayer Boys and Girls Cross Country opened Homecoming with an exciting meet on Friday, October 2nd. In 75-degree heat and facing Milton Academy, which has a fierce cross country team, Thayer gave it their all.

"It started off pretty hot, but it got a lot better, and we pushed through," Thayer cross-country runner KJ Irving shared. "Right before the race, everyone had really great energy, and it felt really good."

Moreover, despite continued construction on the track forcing the creation of a new course only a few days before the meet, Boys Cross Country Coach Paul McCarron remarked that "everything went smoothly" and that he was "happy with the performance of both teams and the spirit that they exhibited to each other."

Throughout both the boys' and girls' races, lively spectators cheered on the runners — even when a downpour began halfway through the girls' race, the spirit never stopped. In fact, after the race, Girls Cross Country Captain Katie Donahue revealed that after the heat earlier, she was secretly hoping she "would finish in the rain." Even though the match was ultimately a loss for Thayer, the infectious spirit of spectators and the support and camaraderie in both teams made it an exciting event to watch.





Boys and Girls Cross Country making their rounds at their Homecomming meet, TÉA WALTON / THE GENERAL



Number 3 Nora Devine takes a shot, CAROLINE WOLFORD / THE GENERAL

VARSITY GIRLS FIELD HOCKEY: What brought the Varsity Field Hockey Team from a three-game losing streak to a decisive win over Austin Preparatory Academy? The answer might be deceptively simple: the refusal to give up.

Even following the third of these losses—a home game to Milton Academy on Tuesday the 29th—Head Field Hockey Coach Suzanne Akerson was not dejected. Despite the disappointing final score, Akerson noted that the team had played much stronger in their game against Milton than they had previously, which gave her confidence in them for Homecoming. "Let's ride this momentum," she told them. "I hope that's the expectation you have of yourself."

Despite the game being the earliest of the Saturday Homecoming schedule, the adrenaline from excited Thayer families was already pouring onto the turf as the team took their positions at centerfield. There was "an atmosphere of community," Varsity Field Hockey Captain Beatrix Cohen-Raymond shared after the match.

As the game progressed, the girls showed what strong communication and good energy can bring to a team. Yet throughout, Akerson did not back down from pushing her players to maintain consistency with their effort and drive. Through grit and determination, the team ultimately landed a 7-0 victory against Austin Prep — the first Homecoming win for Akerson and many veteran players alike.

GIRLS JV FIELD HOCKEY: The JV Girls Field Hockey team fought hard in their game as well. Also against Austin Prep, the ultimate result of the match was a 4-1 loss for Thayer, but the team's spirit was far from broken. Jordan Berry scored Thayer's one goal, and she and others continue to plan for improvement. "I wish we had won, it being Homecoming and all," one team member explained, "but this will only make us want to practice and want to get better even more for the future games."

GIRLS VARSITY SOCCER: If you hear the sounds of "Lip Gloss" by Lil Mamma and "Remember the Name" by Fort Minor pulsating through the Student Commons, you know a Girls Varsity Soccer game is about to begin. The tradition has been going on for more than a decade: the team shouts the chorus of "Remember the Name" — "Ten percent luck, twenty percent skill/Fifteen percent concentrated power of will," followed by "Five percent pleasure, fifty percent pain/And a hundred percent reason to remember the name" — before walking out onto the field.

In addition to the hype music, Senior Ella Sheehan mentioned that the crowd turnout and energy at Homecoming boosts the team's confidence: "We almost sometimes do better when we have a big crowd; everyone's really hyped up." Team Manager Katherine Smallcomb added that the team dynamic this year is strong, improving their gameplay. "They feed off of each other's vibes on and off the field," she explained. For example, as organized by Emery DeRoeve, the team wore blue athletic tape around their arms to show support for Morgan's Message, a nonprofit aiming to normalize the discussion and treatment of mental health among student-athletes.

This proved true as the team secured a 4-1 win over Sacred Heart Greenwich, with Phoebe Catlin and Anya Duffy each scoring a goal, and Sheehan scoring two.

GIRLS JV SOCCER: Girls JV Soccer Captain Renee Monaghan said that the team was feeling confident going into their game against Tabor Academy. She explained, "We had the idea that we were gonna win, [but] we still worked hard and tried to get creative and keep possession." The team ended with a win against Tabor Academy.





Both Varsity and JV Girls Soccer teams won at Homecoming, TATIANA CALVILLO/ THE GENERAL

Campus Events

GIRLS VARSITY VOLLEYBALL: Girls Varsity Volleyball brought home an exciting 3-1 victory against Portsmouth Abbey, collecting their first win of the season.

The close match was forecasted by Thayer's 25-23 win in the first set, putting Thayer on top by a slim margin. Senior and libero Alyssa Durant was a standout in the second set, with Thayer winning 8 consecutive points on her serve and ending with a 25-21 set victory.

Thayer started off the third set strong, with sophomore Hannah Keleher racking up the points on her serve. Unfortunately, the third set was an ultimate loss for Thayer, though the Tigers still held their narrow lead over Portsmouth Abbey going into the fourth set, which they won 25-21.

Senior and captain Saoirse Morrisey commented on this final set, remembering, "There was a moment where we were down eight points, but everybody kept the spirit up and we came back strong." Junior and fellow captain Naraya Dasilva's excellent serving performance was essential for these last few points of the match.

Morrisey went on to praise the performance of the whole team, regarding the match as one of their best games. "I'm happy with the communication skills from everybody, as well as the technical skills and the teamwork and how everybody was so hype." This win had personal significance for Morrisey as well, as it was her senior Homecoming and one of the first Homecoming games she'd won.

GIRLS JV VOLLEYBALL: Despite a 2-1 loss, the Girls JV Volleyball team was imbued with the Thayer spirit during their October 3rd homecoming game. The enthusiasm at the match was infectious; cheers from the crowd were only overpowered by the shouts of the players cheering on their own teammates. Despite coming into the match with a losing record, Thayer remained consistent competition for their opponent, Portsmouth Abbey School. After a 20-25 loss in the first set, Thayer came back remarkably strong, winning the second set 25-15. By the time the third set rolled around, the crowd was behind Thayer all the way. "It's a close game," sophomore Luke Delaar remarked from the crowd. "It's nerve wracking."

Though Thayer lost in the end, spirits remained high on the team; after the match, Sophomore Betsy Medeiros commented, "I'm feeling great. I feel like we did an amazing job." Medeiros's sentiments reflect Thayer's performance: Upper School History teacher and assistant JV coach Andrew Forte had been tracking the stats of the game and reported that 78% of Thayer's serves were in, including 19 aces.



DAN KING / THE GENERAL



Senior Casey Lukens skillfully receives a pass, COMPTON JONES / THE GENERAL

BOYS JV SOCCER: Coach Benjy Nurick was really impressed with the team's performance at Homecoming. Despite having lost three players, the team stepped up to meet the challenge and worked together, ultimately claiming a 7-2 victory against Roxbury Latin School. "That's what's so great about this group," Nurick explained. "Everyone's happy to fill in when asked. And so we had other guys who were ready to step up for the challenge." Nurick feels pride in his role and hopes to inspire the same feelings among the team: "I'm a firm believer that a confident soccer player is gonna be a better soccer player."

BOYS VARSITY SOCCER: At the same time on Kendall Field, the varsity boys soccer team was maintaining pressure and unity against Roxbury Latin. The first half saw consistent defensive efforts on Thayer's side and impressive saves from goalie Chris George in the 8th and 30th minutes. Unfortunately, Senior Adam Beltrami was also injured in the first half.

With fresh legs going into the second half, the team shifted to more offensive attacks. Senior Khaio Pellegrini was a constant presence, pushing the ball up the field again and again, but it was Fin Turner who, off a kick from Declan Bergan, headed the ball into the RL net. Turner maintained that the goal was "something [the team] all worked for," and described Bergan as "lethal on the set pieces." RL kept the momentum going into the end of the game, attempting another goal, which George successfully saved. The Thayer team truly "fought till the very last moment," Senior captain Ethan Choi asserted. The Tigers, as in Girls Varsity Soccer, wore blue wristbands to support Morgan's Message.



DAN KING / THE GENERAL

BOYS VARSITY FOOTBALL: The final game of the day coincided with the opening of the new multi-sport complex. While the football team stretched before their game against Brooks School, Coach DeAndrade walked around, giving every single player words of encouragement.

Throughout the game, Thayer had strong defense, which left the score extremely close by the final half — 8-7 in Brooks' favor. By the 4th quarter, the gap had widened to 21-14. With two seconds left on the clock, Thayer was 10 yards from the end zone on offense. Thayer quarterback and Junior Jaden Johnson was able to make the pass in time, and Thayer had the chance to go for a two-point conversion or a field goal. Thayer chose the conversion but ultimately failed, leaving the score as 21-20 in Brooks' favor. Though there was disappointment, the stands stayed full the entire game, marking a potential new legacy for the Thayer football program. ■



Coach DeAndrade speaks with Senior Gavin Young, DAN KING / THE GENERAL



The teams huddles during their game against Brooks, DAN KING / THE GENERAL

Profile | Advice

Meet Mr. Flaherty and Mr. Brosseau

By CAROLINE WOLFORD

If you've walked past the Brickyard this year, you might have noticed a few changes to Thayer's College Counseling Office. Along with a renovated space, the office welcomed two new team members over the summer: Chris Flaherty, Assistant Director of College Counseling, and Michael Brosseau, Associate Director of College Counseling. Both share a commitment to helping students navigate the college process with confidence. From years of experience in college admissions to a passion for making the application process less stressful, Flaherty and Brosseau hope to help students find colleges that are the right fit for them.

Flaherty, who is originally from Braintree, Massachusetts, graduated from Braintree High School in 2010 before attending Providence College, from which he graduated in 2014. Flaherty's interest in higher education grew out of his involvement in student leadership, orientation activities, and campus programming at the college. These experiences eventually led him to a position in Stonehill College's admissions office in 2016. There, Flaherty spent six years helping prospective students through the admission process. In 2022, he returned to Providence College to work in advancement, a field focused on alumni relations and engagement.

Although he valued the opportunity to work at his alma mater, Flaherty explained how he "started realizing that I missed what I loved about admissions, which was working with students, working through the college process, working with families." So, when a position opened at Thayer, Flaherty decided to return to the college admissions world, but now with a new perspective, having worked with college alumni as well as in admissions. His near-decade of experience in higher education makes him a valuable asset to Thayer's College Counseling team.

For Flaherty, one of the most rewarding aspects of his new role has been getting to know the Thayer community. He appreciates the way students balance their academic responsibilities with athletics and extracurriculars. He emphasized, "The students here really do build that kind of community," adding how, "The community feel is definitely the best part of being here."

Likewise, Brosseau, who grew up in Franklin, Massachusetts, brings a similarly extensive background in higher education. He attended Marist University in Poughkeepsie, New York. After working at the Marist admissions office as an undergraduate student, he continued his career in college admissions at Northeastern University, Emerson College, and Bentley University. More recently, Brosseau worked at Worcester Academy for two years as Associate Head of College Counseling.

For Brosseau, the appeal of college counseling is personal as well as professional. He recalls the support that his own high school guidance counselor gave him: "I remember a lot of the work that my guidance counselor did and all of the support she gave me," he noted. "It was something that stuck with me, and I see the impact of it now that I do it myself."

While neither counselor wants students to feel overwhelmed by the college process, they recognize that applying to college can be stressful. Their shared goal is to make the experience as manageable and rewarding as possible. Flaherty encourages students to celebrate small victories along the way, whether that means submitting an application or completing a standardized test. "Submitting an application, you should celebrate that," he proclaimed. Meanwhile, Brosseau emphasizes the importance of finding the right fit rather than measuring success against someone else's college decisions. "Don't compare your process to anybody else's," he warned, explaining that every student has different interests, identities, and goals. Rather than following a single formula for success, he urges students to show up everyday and do their best in the classroom and throughout the Thayer community. He also reminds students that they do not have to navigate it alone, mentioning the support available through college counseling, advisors, teachers, and other faculty members. "There's no one correct way to navigate this process," Brosseau concluded.

Outside of work, both counselors have interests that extend beyond college applications. Flaherty relishes spending time with his family, coaching his daughter's youth soccer team, and following Boston sports teams. He also hopes to return to hockey, a sport he grew up playing, as his daughter begins learning how to skate. Brosseau, meanwhile, enjoys reading, listening to music, and playing basketball in the Boston Gay Basketball League. He is also an enthusiastic traveler who has visited 13 countries and hopes to get involved in Thayer's travel programs. Indeed, for Brosseau, Thayer's emphasis on local engagement and global experiences was one of the aspects that made the school stand out. He is excited to join a community that encourages students to apply what they learn in class into practical life experience, particularly as Thayer looks ahead to its 150th anniversary.

Ultimately, both Flaherty and Brosseau hope that students will view the College Counseling Office as a resource throughout their high school years, not just a place to visit when application deadlines approach. Whether students need help building a college list, navigating a difficult decision, or simply talking through the pressures of the process, Flaherty and Brosseau want students to know their doors are always open. ■



Mr. Christopher "Chris" Flaherty, THAYER COMMUNICATIONS



Mr. Michael "Mike" Brosseau, THAYER COMMUNICATIONS

Ask Sylvanus

Advice Column

Q: I love being in musicals, but I'm worried about needing to beat the "theater kid" allegations. Thoughts?

A: Let's start with the good news: "theater kids" are going places. According to a study by Scholastic, students involved in performing arts are "four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievements" compared to non-performing students. You may even know some famous theater kids: Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, U.S. Senator Ted Cruz, and even former Canadian Prime Minister (and Katy Perry's Boyfriend) Justin Trudeau. Many of those mentioned above even credit theater with building their confidence and ability to communicate with others.

Knowing those facts, it almost seems as though there is nothing to "beat." People who do theater (I believe they find the term "theater kid" to be controversial and potentially derogatory) develop skills that propel their interpersonal relationships in all facets of life. I understand, however, that the rest of Thayer's student body might not be so impressed by this fact. High school theater tends to get a bad reputation; often, it's associated with bad wigs, jazz hands, and angsty understudies. But you and I both know that's not true of Thayer's theater program, and your friends should know that too.

Say, for instance, that someone in your class knew you were in the play and asked you how it was going. Your options are:

"What play?"

"Hah! I don't even know. Everyone there is so weird, I never show up to rehearsals."

"It's going well! Thanks for asking."

Now, there was a right answer to this question. I hope you chose C. My advice for you: perform with pride. People are much more likely to respect what you do if you express confidence and ownership over your work. I've found that adolescents, similarly to apex predators, pick up on shame and fear very quickly; if it seems as though you are trying to conceal something, people could assume it's a weakness. You don't have to actively bring it up, but, if someone else brings it up, it's important to speak respectfully of the program. If you speak ill of Thayer theater, your friends will assume it's okay for them to do the same.

Senior Matthias Roy gave a perfect example of this in his recent TA Talk. Roy described hiding his face as he walked into auditions, hoping that none of his friends would see him or associate him with the play. You may empathize with this, dear reader, because you seem to be expressing similar sentiments.

By the time the performances rolled around, however, Matthias's friends were in the audience cheering him on. The experience had such a profound impact on Matthias that he included it in his TA Talk, further publicizing his theater journey.

There is something to be said here about caring what others think. Your real friends will come cheer you on if you're on the varsity soccer team or you're the lead in the musical, and the people who give you a hard time obviously don't know how awesome those experiences can be.

I know it's easy for me to say. I am 241 years old, after all. But I do know that you will never regret doing something you love to do. See you on the stage! ■

To submit your own question for Sylvanus's consideration, please email him at TheGeneral@Thayer.org

Changemaker Conference Brings Together ISL

By ANDREW HERNANDEZ

On Oct. 16, Thayer Academy hosted the fifth annual Independent School League Changemakers Conference. The conference was founded by Dr. Melissa Lawler at Milton Academy in 2020, and has since been hosted by several ISL schools (Milton, Lawrence, Tabor, and Nobles). Each year has a different theme, but the overarching goal has always been connecting athletes off the field. This year's theme was "leading across differences."

To start the day, students from 11 of the 16 ISL schools (Thayer, Milton, Rivers, St. Sebs, Brooks, Belmont Hill, BB&N, Roxbury Latin, Nobles, Lawrence, and St. Marks) filed into the Middle School's Thompson Hall to hear opening remarks from Head of School Chris Fortunato, as well as the keynote speaker, Dr. Brooke Tubbs. Fortunato challenged the students to sit in the first few rows of the audience, remarking that "changemakers sit in the front." After Fortunato's kickoff, Dr. Tubbs took the microphone. Tubbs works at Gnomes Surf Therapy, a nonprofit organization built to bring happiness, kindness, love, and acceptance for all and to give space for those who don't feel welcomed in other athletic spaces or have a mental or physical disability. The company uses surfing as that gateway to help people both mentally and physically, using their "octopus approach": they don't just stop at the feeling of support, they "wrap" the athletes in "an unstoppable ecosystem of care."

Next, the attendees broke out into a rotation of workshops, with topics ranging from "The Leadership Pitch: Turning Athletic Challenges into Change" to "The Cost of Moving Up: Access and Inequality in Athletic Recruiting." Most of these workshops were run by students, which, as Thayer senior Peter Cappadona noted, "having peer to peer conversations was so much more meaningful than sitting and listening to someone talk at you about diversity or inclusion or creating equity in spaces." Other workshop highlights included student-led discussions, breakout sessions, and even a BuzzFeed-style quiz that sorted students based on their leadership styles.

After the workshops, athletes participated in a game of soccer. The catch? With help from the Bionic Project and members of the Men's Paralympic Soccer Team, they played with crutches and on one leg. This experience gave students the opportunity to learn about amputee soccer, as well as the ability to appreciate, learn, and empathize with how others interact with sports.

Overall, the conference succeeded in engaging its attendants. Athletic Director Bobbi Moran noted that the energy of the participants "topped the charts. I thought that the kids were really engaged. [...] It was so nice to see."

About the community-focused aims of the conference, Associate Upper School Dean of Students and Assistant Director of Engagement & Belonging Olivia Pena commented, "I think, more importantly, the goal was for athletes across the ISL to share space and share their thoughts, their experiences, and begin to value each other, and value the importance of leadership and diversity."■



Conference attendees participate in an interactive workshop, ANDREW HERNANDEZ / THE GENERAL

Dr. Tim McCarthy, a Thayer scholar in residence, and Former Prime Minister Dr. Leo Varadkar have both dedicated their lives to human rights, especially those of the LGBTQ community. As Leo Varadkar reflects on his time growing up in Ireland and then the transition of politics, he states, " you could legally beat and rape your wife, and divorce. Same sex marrage was illegal, and that was repealed all in my lifetime"

Additionally, he gives his thoughts on how democracies should function; he says, "You can judge a country by how it treats it minority."

He also speaks about the future of democracy. He felt lugubrious about the topic and doesn't see many bright spots around the world, but at the same time he notices that young people are more educated and invested in politics than ever before. He said, "They give me a sneaky hope."



Former Irish Prime Minister Dr. Leo Varadkar talks to an attendee after the forum, CALEB SENDER/ THE GENERAL



Dr. Tim McCarthy sits and adresses an audience member's question, CALEB SENDER / THE GENERAL



Former Prime Minister Dr. Leo Varadkar sits as Dr. Tim McCarthy emcees the conversation, CALEB SENDER / THE GENERAL

Les Mis Gallary

I Think; Therefore I Am... Going to Les Mis!



Charlie Bennett running “I Dreamed a Dream”OLIVER MASSEY / THE GENERAL



Les Mis’s vocal troupe works through the music for a second-act number, DAN KING / THE GENERAL



Musical Director Mel Carubia and Director Kelly Hines run through a scene with the cast, DAN KING / THE GENERAL



OLIVER MASSEY / THE GENERAL



Cast members Liv Talabi Oates, Kira Gleason, Avery Foley, Izzy Troupe, and Shivani Anand react during a scene, OLIVER MASSEY / THE GENERAL



Visiting actor John Ambrosino ’97, who worked on the national tour of Les Misérables, visited Thayer to give students tips on how to elevate their stage acting, SUPPLIED BY KELLY HINES

Visiting Violinist Miclen LaiPang Gives Live Masterclass

By COMPTON JONES

"I want to give students an outlet to express themselves and have a good time," explained Miclen LaiPang, the violinist who visited campus on Friday, October 23rd. During the school meeting, LaiPang gave live masterclasses to three Upper School students: Junior Arthur Chen, Sophomore Echo Sun, and Senior Amelia Castillo.

LaiPang, a California-born violinist renowned on the world stage, aimed to illustrate how a student's performance can interpret or convey the original meaning of the composer. Chen, for example, played a piano piece by Rachmaninoff. LaiPang asked Chen to imagine an approaching army, marching to a band of horns. In doing so, LaiPang aims to loosen the "stiffness" he associates with classical music education.

Thayer Resident Scholar Jin Kim organized the presentation, deciding to invite students to a live critique in front of the whole school. Of the decision, he explained, "Performance happens both on stage and in practice rooms. And what happens in classrooms, it's also live."

"This stage is a huge classroom of friends. I wanted to share that and recreate what happens in smaller classes."

"This stage is a huge classroom of friends. I wanted to share that and recreate what happens in smaller classes."

After the critiques, LaiPang closed out the meeting with a Hungarian folk tune, accompanied by Kim on the piano. Returning to the CFA stage, LaiPang played Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto with Kim's Atlantic Symphony Orchestra on Saturday, October 24th.

With contributions from **DAN KING**



For the encore to the event, LaiPang performs alongside Kim, DAN KING/ THE GENERAL



As part of Author Chen's critique, LaiPang encourages him to reflect on the composer's life and consider what he may have been thinking when he wrote the piece. In this LaiPang aims to bring out more emotion in the performance, DAN KING / THE GENERAL.



LaiPang encourages Echo to envision tiny elves dancing around to bring out more emotion in her playing, DAN KING/ THE GENERAL.



DAN KING / THE GENERAL.

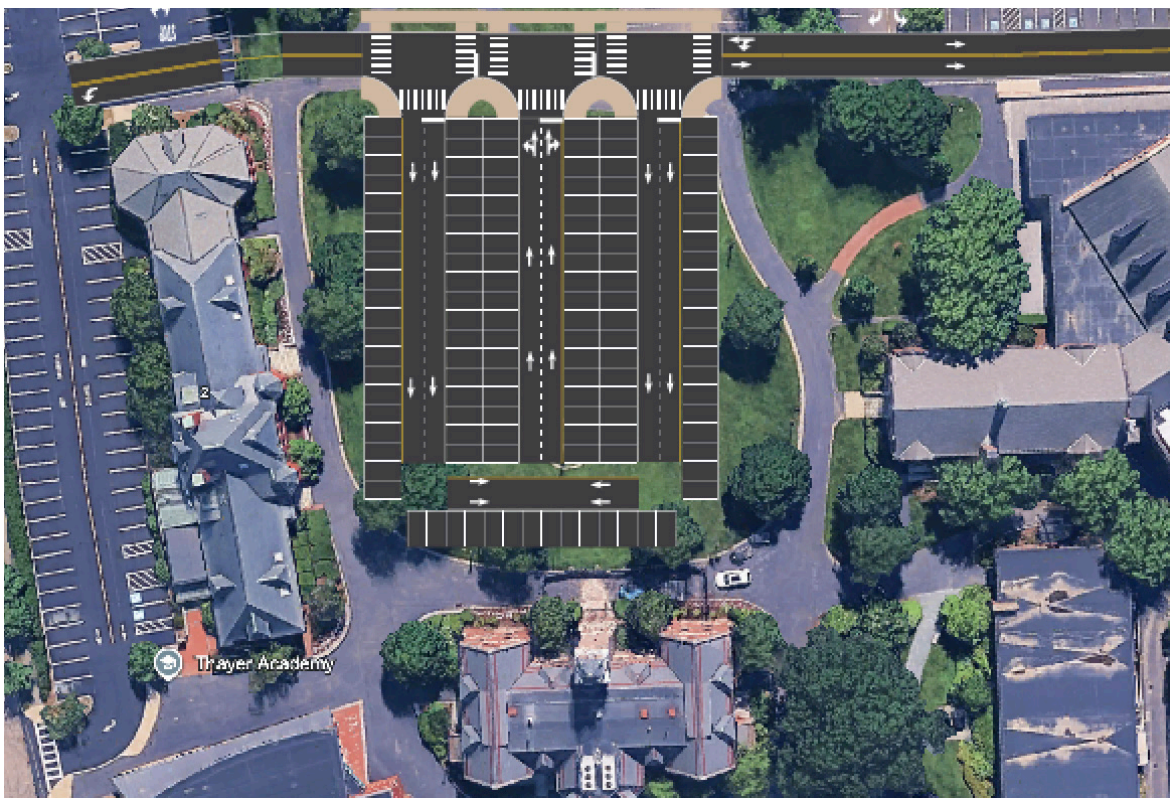


As part of this exercise, LaiPang has Amelia Castillo revisit parts of her piece, Csárdás, in an effort to bring it to its fullest potential, DAN KING / THE GENERAL.

Can't Find A Place to Park? **We Should Pave the Teardrop.**

Aarav Vaghela, Senior Parking Correspondent, Shares His Next Brilliant Plan for the Next Campus Remodel

By ANA SULLIVAN and AARAV VAGHELA



Students have described the campus parking situation as "bad", CALEB SENDER / THE GENERAL

Thayer Academy has a problem. A major one. And every single student on campus is in agreement about what this problem is.

Since the school's founding, when General Sylvanus Thayer ordered extra-wide parking spots to be reserved for his horse and buggy, the lack of space for student parking has enraged the community.

Now, Thayer students need a hero, and not all heroes wear capes. Senior Parking Correspondent for The General Aaravsinh Vaghela was on the case.

Aarav started his investigation with the essential first step: figure out why he was hired in the first place. In this case, the reason was parking. Easy. What's next? Vaghela had to figure out how the people felt about parking at Thayer. The overall consensus for this one was, quite simply, "bad." Next came the hard part: the solution.

Vaghela, a creative at heart, believed that this would be the perfect time to showcase designs from his "Thayer Remodeled" portfolio. Since he arrived in the fifth grade, Aarav has been building bigger and better things for Thayer in his mind, such as a Business and Entrepeneurship building. Unfortunately, Mr. Fortunato stole those particular plans and pawned them off as his own, so Vaghela had to abandon that dream.

In a rare stroke of brilliance, Vaghela remembered a mode of transportation that requires NO parking spots: walking. Thayer students needed to get their steps in, Vaghela believed, and what better way to do so than their morning and evening commutes. He decided to bounce this idea off his right hand man, Senior and soccer star Ethan Choi. Choi, initially enthused, soon discovered that his walk to Thayer from Foxborough would take nine hours. Vaghela still thought that would be doable, but he didn't want to push Choi; he knew how protective soccer players were about their feet.

Okay, so walking's out. But if Vaghela had learned anything from the Tour de France, it's that bikers love little shorts. And also, you can bike much longer distances than you can walk. Vaghela figured that before he committed to the real deal, he should practice on the stationary bike in the gym. At first, he believed he had found the perfect solution. Biking was much easier than walking! He didn't even have to pedal! That is until a well-meaning onlooker pointed out that he had set the bike to the "constant downhill" setting. His ego bruised, Vaghela promptly ruled out biking as a viable transportation option.

With his signature wit and misplaced optimism, Vaghela set out to collect data on his next idea. This one would be environmentally friendly. Call him Thayer's own Greta Thunberg: Vaghela was going green. Carpooling = less cars = less greenhouse gas emissions = more parking spots. Genius. How had he not thought of this before? Vaghela knew Thayer students didn't like to share, so he had to work extra hard to convince Juniors Will Jones and Nick Hough to buy into his idea. Vaghela, lazy by nature, immediately canceled the carpool upon learning the distance he'd have to drive between their towns.

Having already gone through plans A, B, and C, and having forgotten the rest of his alphabet, Vaghela figured he needed to reframe his thinking.

The perfect answer came to him during his daily stroll around the new football field. Vaghela loves these walks: drinking in the Thayer pride, roaming the shiny new bleachers, and hearing the roar of the scoreboard when Thayer scored a touchdown. But on this particular day, Vaghela was preoccupied. He just couldn't get the image of students circling the CFA parking lot in vain at 7:59, knowing this tardy would mean censure, out of his head.

Say what you will about Vaghela, but he is a man married to the job, and he'll stop at nothing to eradicate the problems that plague ordinary citizens. That's why, as much as he loved the football field, Vaghela knew it had to go. Misreading its title of "Multi-Purpose Athletic Complex," Vaghela proposed that the turf be used for parking during the daytime.

Breaking the news to the players would be difficult, but Vaghela figured they would appreciate his unfailing sensitivity and kindness. Unfortunately, Vaghela forgot to consider the ... somewhat imposing physical stature of these men. Assert dominance, Vaghela reminded himself. They can smell your fear.

Vaghela had tried out for the varsity football team every single year he'd been at Thayer, and though he'd never once made it, he figured his constant presence at tryouts, practices, and games would make him "one of the boys." He was wrong. After he proposed his idea to pave over the new football field to create a new parking lot, he was politely asked to leave with a surprise tackle from a mysterious hooded player.

When scouting out unused spaces at Thayer to tear up for parking, Vaghela did find one — admittedly perfect — option. The Teardrop. This deceptively grassy mud pit had infected students' view for too long. The more he thought about it, the harder it became for Vaghela to come up with a reason to keep this performative quad-wannabe as a part of Thayer's campus. With high school application season coming up, he thought his renovation would surely attract future Tigers. And, why stop at a measly parking lot? Combining his elite knowledge of junior year APUSH and senior year APES, Vaghela designed a parking garage centered around the theme of vertical expansion. His blueprint had five stories, but that could be negotiated higher.

Predicting an easy yes, Vaghela only scheduled a 15-minute meeting with Student Body President Katherine Smallcomb. Surprisingly, though, he didn't even need the full 15; Smallcomb only had one thing to say:

"No."

Oh, well ... It's back to the drawing board! A Senior Parking Correspondent never says die! Keep an eye out for the belowground parking tunnel coming to Thayer soon! ■



CALEB SENDER / THE GENERAL



What Thayer could look like with an illustrious parking garage CALEB SENDER / THE GENERAL