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# Lamplighter

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## FEATURED ARTICLES

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### **Who's Been Gaslighting NMH?**

by Maggie Provencal '25

### **Sometimes It's Better To Say The Wrong Thing Than Nothing At All**

by Soren Anderson-Flynn '25

### **Loving The Connecticut River**

by Leah Song '27

### **Finding Yourself: NMH Seniors Pursuing Their Passions**

by Michelle Tang '25

### **Take Accountability: A look into AP Distribution Discrepancy Across Campus**

by Izzy Cadena '25

**... and more!**

# Finding Yourself: NMH Seniors Pursuing their Passions

By MICHELLE TANG '26

*“Our Passion is Our Strength.” — Billie Joe Armstrong*

We are defined by the things that we love. Perhaps ignited by a spark, perhaps discovered over time, seeds of passion sowed in high school can grow into towering trees and root firmly in one’s heart, nourished by the time and effort we dedicate to them. As the finale of their high school journey looms over the class of 2024, what do our seniors have to say about their journeys to discovering their passions?

## —Art: Everett Liu—

What does it mean to be a “RAC Rat”? Everett has lived out the definition of this term every day of his NMH life.

“I’d like to think that every aspect about myself is very artistic, from the way that I dress, the way I present myself, to the artwork I create...” said Everett. “I am definitely someone who lives their life through art.”

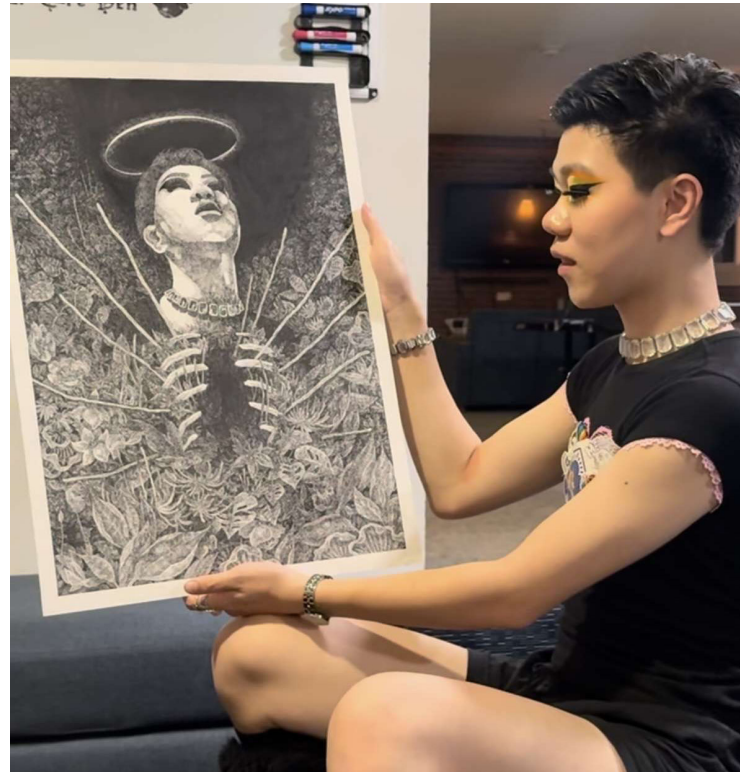
Everett’s greatest passion lies in fashion design. It started in middle school for him as a form of therapy: fashion – dressing well everyday – gave him confidence and an outlet of self-expression to combat ridicule from others. “The way that people present themselves in public really tells us so much about them, and it’s so disappointing how a lot of people can sometimes be afraid of that, due to other societal norms, which I think are kind of b\*\*\*\*\*t,” he said.

At NMH, Everett has seized every possible opportunity to explore art. He has been engaged in countless visual and performing art courses, musicals, and singing groups, saying he truly enjoyed the “freedom and time” to create and explore what he wanted. “I think it has definitely solidified my decision of wanting to go to design school,” he said. Having worked hours and hours on art projects in the Advanced 3D Portfolio course, Everett is confident that he will “survive” the eight-hour art classes of university.

“I almost have a self [imposed] duty to motivate other people to see that everything is art,” he said. He believes that for centuries, artists have created art so they can show people what the world is like when words fail. “It’s a window into what you’re thinking.”

In early April, he was torn between the Rhode Island School of Design and Parsons School of Design, both of which are top universities of art and design. Everett looks forward to being surrounded by people who share the same fire for art as he has.

“If people can appreciate more the art they see everyday, we would be able to ‘live’ a little more, rather than just ‘survive,’” he said. “I just hope to be someone who can inspire other people to live their truth through the creativity that they have and the creativity that I know everyone can possess.”



***“If people can appreciate more the art they see everyday, we would be able to ‘live’ a little more, rather than just ‘survive.’”***

Photo by EVERETT LIU '24.



***“Whoever you are, whatever passion you have, pursue that, but also read some books.”***

Photo by SOFIIA TIAPKINA '24.

## —Comparative Literature: Sofia Tiapkina—

Sofia beamed as she enthusiastically explained the essence of comparative literature, the major she will be studying at Yale University: “You take one or two [pieces of] literature, and compare them on linguistic, societal, cultural, gendered levels....”

Growing up in southeastern Ukraine, she learned “basically everything” in Russian. “I was very much aware that the reason I’m doing this is because my country was suffering under cultural oppression for centuries,” she said. “To me, it felt important to know and understand my place within a society where my two main languages interact and clash with each other.” A curious part of her also longed to learn more about the different cultures, languages, and people in the world through literature. “It just makes me really appreciate the diversity of humanity.”

At NMH, Sofia met students from diverse backgrounds that introduced her to new cultures. “It’s not necessarily one thing about NMH that made me interested in comparative literature,” she said. “It’s more like the environment and the experience as a whole.”

Sofia is the youngest writer to ever be published at the International Human Rights Festival. Sophomore year, she published the short story *The Voices of Ukraine*, an anthology of different Ukrainian writers and creators. It was her first foray into comparative literature: the book was based heavily in Ukraine but was written in English and intended for an audience from foreign cultures.

The parallels and distinctions between different cultures intrigue and inspire her. “Everything is so interconnected,” she said. “There’s so many similarities, even in the most unexpected places.”

Asserting that knowledge learned from humanities can be versatile and transferable, Sofia believes that people from all disciplines need to learn humanities to be an active part of society. “Whoever you are, whatever passion you have, pursue that, but also read some books,” she said. “There’s so many ways to experience humanities and that’s what makes it beautiful: to every person, it can bring something different.”

Attracted by Yale’s long tradition of multiculturalism and study-abroad programs, Sofia already committed to this top university in an early decision last year.

“Any final Advice?” I asked.

“Read books and be happy,” she said, smirking.



***[Rowing] instilled so much discipline and hard work in me that I find myself using it when I do my homework and when I'm in class."***

Photo by MARGAUX MOOS '24.

### —Division I Sports: Margaux Moos—

Rowing is a sport that came to Margaux rather late in life, but that hasn't stopped rowing from becoming a core part of her high school experience.

Currently in her sixth rowing season at NMH, Margaux recalls the starting point of her rowing journey. In the fall of 2021, she joined the NMH crew team as a nervous new sophomore. "I didn't know what to expect at first," she said. "It was definitely intimidating walking into that, but once I got my feet under me, everyone was welcoming." The practices at the boathouse after school, the workouts on land, and the races in water all taught her what it meant to be part of a rowing team.

"Rowing builds a strong community of strong, driven people," she says. "It taught me teamwork, communication, and camaraderie. I really liked the sport: it's hard but really rewarding."

During the summers after her sophomore and junior year, Margaux joined an intensive three-and-half-week rowing program in Alabama called Ready Set Row. Just like that, she went from living at home all year long to living away from home for the entire school year and for most of the summer. The sport itself is physically demanding enough, not to mention the pressure of having to work with unfamiliar rowers and coaches in a new environment. "I really pushed myself out of my comfort zone," she said.

The hard work paid off and positively influenced her in unforeseen ways. "It instilled so much discipline and hard work in me that I find myself using it when I do my homework and when I'm in class," she said. "I guess I'll use it for the rest of my life."

In her recruiting process, Margaux communicated with university coaches and visited campuses, hoping to find a team that she would be able to make great connections with. Eventually, she committed to Division I rowing at Columbia University.

As an editor for Lamplighter and a resident leader in Lower South Crossley, Margaux has numerous components in her college application beyond rowing. "Rowing makes me stand out in my application, but I am also proud that there are many other things I can offer to a school," she said.

"If you find something that you really enjoy doing and that you can see yourself doing in the future, don't give up on it, and reach out to people around you for support," said Margaux. "Just keep working on it."

### —Environmental Science: Kitty Zhang—

"I have taken mostly all NMH science courses other than physics," said Kitty.

Born in China and raised in Korea near the ocean and woods, Kitty has always been fascinated by nature. Her interest in environmental science became concrete through her years of active participation in climate action and sustainability initiatives at NMH. She is an Ecoleader, a leader of the Climate Justice Coalition, and a participant in climate summits and statehouse lobbying events. "If anyone is interested in going into the science field, it's not just the science part that matters, but also the side about humanity and the government," she said.

At the NMH Farm semester program, Kitty enjoyed learning about food systems and soil sites. "We learned how humans interact with the land, and how there can be a mutualistic relationship," she said. The class code was to dress like an onion and think like a root, reminding her to always come prepared with heavy layers for fieldwork, and flexibly move around obstacles to seek "nutrients" — knowledge.

When she was a member of the Task-Force for Sustainability, Kitty would go down to the farm and help pick berries. That was when she first heard that a few years ago, two NMH students created a ban on all plastic bottles on campus. The plan was approved at first, but later disrupted by COVID. "My reaction to this was: WOW," she said. "Students here have so many voices, and people want to hear our voices — the community cares. That's also why I love Ecoleaders, because our voices actually matter."

Sophomore year, Kitty attended a western Massachusetts climate summit led by Youth Climate Action Now (YCAN). She was utterly inspired and, along with a few other students, decided to take the initiative of hosting an Earth Day climate action week at NMH. They worked from October to April to get the plan approved by the deans and succeeded in winning this opportunity to get the entire community to focus their attention on environmental change annually during this special week.

Kitty knows that she is not alone and that people can hear her voice. She became especially interested in the policies of environmental science because it is all about making change. "I hope to delve into the policy part, look at the big world, and one day go back to my home in China and use my voice to help my home be a better place," she said.

Over the summer, Kitty always travels abroad. She went to Alaska and Hawaii to learn about the environmental impacts on indigenous populations and cultures. "Instead of reading, go outside if you have the opportunity, open your perspective to learn about the world around you and the people in different communities." Travelling has enriched her life and broadened her horizons. "Just go on exploring," she said.

Looking forward to a university with cool plants and a big nice farm, Kitty has attained her goal: getting accepted into Cornell.

"To anyone who is reading this, you can always find what you love and you will do great," she smiled. "And don't forget to love the Earth!"



***"It's not just the science part that matters, but also the side about humanity and the government."***

Photo by KITTY ZHANG '24.

# Sometimes It's Better To Say The Wrong Thing Than Nothing At All

By SOREN ANDERSON-FLYNN '25

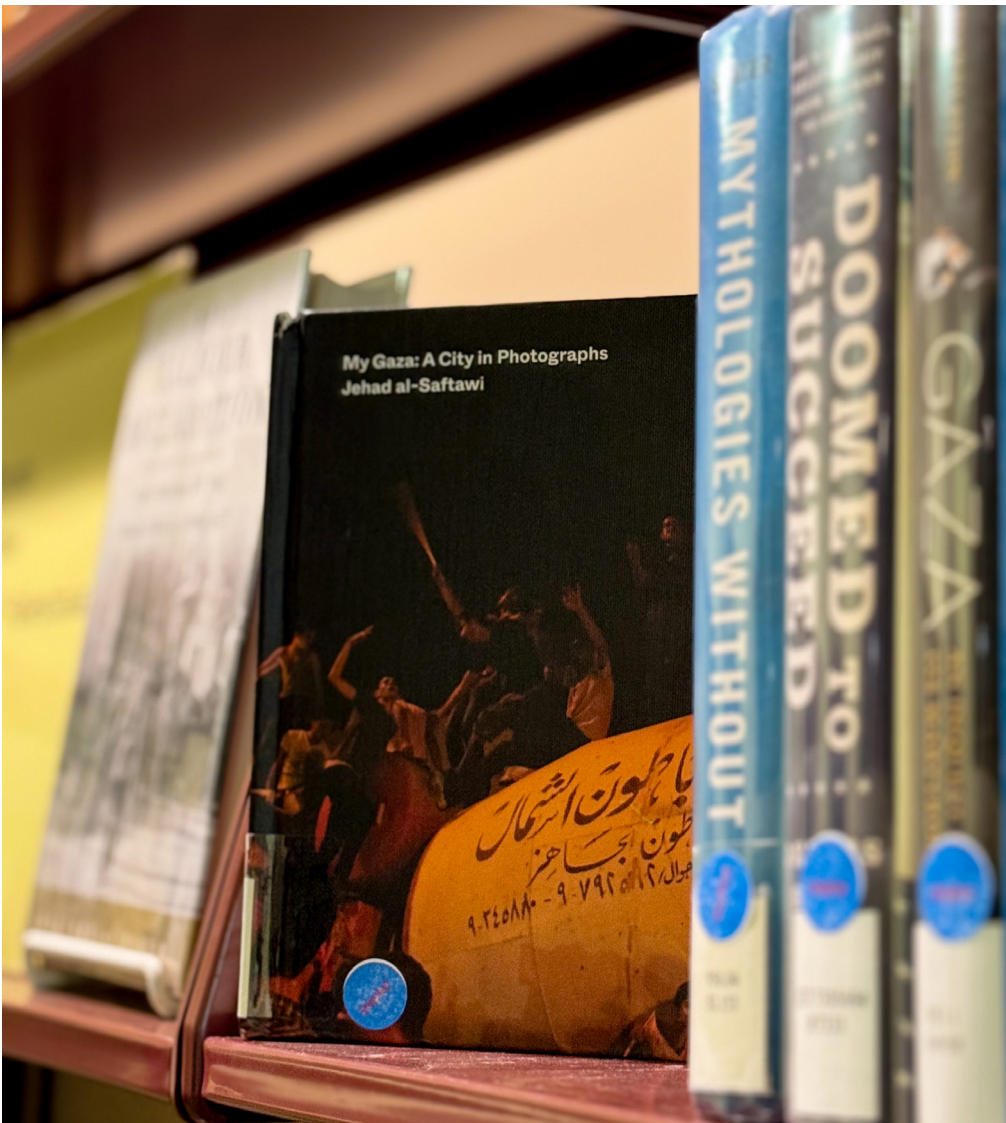


Photo by CHIARA PINCI '24.

*A note from the author: I started attempting to write a Lamplighter article about the conflict in early November. Over half a year, this piece has morphed from a forceful statement to an artistic op-ed to this journalistic effort. An article about a less controversial subject would not have gone through so many iterations. But if talking about the war is daunting, writing and publishing a piece about it, knowing that someone could read this in decades, is even scarier.*

NMH students are rarely afraid to share their opinions on anything. Even if those opinions are half-baked run-on sentences on a topic a kid knows next-to-nothing about, that student will often share their views with the confidence of a tenured professor. This over-confidence extends into discussions of politics and foreign affairs, where students will give you long-form dissertations on the War in Ukraine and US-China trade relations after little more than listening to a podcast. But there is an exception to this almost-universal rule: Israel-Palestine, a topic on which many students have remained eerily silent.

"I haven't seen a lot of response," said Selina '26, who's done reporting on the NMH community in

relation to Israel and Gaza. "I had to ask around to find people who would talk [about the war]."

I've noticed the same thing in my reporting. Although a few students were eager to talk, many — especially those who I don't know well — were wary to sit down.

This isn't because NMH students don't care about the conflict, far from it. "There's barely any apathy about the war in Gaza," said Lanie '25. When I interviewed her, Selina agreed. "With such a large community with such diverse backgrounds, particularly because we have people with affected religions and identities here, there are many people here who [the war] matters to."

Having established that this silence wasn't just because of apathy, I sat down with Martha Neubert, dean of equity and social justice, to try and parse what was causing it. Neubert is known for her usually unreserved statements and extroverted mannerisms. In her Advanced US History class, she can often be found joking with students, pointing every which way in a series of hand gestures, tossing a baseball while she talks, and engaging in any conversation ranging from debates about 90s music to a discussion of the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494.

However, on the day of our interview about Israel-Palestine, Neubert's tone and tenor couldn't have been more out of the norm. She entered the classroom and put her bag down softly before the interview began. When I asked my first question, she paused multiple times and exchanged glances with the ceiling. She spoke slowly and intentionally, qualifying every statement, until she finally discovered her point:

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***"[We] collectively are really damn nervous about saying the wrong thing."***

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"[We] collectively are really nervous about saying the wrong thing," she said.

This point was echoed by everyone I spoke to, and by implication, every single person who wouldn't speak to me. "I think people are nervous to talk about Gaza, even more than other [political] issues, because it's hard to know where to source your information," said Eva '27. "So when people only know some things, it's kind of scary talking because it's easy to get something wrong, and that can make people angry."

This fear isn't unfounded. In December, the presidents of Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology were brought in front of Congress to be asked questions about students who were protesting the war on their campuses. In the aftermath of their statements, which were seen by some as being too tepid in condemning anti-semitism, the president of UPenn resigned. Less than a month later (after a plagiarism scandal that emerged from her Congressional testimony), Harvard president Claudine Gay resigned. If this is happening to Ivy League presidents, it's not surprising that high school students are worried about "saying the wrong thing," too.

The anxiety around talking about the conflict has afflicted people of all viewpoints. James '24, one of NMH's more vocally conservative students, worries about the effect this fear has on students with opinions that may be in the minority. "At this school, there are a lot more students who are pro-Palestine than pro-Israel," James said, "and at NMH, people are very careful not to offend anybody. And so the math would support students— particularly students who are somewhat in favor of or sympathetic to Israel — staying silent."

This fear isn't just a vague notion of criticism or "cancellation." People with any and all opinions on the war face allegations that question their very humanity. Some are characterized as anti-semitic or labeled supporters of terrorism. Others are called genocidal, pro-apartheid, or Islamophobic. Protestors at universities across the country have faced arrest and some Americans have experienced trepidation about expressing their religious identi-

ties. Across the nation, jobs have been lost, careers have been ruined, and institutions have trembled at the prospect of taking the “wrong side.” Political debates about tax policy, and even many other humanitarian crises, don’t often conjure this level of emotion, vitriol, and fear.

On January 17, while some of the worst violence of the war was taking place, political activist and Smith College professor Loretta Ross came to speak at NMH. With more than 700 community members seated in front of her in the chapel, Ross covered topics ranging from throwing rocks at police officers to rape and gender discrimination. But the topic which she spoke the most passionately about was “calling-in the call-out culture.” To Ross, doing this entails meeting people with open-mindedness, refusing to slander their character, and approaching them with a willingness to grow, learn, and love, all of which are the antithesis of “cancel culture.” When Ross preached about this topic, she believed what she was saying so thoroughly that she couldn’t help but smile during her speech.

Echoing Ross’ message, James said, “We need an ingrained culture of tolerance and free speech on campus. If we had that, more people would be willing to speak out, learn, and grow around the Israel-Gaza conflict. It’s the responsibility of the student body to listen to each other without judgment and to assume good intentions.”

But before he finished his thought, James broke into a grin equally as wide as Ross’. “As Loretta Ross would say, we need to call in rather than call out. And if I agree with her on anything, there’s got to be something to it.”

Talking about the war in Gaza is of particular importance. As Neubert said, “If you’re too nervous to say anything, you’re not going to ask any questions. And if you can’t ask questions — if you’re not allowed to grow — then you can’t get educated.”

While our school community remains mostly silent, the war itself keeps evolving. When this article was first envisioned in late October, the world was still reeling from the violence of October 7th, the bombing of Gaza had recently commenced, and the American government stood steadfastly behind Israel. As of writing this, more than six months have passed since the initial terror attacks, tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians have been killed, and the Biden administration has started to waver in its support for Netanyahu, most recently by refusing to veto a ceasefire vote at the United Nations Security Council. Furthermore, American opinion has become increasingly divided on the war, with more and more young Americans feeling that Israel’s actions since October 7th have been unjust, while their older counterparts have largely remained supportive of the Israeli government, according to a poll by Pew Research Center.

A great number of uncertainties still lie ahead. Will an all-out famine envelop Gaza? Is the Israeli goal of destroying Hamas achievable? Is Hamas going to release the hostages, and would that change the dynamic of the war? Will Netanyahu change his policies or resign due to mounting international and domestic pressure? What does this conflict mean for the state of Israel in the long term? How many more people will die before it is resolved? How can we all keep our collective humanity in the face of such horror?

It would be fitting for me to end this piece by trying to answer at least one of these questions. However, the problem with us being collectively afraid to talk about Israel and Palestine isn’t that no one gets to hear my opinion. As I’ve learned over the past six months, very few people really care about any one individual’s opinion, especially if that opinion is coming from a loud-mouthed high schooler. But just because no one needs to hear my opinion, doesn’t mean we don’t need more dialogue.

This article is my attempt to deal with what many of us have been feeling: a collective weight on our shoulders, composed of fear and apprehension, around a subject that needs openness, education, and dialogue to remedy it. The weight is heavy. It cannot be lifted alone.

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## From Farm To Classroom, Helping Minds Grow

By GEORGE NING '26

Jake Morrow’s story unfolds like a patchwork quilt of passions that extend through two distinct realms. Jake is an English teacher whose roots delve deep into the soil of farming. Much like the turning of seasons, his life has transitioned from cultivating crops to nurturing minds. At NMH, he pursues the perfect balance between his two passions of farming and teaching. But how does he manage to traverse such a divergent path, shifting from being the farm program director to an English teacher?

As the farm director at NMH, Jake immersed himself in the timeless rhythm of rural life. He cultivated crops and tended to livestock almost every day for six years. The farm has always been an important part of school life, as it has a student-built greenhouse, a sugar house, and a cider house. Each term, there are thirty students who participate in farm work-job, a program overseen by Jake. The farm work-job is a long-standing tradition at NMH, where students gather vegetables for the dining hall and press apples for cider.

For Jake, farming was more than just a profession; it was a way of life. Before he came to NMH, he taught Latin at his former school. For ten years of his life, he taught during school and went to work on farms in the summer. “My teaching friends didn’t recognize me in my farming clothes. And my farming friends didn’t recognize me and my teaching cloth. I had these two worlds,” said Jake. When he came to NMH, he decided to combine his two worlds instead of going back and forth between them.

In his first four years at NMH, Jake was primarily focused on taking care of the farm and supervising the work-job program. In his fifth year, Jake initiated the farm semester, a pair of classes that create a connection between farming and academics. The

classes are interdisciplinary and delve into the scientific, cultural, and practical aspects of food production. Students engage with agriculture while also building their knowledge of literature, biology, and chemistry. Jake created a space where learning could be enriched, all while fostering a deeper appreciation and understanding of the land.

In his sixth year at NMH, an English teaching position became available, and Jake decided that returning to a traditional classroom would be a wise decision for his coming years. “If I spend all day just doing physical work, without at some point sitting down and reading something or writing something, or even just thinking... I’m not satisfied. I was at a stopping point with the farm program where I had accomplished what I wanted to accomplish in my initial phase there, and I thought I should sign up for another six years as an English teacher,” said Jake.

In addition, Jake expressed that, “The only way I had encountered students was through work-job. I wanted to see NMH through the lens of a classroom teacher, a dorm faculty member, an advisor or even as a coach. I hadn’t really played those roles at the school and I would like to get to know NMH in that way.”

Jake specifically chose to become an English teacher in place of a Latin teacher, as he wanted to explore teaching a new subject. To Jake, reading great literature and seeing students dive into the world of literature is what excites him the most. Teaching Latin is an experience that Jake already had for ten years at a previous school. “It feels like a season of my life which has passed but it’s not to say that it wouldn’t show up again,” said Jake. “It’s funny, because I have two boxes in my basement of all my Latin books, which I packed up at one point when



Photo by CHIARA PINCI '24.

we were moving. Latin is an important part of my identity and my character. But it does feel like it’s dormant right now.”

Jake is embracing change with immense courage, all while following his heart. While he cherished his time as a Latin teacher and as a farmer, Jake recognizes that for now, his passion lies in the exploration of literature, and he is grateful for the opportunity to ignite a love of English within his students. As he starts this new segment of his career, Jake is guided by his steadfast commitment to personal growth, professional fulfillment, and the pursuit of a life well-lived.

# Take Accountability: A look Into AP Distribution Discrepancy Across Campus

By IZZY CADENA '25

We're probably all familiar with the term APs as a reference to those pesky Absence Points (perhaps more familiar than we'd like), but the identical acronym, which refers to Accountability Points, seems to receive much less attention. Accountability Points are a tool of enforcement within dorms. Students can earn APs for various offenses: late check-in; closing their doors during study hall; showering during study hall; being out-of-rooms after in-rooms, etc. These are less consequential than Absence Points but can definitely become burdensome, as three accountability points equate to one in-dorm Friday restriction. But since every dorm is different, is it possible that how you experience this aspect of the NMH justice system is entirely based on the dorm in which you reside? And how do variations in rule enforcement affect the culture of a dorm? I decided to research four different dorms to investigate further.

The first dorm I looked into was LSC, where I happen to live. I spoke with Juliana Cruz Martinez, who is in her second year as the dorm head. Juliana is a Spanish teacher and advisor who also runs the yearbook and the Latinx affinity group. My conversation with Juliana commenced as she explained her initiative to diversify the LSC community. "When I first got here, it was known as the Sorority Dorm," she explained. She expressed her approval of LSC's increased diversity this year, applauding the wider array of cultures, races, and ethnicities in the dorm.

I asked Juliana to rate her dorm's level of strictness. 6.5 out of 10, she said. She said she'd like her dorm to be stricter but understands that "we are all human beings." "If a teenage brain has no consequences for breaking rules, it will just continue to break them in general." Juliana said she's always open to a conversation about rule enforcement, "not necessarily to change the rules, but to evaluate them." Juliana's belief in rules is put into practice, as she administers an estimated four or six APs per semester on average per student.

When I talked to LSC dorm members to gauge their thoughts on the matter, an anonymous student said, "There are definitely discrepancies between each dorm staff and the way they administer rules." Another told me that they "know dorm staff have our best interests in mind" but that the enforcement of rules can be "overbearing and sometimes hostile." However, there seems to be a wide range of opinions. Another individual I spoke to said that Juliana "runs a tight ship but treats us fairly."

"I'd love to go 80 in a 65 lane," Juliana said, "but it's not my job to agree with the law. I follow it because it reduces the number of traffic accidents overall." Juliana encourages a sense of trust in the AP system and its broader impact on students' habits. "We want to teach you to have routines that will set you up in life," she said.

The next dorm I looked into was North Wallace, where I met with Molly Rehnquist, a second-year dorm head. Molly is a college counselor who previously worked at USC. Upon arriving at North Wallace, she also encountered attempts to diversify the dorm population. She described an increase in athletes and theater participants, as the dorm previ-

ously had a reputation as an introverted dorm.

Molly seems to practice a different approach to dorm rule enforcement. She said that the dorm was stricter at the beginning of the year but is now probably ranked at a 3 on the 10 scale. She says that students "need to understand that the rules apply to them," but more importantly, "why we have the rules in the first place." Students must also "be able to advocate for themselves if they need a difference" in a particular situation. Molly provided valuable insight on her approach to facilitating a transition period for new dorm members: "If a student has never had a rule in their life, there's no point in throwing APs at them for months and hoping for the best...it's important to have conversations and work with students, so they'll actually buy in."

One student told me they "don't really get APs" and that dorm staff "is pretty understanding." Another student expanded on this, saying that dorm staff are "usually more interested in having a con-

versation with us." These sentiments seem to align with Molly's description of their relatively lenient accountability system in North Wallace.

Molly said she aims for a dorm culture in which residents and staff assume the best intentions and have trust in one another. "The only reason we hold students accountable is that we care," she said. "Not just to penalize them." She said she personally has given out five APs all year and that there has never been an in-dorm restriction. Molly believes her dorm has found a happy medium in order to keep kids safe. She wants kids "to feel at home, but not like they're constantly looking over their shoulder." Molly's chief concern is getting dorm members to buy into a sense of community. "If students don't buy in, we're outnumbered," she said. "Thirty against one is more than overwhelming."

Next on my list was LNC, the male counterpart of my dorm. William Chuch is in his fifth year as a dorm head. He's a teacher and graduate of the Air Force Academy who received a dorm head award during his first year at NMH. I asked Chuch about his opinion on dorm culture over this period; he described it as somewhat "fractured" when he first arrived. The dorm had been under stress during the previous year, so Chuch seized the opportunity for a reset. Chuch described his dorm as "a culture that we build, which reflects a bigger community." "By doing the little things in here, we become bet-

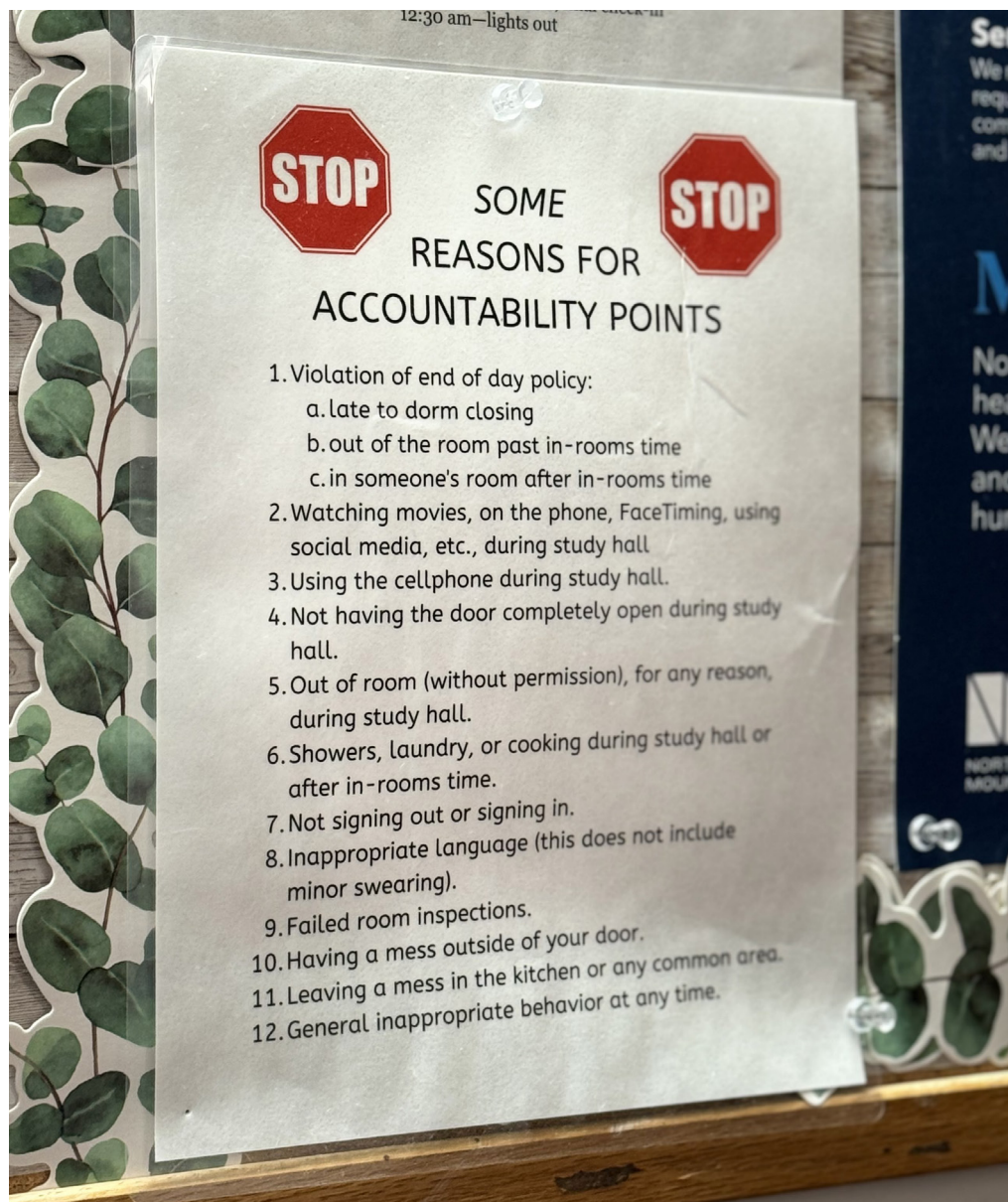


Photo by CHIARA PINCI '24.

ter young men of character outside of the dorm.” Since LNC is widely comprised of athletes, Chuch harnesses that competitiveness toward community and leadership.

Chuch emphasizes the importance of mutual respect in his approach. Similarly to Molly Rehnquist, he values student “buy-in” to the dorm community. He comments on how “everyone is “willing to buy in when it comes to a pizza party in the kitchen,” but he needs everyone “to show up with the same enthusiasm for our goals and expectations, and roles.” “Once students understand community standards, they can learn to advocate for themselves, and exceptions can be made,” he concludes.

The students I spoke to didn’t provide me with much more insight into LNC’s dorm culture, but agreed that APs are given out pretty infrequently. Chuch said he starts his years off quite strict, but as the year progresses, he increases lenience and leeway for dorm members. He explained that as students are “listening, following rules, and participating,” they are “earning respect, which allows for flexibility.” He believes this approach helps dorm members learn “self-accountability” and how “past actions lead to the future responses from people around you.” Chuch ranked his dorm at a 4 on the strictness scale and, on average, gives out one to two APs per student per semester.

I then covered the brand-new dorm, Norton. Dorm head Loubna Boumhait previously worked

in USC and was excited about the new position in a brand new campus residence. She described her dorm as home-like. “There will always be something to eat and someone to talk to, whether it’s an adult or a student.” She believes a sense of closeness arose organically among dorm members, which is why Norton is often described as feeling “welcoming” by visitors. Loubna admitted that her dorm started off strict and has remained pretty strict, placing it at about an 8 from her perspective. She informed me that she values “having a trustworthy dorm.” “We are honest with each other, even if we may have consequences.”

Regarding administering consequences, Loubna says she treats dorm members equally because “you can’t pick and choose,” and she instructs dorm staff to be consistent with this. “If a student is struggling, we have conversations.” I am always willing to give space so we can revisit a situation.” Although her administration of rules remains concrete, she emphasized compassion as a necessity in her approach. She told me that residents accumulate 3 APs on average per semester but admitted that some members have very high counts while others have close to none.

Norton residents had a few thoughts about dorm staff and rule enforcement. One told me that Loubna “is very strict, but also very fair,” which matched her self-description. Another more critical student said, “It feels like a freshman dorm here because very lit-

tle things get you an AP. As upperclassmen, I wish we had more freedom to be independent.”

Loubna remarked on how she is often thought of as a strict dorm head, but she believes she has really just taken on the “mother role.” Although she “enforces the rules,” she is also “caring and loving” to her dorm members. Loubna expressed how happy she is to give them rides, take them to eat food they miss from their home countries and take them to get their nails done. “Yes, we follow the rules, but we’re very caring, and I really treat them like they’re my kids.”

Spending many a study hall and sitting in the common rooms of each dorm was an enlightening experience. I was encapsulated by the worlds I entered, each composed of unique communities, ideologies, and talents. The dorm we live in can change the trajectory of our NMH experience. It was compelling to witness this firsthand. However, the wide array of accountability cultures raises many questions. It’s worth evaluating whether or not these discrepancies in strictness are problematic. In general, would dorms benefit from increased leniency or increased strictness? Can there be a standard in such a diverse array of environments? Perhaps it’s the diversity in dorm strictness that most significantly defines a student’s four years on campus. After all, the dorm is where we begin and end every single day.

## The Awakening World

By EMERY VITRANO '26

The morning dew sweetens the air  
as birds sing their song atop a hill  
where the sun shines  
brighter and brighter  
with each passing day.

In a field the buds bloom pastel colors  
and children play a game  
passing a ball back and forth,  
back and forth,  
back and forth.

With radiant smiles  
their laughter carries through the air,  
through the air,  
through the air,  
while blades of grass flow  
on the green green mountain.

Counting down  
down,  
down,  
till beach days begin  
jumping with joy  
under the frying sun.



Photo by MOHAVI THAKUR '24.

# The Legacy of D.L. Moody

By ISABEL HUNT '27



Photo by AUGGIE SWARTWOOD '24.

Northfield Mount Hermon School recently expanded Founder's Day, a long-standing tradition, into Founder's Week. This change has sparked debate about whether the school's founder, D.L. Moody, deserves the praise he receives. In 1879, Moody opened the Northfield Seminary for women. Shortly after that, he founded the Mount Hermon School for Boys. Moody did not receive much of an education himself, and, according to NMH archivist Peter Weis, he often felt "handicapped by his lack of education." His understanding of the importance of learning led him to establish educational institutions like NMH.

Founder's Week, as described by the NMH website, is an annual event held at Memorial Chapel. A faculty member gives a keynote speech that reflects on Moody's life and legacy. This event is also an opportunity for students to share speeches and perform musical pieces. The focus of the week is also to highlight the importance of service and leadership, values that the school's founder cherished, and how we continue to uphold them at NMH.

"D.L. Moody's character is intricate, reflecting his humble beginnings," says Weis. Moody had previously thrived as a shoe salesman in Boston and Chicago, which made him very resilient and diligent. These traits inspired him to ensure both schools focused on educating minority groups and the underprivileged. His philosophy allowed the school to be diverse and inclusive—commendable for his time.

According to Weis, Moody also had an "unwavering commitment to spreading the Gospel." Evangelical Bible study and Christian principles profoundly influenced his worldview. "He was very interested in reading the Bible, and rereading the Bible," Weis said.

"Moody's actions demonstrated genuine concern for others' well-being, transcending societal

barriers and reflecting deep humanity," said Weis. Moody's Christian ethos is ingrained and reflected in NMH's values of kindness, open-mindedness, and inclusivity, which all persist to this day. As NMH has evolved and now welcomes many students from various diverse backgrounds, its Christian heritage continues to have a positive influence. While originating from Christianity can cause limitations, the values that coincide with the Evangelical faith have allowed NMH to be a well-rounded institution that encourages students to explore their interests while developing intellect and empathy. The NMH community uses its former Christian beliefs to create a community that allows leaders to emerge who are committed to creating a fair and equitable world.

On the other hand, NMH's Christian legacy and its lingering religious undertones prevent the school from truly embracing secularism. Moody's Evangelism rooted the school in spiritual teachings, evident in certain traditions that persist today. Evangelism, the spread of the Christian gospel, continues to influence NMH, blurring the line between tradition and imposition on students. This is shown in mandatory chapel meetings and the school song, "Jerusalem."

"NMH is not secular because the school has roots in Christianity that are covered up by how diverse we are," said Ella Blecher '26. Despite their historical significance, the presence of these religious activities presents ethical concerns. These religious ties complicate the school's ability to address critical social issues, which often intersect with religious beliefs.

Reflecting on history is important in understanding the present and shaping the future. By examining the past, we can gain insights into the events, decisions, and individuals that influence life at NMH.

Founder's Week is particularly significant because it provides an opportunity to appreciate D.L. Moody and recognize his contributions, both positive and negative. Embracing the complexity of our history allows us to acknowledge and learn from our mistakes, which creates a culture of accountability and growth. Without Founder's Week, we would not be able to understand and reconcile the complicated history of NMH.



Photo by NMH ARCHIVES.



# What Do We Hear On The Hill?

By ANNA LAZORINA '26



Photo by HEARD ON THE HILL.

**First:** You carefully observe people. What stories might they carry? You see a girl walking who suddenly stops and turns her head to a nearby tree. She doesn't move. She stands still. She's immersed by this moment. What made her stop? Is there something that caught her attention? If so, what could it be?

"Millions of questions spin in your head as you're trying to find their purpose and value in mundane life," says Michelle Tang '26, a member of the NMH podcast, *Heard on The Hill*. This podcast was launched at the beginning of 2024 as a part of *Audio Journalism*, a co-curricular led by Ben James, the journalism teacher at NMH. "It's a great addition to other things people are doing at NMH in terms of sharing information," James says.

"The goal with [our first] project is to capture the quintessential sounds of NMH, something that brings you back to what makes this place home," explains Isabel Cadena '25, another member of *Heard on the Hill*.

**Second:** You finally select a person with a story. This person is going to be a character in your episode. The next question is, how is their story relevant to the theme of your episode? Did that girl stop for a moment to simply enjoy the beauty of the moment? Or did she hear a special sound? What could that sound mean to her? And so your new goal becomes to open this person up. But to do so, you first need to gain her trust.

James likes to imagine this interaction as peeling an onion. You start with the surface layers: What's her name? What does she do? You then move into deeper ideas that bring you closer to your goal of the interview: Does she usually walk in her free time? What made her stop that day? Layer by layer, you are unpeeling this person, just as you would an onion. And then it comes, the answer that connects to your upcoming episode.

"That was the first time I heard birds singing

since early fall, when I used to wake to their singing. This sound is my strongest association with NMH, because it brings back warm memories," student Liv(Siri) Wooten-Forman '26 reveals. You carefully listen to this person, scared to interrupt their sincere flow of thoughts. This stranger just became a friend to you. You are able to relate to them. You absorb their story. And, if needed, you are silent.

"Sometimes silence is the best way to get information," Yasmin Vossoughian '96, a television journalist currently serving as a national reporter on MSNBC, shared during her speech at NMH on March 27th.

**Third:** You follow your story and try to find a continuation of it. You start paying attention to every sound you hear, because this is the structural base of the podcast. Sounds are going to fill your episode and connect different ideas. In an episode like "The Sounds of NMH," this step is especially crucial. You start noticing things you've never heard before: a crunch of snow underfoot, a squirrel eating a nut, a bird hiding in the foliage of a tree. "I realized I never really paid attention to sounds around me," says Tang. This process, according to Tang, involves great attention to detail. You start spending every second of your life, looking for THE sound. You want it to be perfect. You try to capture high quality sounds by recording them over and over. Sofie Fleischmann '25, a member of *Audio Journalism*, had to record the sound of suddenly breaking on ice skates at least four times, in order to obtain all aspects of it.

**Fourth:** You start assembling everything you've collected in the multitrack editor, Adobe Audition. It's a magical tool that unites things that first appear to be disconnected. You cut off unnecessary parts, add layers of sounds, fill out the empty spaces and regulate levels.

"Editing is the most time consuming part, so you

need to make sure you know how to convey your message to the audience," Tang says.

Sometimes you realize that there are not enough sounds, so you go out and collect more. It is a constant cycle – you try and then you go back and try again. You put all of your emotions into it. You feel responsible for your listeners. You want them to experience the same feelings you do. After listening to the first episode of *Heard on the Hill*, Andrew Lipman, NMH's media technology specialist, said, "It is a great insight into NMH and probably the most authentic NMH content I have seen in a while." This enthusiastic reaction makes all of the effort and hard work worth it.

**Fifth:** You go to the podcast studio, where *Heard on the Hill* is being created. It is a place where students are able to work on their projects, both in groups and individually. The podcast studio is a place where anything is possible. You feel empowered and professional when you are there. You are immersed by the feeling of knowing that others will listen to what you create. You sit down on the chair, put on the headphones, move closer to the mic, and suddenly it just becomes you and the story. Nothing else exists.

Three, two, one... "Hello! And welcome to NMH's brand new podcast, *Heard on the Hill*, today we will..."

Listen to **HEARD ON THE HILL** at  
[www.nmhlamplighter.com](http://www.nmhlamplighter.com)

or

SCAN HERE THROUGH THE SPOTIFY APP



# The Upcoming “Most Used Athletics Facility”

By EMILY LIU '26

There is the bounce of a tennis ball, another bounce from a basketball, and people running on the track. Nearby, hockey skates shredding across the ice echo in the arena. But wait—it's the middle of winter, yet students can play all these sports simultaneously. You might have just looked at what our school will be in 2026, with the addition of a new fieldhouse and hockey arena.

The plan is to transform McCollum Arena into a fieldhouse and build an additional hockey rink. For reference, McCollum Arena was built in 1957 and is one of the oldest hockey arenas still in use today. If you've ever been down to McCollum to watch a hockey game, you might notice no walls on the sides. Instead, it's metal mesh on two sides of the arena. The compressor of McCollum - the machine that helps keep the arena cold - is over 60 years old. Eventually, it will not be able to function as well, mainly because of the increase in global temperatures.

“We're able to transform McCollum, which has served the community very, very well, into an entirely different type of facility,” said athletics director Rick Hendrickson. “That facility will be the most used athletic facility on campus...In [the new field house], you're going to be able to play tennis; you're going to be able to do lacrosse; you're going to be able to do indoor batting practice for baseball and softball. You're going to be able to play basketball. You're going to be able to run. If you have inclement weather somewhere else, you could do an indoor Ultimate Frisbee tournament.”

“One of our emphasis is gender equity. It will give

a big boost to our girls' program,” said Hendrickson. Lily Goldsmith, '24, captain of girls varsity hockey and lacrosse, recalled, “I remember, in freshman and sophomore year, we had practice during study hall sometimes. You'd have a team study hall and then practice from 8 to 9:30. Especially for me, I'm a day student, so driving home from 9:30 to 10 o'clock practice was kind of late, especially doing that every single day.” With the addition of the new field house, many junior varsity and third teams can practice in the designated sports block instead of running into the cocurricular times and study hall.

Once the field house has completed its fundraising, it will commence the concept design phase. “The beauty of a Fieldhouse is it's a big box. So we're not going to divide it off with walls or anything. Imagine the space without the hockey rink if you go down into McCollum. You just have four walls, and you have the beams that support them, and that's what you use. So we'll put walls up and insulate it. And [then] you can put a multi-playing surface on it... And again, we have to go through concept design, but we might have some type of running track on the outside, you know, a couple of lanes,” said Hendrickson.

Even with the addition of a new hockey arena and fieldhouse, the school still strives to minimize its impact on global warming. An electric Zamboni has already replaced the old propane-powered one in the hockey arena. “A fieldhouse doesn't have to be warm,” said Hendrickson. “[For the fieldhouse] in the winter, it can be 64 degrees. Because when you put 40 bodies in a fieldhouse at 64 degrees, the

temperature goes up if you're well-insulated. So, there are several different ways that you can calculate energy savings... We'll look at some of the other facets [too]. New lighting; LED lighting takes up far less energy and lasts forever... [once installed], they won't need to be replaced for another 20 years”.

These transformations result from the Board of Trustees' programming and strategic planning. Established by the Trustees in 2020, strategic planning looks into NMH's needs and aspirations in the upcoming years and beyond. The strategic framework of 2020 included three priorities: expect transformation, invest in people, and steward our resources. The new athletics facility provides an answer to all three of these priorities with goals of “delivering an exceptional academic experience,” “expanding access and opportunity,” and “maximizing campus resources.”

The new facilities' funding comes from the This Moment, This Place campaign, an ongoing fundraiser that benefits various aspects of campus life. “The fact of the matter is that the number of friends at the school is the one who makes each succeeding generation a better school. One of the things that our alumni recognize is that this is a great school, and we want to make it continue to be a great school,” said Hendrickson.

A tentative opening of the new hockey arena is in the fall of 2025. Once the new hockey rink is in use, McCollum can start its construction with the hope of (re)opening its doors in the fall of 2026.



Photo by NMH FLICKR.

# Hayden's Señor Campos Provides A Home Away From Home

By ESA BLUME '25

I never thought I would be in my dorm head's apartment baking Rolo-filled cupcakes with classical music playing in the background. Yet, there I was standing in Steven Campos' kitchen with a whisk in my hand having a conversation about dorm culture in Hayden. I had never had this kind of relationship with any dorm faculty in my three years of being at NMH. He had invited me and two other friends from Hayden to bake with him and his fiancé. Me and my friends had already been in his apartment before to have tea with him, so we were already familiar with the apartment. We spent that night laughing because we didn't have a lot of experience with baking. We were hoping for unburnt cupcakes.

Since the beginning of the year, Hayden has been going through small changes concerning its decoration choices. First, tall, green plants were placed around the common room. Later, a small fountain was placed next to the kitchen. Then, there was a speaker placed next to the fountain, playing classical music all day and night. The final change that everyone noticed when they walked in was the smell. Usually, when I'm walking into Hayden, I'm hit with the smell of sweaty sports gear. Now, I walk in to the smell of pine trees. This was all thanks to the new Hayden dorm head, Señor Steven Campos.

Campos was born in Puerto Rico and moved to the U.S. when he was 24 years old. He always knew that he wanted to be a teacher since kindergarten, so much, "to the point that when I was in first grade, the kindergarten teacher allowed me to go back to kindergarten to teach the kindergarteners the vowels," said Campos. During his lunchtime, he would finish his food as fast as possible so that he had enough time to teach the younger kids.

He spent six and a half years teaching at St.



Photo by YOONA JUNG '25.

George's School in Rhode Island before realizing that he wanted to be more integrated in the school community. Campos saw an opportunity to try new things at a different school, such as being a dorm head. He now teaches introductory level Spanish and advanced level Spanish at NMH.

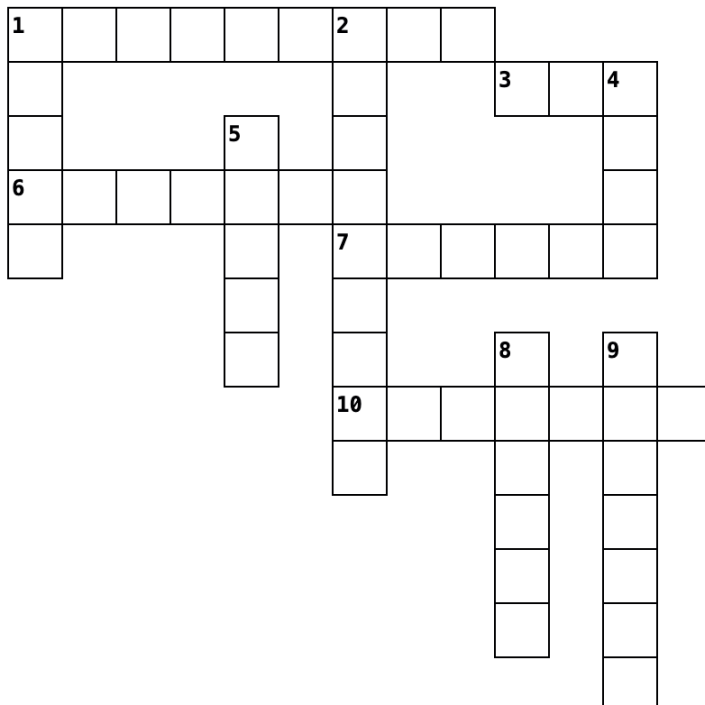
Even though he wasn't a dorm head at his previous school, residents still saw him as a dorm head figure. During Campos' time in dorms, he would invite residents to bake and have tea with him

and his partner. "Our living room almost became like a common room," he said. "A home away from home." Coming to NMH, Campos said that everything he had heard about Hayden Hall "were not the most positive things." He heard that it was "difficult" and "dirty," but he didn't care about that. With the help of the dorm parents and making small adjustments, Campos saw a lot of changes in the dorm. "I don't take ownership of those things," said Campos "What I like to say is that I contribute to that because when I see the residents having a good time and cooperating and taking the initiative of keeping that vibe, it's no longer my thing. Maybe I was the catalyst of the change, but you guys took over."

At St. George's, Campos was the only Latino teacher and one of the few Latinx/Hispanic people on the campus. This led to him co-founding the school's first Latinx affinity group alongside a senior who had come up with the idea. The group was called "Latinos Unidos," or Latinos United. At the affinity group meetings, they would cook food and share stories. "I'm proud to say that's something I contributed to," Campos said.

His favorite experience at NMH so far has been getting to know different students and creating more community in the dorm. He loves getting feedback about how Hayden has been "molting" and changing in the best way. He also loves the amount of diversity on the campus and how people are willing to contribute to the dorm life and culture. Campos is always willing to help others and wants to make other people's days better: "Even though NMH might not feel like your second home, you can still make the place a welcoming space for others... You never know who's having a bad day."

Every time I bring a friend into Hayden from another dorm, one of the first things they will say is "Wow, it smells so much better than I imagined," and that makes me proud of my dorm head and the dorm I live in.



## Summer Vacation

### Across

- Common swimming style which includes dolphin kicks
- Sunscreen unit
- Phineas and Ferb's big sister
- The top country destination with 72.4 million visitors in 2022
- Latitude line with zero degrees

### Down

- Ken's occupation in the Barbie Movie (2023)
- Light-producing flying beetles; only come out during summer
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hundred Days of Summer
- Yellow tropical fruit; its name derived from India
- Desert plants with prickly leaves
- Brown/white tropical fruit with three germination pores (aka. holes)

9. COCONUT  
8. CACTUS  
7. FRANGE  
5. MANGO  
4. FIVE  
3. SPF  
2. FIREFLIES  
1. BEACH

10. EQUATOR  
7. FRANGE  
6. CANDACE  
3. SPF  
1. BUTTERFLY

Answers:  
Across  
Down



# Who's Been Gaslighting NMH?

By MAGGIE PROVENCAL '25

Photo by BENJAMIN ROSENTHAL '27.

It was a snowy day in Craftsbury, Vermont. Some members of the NMH Nordic team were sitting around a table laughing at the idea of starting a school newspaper called *The Gaslighter*. The idea of creating another student-run newspaper was originally inspired by the gossip column in the popular show *Bridgerton*. While the idea of a gossip column was definitely against school rules, the team still was sold on creating a newspaper that would be competitive with the already established *Lamplighter*. Rachel Huynh '25, who was at the table, said, "I didn't think that it would actually be launched."

Against all odds, the first edition of a newspaper called *The Gaslighter* appeared at Northfield Mount Hermon on January 9th 2024. The edition, a single double-sided page written in an old-fashioned newspaper font, was scattered on every table in NMH's academic buildings, all while the author of the paper remained completely anonymous. As the community was filled with curiosity about the writers of *The Gaslighter*, Huynh said that everyone on the Nordic team denied taking part in the paper. So while the Nordic team originally dreamed up the idea of *The Gaslighter*, no one took responsibility for this new infamous school paper.

Days after *The Gaslighter's* introduction, students began to form opinions about the paper's addition to the NMH community. Sophie Cohen '25, another member of the Nordic team said, "The *Gaslighter* is a great newspaper because it highlights everything. It's a student-run newspaper and it's very consistent. I really love the idea of it."

Another student, Sofie Fleischmann '25, said "I think that it's really great to see NMH students express themselves freely in a way that isn't specifically promoted by the school." Students seemed to enjoy the mystery surrounding who the creator of *The Gaslighter* truly was.

*The Gaslighter's* creator remained anonymous for about 3 weeks, until word got out that the editor-in-chief was James Kolak '24. As Kolak reflects on his inspiration for this paper, he said "I guess it really started back in my freshman year." He wanted to create another paper besides the *Lamplighter* with more, as he said so himself, "punctuality."

While Kolak has been thinking about starting an alternative school newspaper for multiple years, he decided to take advantage of his last year at NMH to pursue his vision. "Monday night, before the first Tuesday of the

school year, I threw it all together," he said.

He originally intended to stay anonymous, as it would allow him and the other writers for his paper to be able to have the freedom to speak their minds without fear of disciplinary action.

"I wanted to make it about the words that were actually printed, not the people who [wrote] them," Kolak said. This idea of freedom for the writer allowed, as Gillian Fletcher '24 pointed out, the ability to write "more of an opinion piece" compared to the *Lamplighter*.

After his identity was revealed, the deans required *The Gaslighter* to become an official school club. Although the writer's freedom was compromised, Kolak said "we ended up going about just doing it anyway, because I figured a paper that toes the school line is better than no paper at all." Kolak also changed the paper's name. Huynh, who originally created the name *The Gaslighter* during a Nordic ski team conversation, reflects on brainstorming in the dining hall with the other team members. "I made a list of like 20 plus new names. And *The Arrow* was the one name that everyone at our table agreed should not be the name. It's just bland. It's awful. It does not reflect the original patina pettiness of the name. There were so many better names on the list," she said.

Though Huynh feels this way, she said that, "James took the list to Mr. Weiss, and none of the names on my list were chosen. I worked on them with him and around five other people on the Nordic team, and he ended up choosing *The Arrow* without talking to me." The paper went through a lot of changes and, because it became a club, Peter Weiss, the school's archivist, took the responsibility of becoming its faculty advisor. His role as the advisor is to ensure that each printed issue is up to journalistic standards.

Mr. Weiss, a graduate of the class of 1978, knows a thing or two about the history of NMH's student newspapers. Now that there are two NMH newspapers, *The Arrow* and the *Lamplighter*, the NMH newspaper scene mirrors the school's past rivalry with *The Hermonite* and *The Bridge*. *The Bridge* was NMH's original school newspaper, and *The Hermonite* was later published in 2010. These two newspapers thrived on their own, yet in the fall of 2021 they merged into what is now known as the *Lamplighter*.

"I'm really interested in having a record of this instant in our history preserved," said Weiss. "The newspaper

doesn't always have everything, obviously, but our best record of what was going on at Northfield and Mount Hermon 100 years ago, is in the Northfield star and in the *Hermonite*, and the *Hermonite* used to serve both campuses."

Like those past two papers, *The Arrow* and the *Lamplighter* are vastly different. The most prominent distinctions between them are: *The Arrow* is less rigid than the *Lamplighter*, since its writers do not meet in a formal setting; a new issue of *The Arrow* is published every Thursday while the *Lamplighter* gets a new issue out every month; and *The Arrow's* publications are more frequent, shorter, and have fewer interviewee perspectives than the *Lamplighter*. Weiss said "I hope that *The Arrow*, in its completely different format from the *Lamplighter*, can make the *Lamplighter* better." With the combination of both of these papers on campus, many faculty members and students hope that they will help each other become both more punctual.

Despite the difficult journey, *The Arrow* has had with deans, many NMH students thought that this paper was a necessary source to stay updated on NMH's current news.

"It's like the new version of the *Hermonite* and I really, really love that. I think quite a few people on campus would agree with that, including some staff members. It's just a really collaborative, inclusive community of writers coming together to make something," said Sophie Cohen '25.

"I think that it's really great to see NMH students express themselves," Fleischmann said. "Kolak brought it to life, and it's taken off since then. It's good to see student-driven change on this campus."

In addition, Lydia Foote, an avid reader of *The Arrow*, also has positive opinions on this paper. "I think it's great to get some new flavor in the mix. I like the *Lamplighter*. But adding a different newspaper is good, too. It's all student-run, [...] but I think that's great for stirring some student creativity."

Despite the many ups and downs *The Arrow* has experienced, students and faculty members seem excited about its future. As it continues to publish campus news on a weekly basis, it may even begin to encourage the *Lamplighter* to step up their game.

# How Mental Health Counseling Promotes Wellness

By SARAH PARK '27

A student waits anxiously in the quiet health center, where only distant voices and occasional chair squeaks break the silence. Fidgeting with their backpack strap, their eyes remain fixed on the door. Each creak of the hallway door makes them tense up, their mind racing with thoughts of what they might say. With each passing moment, the tension in the air grows heavier.

In the midst of the bustling halls and vibrant classrooms of our school lies a silent struggle that affects a significant portion of our student body. Mental health challenges, ranging from anxiety to depression, are prevalent among high school students, with approximately 40-45% of the student body seeking support from our school counselors each year. As students navigate the challenges of academic pressure, relationship dynamics, and personal growth, the support and guidance of mental health professionals play a pivotal role. I had the opportunity to sit down with Sherri Brown, one of our school counselors, to delve into the prevalence of mental health issues among our student body and the strategies employed to address these challenges.

Academic pressures, such as high expectations for grades and college admissions, for example, can weigh heavily on students. Relationship dynamics, both within peer groups and with family members, can also contribute to emotional strain. Additionally, the process of personal growth and self-discovery during these formative years can lead to feelings of confusion, isolation, and uncertainty.

Despite the prevalence of these issues, there is often a reluctance among students to seek help due to the stigma surrounding mental health. Brown emphasized the importance of destigmatizing mental health and creating an open environment for students to discuss their strategies.

"Our goal is to create less obstacles to get to us," she said. "There are no rules with how to engage with counseling."

By fostering a community where conversations about mental health are normalized and encouraged, we can help students feel more comfortable seeking support and ultimately lead healthier, more fulfilling lives.

"To destigmatize mental health, we need to create a culture where students feel comfortable seeking help and talking about their emotions," Brown said.

The counseling department employs various strategies to stay attuned to the needs of the student body. They provide weekly counseling sessions, ensuring that students have a confidential space to express their feelings. Additionally, workshops are conducted to equip students with coping skills, emotional regulation techniques, and mindfulness practices. Brown highlighted the importance of taking care of the whole self, including having good sleep habits and minding your body's needs, to handle stress effectively.

"By teaching students how to take care of their mental health, we empower them to navigate challenges with resilience and confidence," Brown explained.

Despite their efforts, counselors face challenges in providing effective support. Busy schedules, both for students and counselors, can make it challenging to find time for sessions. Moreover, students

may not prioritize their mental health, viewing it as less important than their academic commitments. The unique environment of boarding schools, where students feel like they are constantly under scrutiny, adds another layer of complexity.

"Counseling is just as important as academics," Brown emphasized. "We need to help students understand that taking care of their mental health is a priority."

Despite these challenges, counseling services have had a profound impact on students' lives. Brown shared a success story with me where a student, who was going through an emotional crisis, was able to receive flexible support from teachers and counselors. This support included extra time on assignments and deadline extensions, demonstrating the collaborative effort between counselors and teachers to support students' mental health and academic success.

Brown explained mental health struggles using the analogy of seasons, comparing difficult times to a 'season of difficulty.' She reassured students that these challenging periods are temporary and encouraged them to seek support. Reminding them

that there is no right or wrong way to engage with counseling, she is aiming to reduce the obstacles that students perceive in accessing mental health services.

The role of school counselors in supporting students' mental health cannot be overstated. By providing a safe and supportive environment, offering practical strategies for coping with stress, and advocating for the destigmatization of mental health, counselors play a crucial role in the well-being and academic success of our student body. It is essential for students to know that help is available and that seeking support is a sign of strength, not weakness.

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***"You're not alone in this," Brown assured. "This season won't last forever"***

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Illustration by FIONA CUTCHINS '25.

# Loving the Connecticut River

By LEAH SONG '27



Connecticut River Boating (1889). Photo by NMH ARCHIVES.

20 minutes away from the core campus, students dragged their sore legs through the woods and up the bumpy hills. Their legs were trembling as if about to lose balance once they reached their destination, but the long walk was worth it once they saw the beautiful Connecticut River. Every one of these students stopped to take everything in.

The Connecticut River Valley is a unique geological zone with majestic features: the awe-inspiring scenery of the river, the organized boats in different sections of the boathouse where crew members stay, and the cotton candy clouds floating on a sky-blue canvas.

"The river has been here forever. It would have formed geologically, about 250 million years ago or so," said Pete Sniffen, the sustainability coordinator at NMH.

Clare Knowlton, a science teacher and the head coach of the girls' rowing team, agreed with Sniffen, adding that "Geology takes millions of years to shift and change. So the school would have been built around the river."

Knowlton expressed her appreciation for having access to a river right on campus. "As a rowing coach, it's a privilege to get to practice right on campus without needing to drive a long way to the water. It allows us to connect with nature and work on our skills easily."

In addition to appreciating and admiring the river, Knowlton also has the opportunity to observe the river's ecosystems every day.

Previous generations of NMH students have used the river for rowing practice, leisure, and ice skating. Jessica Zhang '25 said that there was even a rumor that circulated in the admissions office about how the river "used to freeze over completely, and the boys of Mount Hermon would drag stone, wood, or other materials across it." However, according to Mr. Weis, that rumor is false. "Mount Hermon Boys never dragged anything over the ice, and no one ever trusts ice in that way in this climate," he said.

Apart from NMH students, the local indigenous people, the Nipmuc, used the river for transportation before colonization. The Nipmuc "would have been using it for some level of agriculture, because when the rivers flood they deposit nutrient-rich sediment on the banks and the water recedes," Sniffen said.

"It's an important river, which involves a lot of history. It is cultural to indigenous populations and has a long legacy of violent colonization," he continued. "This river has some real problems that industrial America is responsible for. And we have a role to play as a wealthy institution that controls a lot of land in this region."

It is Margaux Moos '24's seventh season on the team, and she has been rowing since 10th grade. Moos was born in the city of Toronto, Canada. The river was her introduction to environmental appreciation. At home, it was hard for her to access Lake Ontario. She spends a lot of time by the Connecticut River in the fall when there are vibrant, orange

leaves on the trees, and in the spring when there are bright green ones. She thinks the most outstanding trait of the river is how peaceful it is. For her, a big part of rowing is going down to the river and enjoying its little world after a busy school day. The Connecticut River is more accessible than natural bodies of water for her at home in Toronto has made her notice and appreciate the smallest things she could find in nature.

"It's so beautiful, especially in the spring," she said. For Moos, it is an amazing experience to have a river both so close to campus and so secluded, because there she can escape from the chaos of school to take in the beautiful scenery.

Likewise, Sniffen is not only grateful for the river itself but is also pleased that as a teacher he can take his classes down to visit when his students need a break to be outside.

Maggie Provençal is another crew member of the girls' rowing team. "I've always appreciated nature," she said. "I've always been around nature, and lived close to NMH my whole life surrounded by the rivers." But she was still astounded by how beautiful the Connecticut River was when she came to NMH. For Provençal, rowing makes her embrace the time she spends on the river. "NMH is fortunate to be able to have a river that's on campus. For biology or other science classes, students can go down to the river, but it's also convenient for rowers," she said. "It is so beautiful, no matter where you look."

# Blowing Out Burnout

By ROSE WU '25



Photo by RICHARD SELL.

Graduating after four years ensures that the students of Northfield Mount Hermon School (NMH) never know the repetitive ennui of teaching the same classes for years, and even decades. When the time piles up, teachers often begin to experience burnout. NMH, in addition to numerous other institutions, have addressed and are continuing to work on resolving this issue. However, while faculty are educated and informed on student burnout, few students are acquainted with the equally challenging problem of faculty burnout. Despite this lack of awareness, students are familiar with seeing faculty go on or come back from sabbatical leaves – one way to ease teacher burnout while also reinvigorating their professional and personal passions.

Sabbatical, as defined in the NMH sabbatical package, is a leave program that offers “faculty the opportunity to acquire new or further skills to advance their professional development and effectiveness.” Though mainly focused on professional development, schools also offer sabbaticals as a way for teachers to recharge. Pete Masteller, a faculty member at NMH for over a decade, said that “teacher burnout is a problem,” especially with teachers who have been teaching the same class for years. Repetitively instructing material causes classes to become tedious and even stressful for teachers. To combat this issue, NMH offers teachers who have been working for over nine years a chance to apply for a sabbatical, which encourages them to enhance their professional interests while also taking time for themselves. Bea Garcia, a dean at NMH in charge of the sabbatical program, says often faculty “do a lot of good projects, but also take a lot of rest” on their sabbaticals.

Richard Sell, an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and English teacher at NMH, affirms that his sabbatical helped him rejuvenate.

“It was an amazing experience that I think back to frequently when I feel stressed or worried about the little daily things.” Sell went to Australia to study creative nonfiction and travel writing, as well as for the personal purpose of tracing his grandfather’s life during the battle between two ships, the Australian Sydney and the German Kormoran. Additionally, he said that learning about his grandfather’s survival through World War II filled him with gratitude about life, which he says “made me a little less worried” about everyday concerns.

Another teacher at NMH, Tabatha Collins, said her sabbatical moved at a pace that was enjoyable and restful. Her sabbatical was aimed at “refreshing and preparing herself to teach Advanced Phys-

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***“Sabbaticals give teachers a chance to discover what it is that [they] love, and what [they] are interested in.”***

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ics and Calculus.” She said she really enjoyed not having to “wake up to an alarm” and that she liked having time to “read books on Quantum Physics, Relativity and Neutrinos.”

A third teacher at NMH, Chris Edler, went on her sabbatical last spring. “Getting time to step away... is terrific,” she said. She focused on learning “more about the resistance of enslaved people [and] enslaved women” while traveling to places

like Charleston, South Carolina; Atlanta, Georgia; Washington D.C.; New Orleans; and Montgomery, Alabama. She described her sabbatical as “relaxing and rejuvenating,” and added that she “enjoyed being able to travel and visit new places and learn.”

In addition to reducing stress, sabbaticals also allow teachers to pursue their personal interests. As Masteller says, “Sabbaticals give teachers a chance to discover what it is that [they] love, and what [they] are interested in.” The repetitiveness of teaching the same classes may be renewed and reinvigorated by an adventurous expedition. Teachers come back from sabbatical with various insights into the subjects they teach. For instance, Sell is teaching one of the books he read while on sabbatical. He is also using lessons and prompts from a creative non-fiction workshop he attended while he was away. Additionally, Tabatha Collins attended a four-day Quarknet Teacher Workshop that aimed to introduce particle physics to high school physics classes. She also took NMH math teacher Mark Yates’ Advanced Calculus class, where afterwards she said that she learned “so much by being a student at NMH again, and by having homework.” Drawing from this experience, she made various improvements to how she designs her classes and assigns homework.

Sabbaticals are only one way in which teacher burnout can be addressed, as there are many other small scale resolutions that can reignite a teacher’s passion day to day. Prioritizing self care, taking time to oneself, and carving out space for adults to pursue personal interests on and off campus must be emphasized and supported by the broader NMH community. With a greater knowledge of how repetitive a class could become, students and faculty must work together to help further the conversation around teacher burnout.



# Lamplighter

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