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## Bingham Auditorium's Controversial Renovation



Photo Courtesy of OpenAI

**STEVEN ZHANG**  
*Staff Writer*

In a stunning display of innovation, Taft's administration has announced the latest phase of its ongoing modernization project: the complete removal of Bingham Auditorium's wooden seats in favor of — what else? — a sleek array of plush, grey, hypnotically modern couches. The announcement came out of the blue on Wednesday morning as students flocked to assembly at 9:20 and were shocked by the massive renovation. This latest development has instigated a sense of awe, confusion, and a deep existential dread from the student body.

"We saw how much Tafties loved the new grey couches near Woodward Theatre and outside of the Potter Gallery," said an anonymous administrator while adjusting their vest. "So naturally, we thought, why stop there? Who needs the uncomfortable old wooden furniture when you can be engulfed in a sea of upholstery for times when you

want to relax in the middle of Taft's main thoroughfare?"

The project, which reportedly reached seven figures in costs (around the expense for two of the new oversized boulders sitting on Jig patio) was the latest installment by Voith & Mactavish Architects, a leading architectural firm ranking at the top of the most tongue-twisting company names to pronounce. Gone are the classic wooden seats, rich with the history and legacy of bored students. In their place stands an extensive array of plush grey couches, each aimed to maximize ergonomic awkwardness and designed to look as out of place as possible.

This transition has not been without controversy. "Bingham used to have character," lamented on senior, slouching dramatically across a couch armrest. "Now it looks like a high-end dentist's waiting room."

The administration has assured students that the couches are a "long-term investment in student wellness."

However, rumors are already swirling that a second phase of renovations will soon replace the wooden facades of Bingham with glass panels and LED mood lighting. Some even speculate that a state-of-the-art reclining feature may be installed, ensuring that your Bingham buddies will be comfortable when they invariably drift off to sleep during Morning Meetings.

At press time, sources reported that there had already been numerous stains on the new couches caused by rogue cans of Celsius and iced coffee from the Jig. Additionally, the couches have already claimed their first victim, a sophomore who became so deeply lodged in the cushions that they were unable to escape before the start of their next class. Emergency services have been contacted and are rushing to extract them. However, conduct grades have already been assigned, and Ms. Leal and OP will not be lending a sympathetic ear.



# To The Maldives!

CHELSEA SOETEMO  
Staff Writer

Imagine waking up for school every morning in your overwater bungalow on an island paradise. You look out the window to find yourself surrounded by a sparkling turquoise lagoon under a brilliant blue sky. The tropical air energizes you as you make your way to your first class. This will be a reality for all Taft students from the 2025-2026 academic year onward.

After over a century of Taft’s residence in Watertown, it has been decided that Taft needs a change of scenery and will be moving its campus to the Republic of Maldives. Although Watertown, Connecticut, has been a comfortable home, the school has come to the realization that there are places outside of this small town that may better fit our needs as a community. This dramatic decision has been kept secret for years but has ultimately been finalized.

For confused students, the school has disclosed its rationale behind choosing the Maldives. Located near the equator, the Maldives are wonderfully warm and sunny year-round, with temperatures consistently around 77-90 degrees Fahrenheit (25-32 degrees Celsius). Members of the Taft community will no longer have to worry about icy puddles and wearing layers. More importantly, sunshine and warm weather

have been scientifically proven to make people happier and healthier because of vitamin D and serotonin. As concerns for teenagers’ mental health grow, placing Tafties in a joyful environment is paramount.

Moving to a tropical country also presents exciting opportunities for several sports teams. As our future campus will be surrounded by water, our crew team will no longer have to travel for hours to practice. This is also good news for swimmers, who will get to swim anytime they want. Lamenting Taft’s lack of a swimming pool will be a thing of the past.

Like any other major decision, moving Taft’s campus across the globe has sparked controversy. Some are concerned about the historical significance of the Watertown campus. It was once an old hotel that Mr. Taft purchased for his budding boarding school in 1893. Since then, Taft’s campus has grown in size, with HDT Hall built in 1912, Mac House and Congdon built in 1926, and, much later, the Wu Building in 1997. Many are troubled by the idea of leaving all of this behind.

Luckily, another boarding school will be taking care of our current campus. Upon hearing about our big move, The Hotchkiss School eagerly grabbed the opportunity and will occupy our campus once we depart. Although Hotchkiss has



always denied the superiority of Taft’s campus, they have finally given in. But as members of the Taft community, we reserve the right to visit anytime we want.

Another important point brought up was our beautiful tradition of carving the names of graduating students onto the dining hall walls and brick path. To bring the spirit of this ritual with us to the Maldives, we will instead be carving their names onto rubber trees in a nearby forest.

Photo Courtesy of The Times

## Taft Institutes Sunday Classes

VERONICA ANTOV  
Staff Writer

Goodbye, senior skips and assembly passes! Hello, second-semester exams! But what you haven’t heard yet is that these changes are part of a larger, more elaborate protocol that’s been simmering in every office in Main Hall. Beginning next school year, we’ll also be obligated to attend class on Sundays.

Prepare to become more productive, diligent, and fastidious! You will be setting up camp in the MAC every other night or otherwise drowning in the teeming towers of hand-outs and print-outs on your dorm desk. Who needs concealer anyway? Three hours of sleep and a venti Starbucks are your retinol. There’s really nothing more rejuvenating than an all-nighter.

To maintain the equilibrium of your weekly schedule, every class will meet on Sunday. Your teachers will be just as elated as you are to be in their classrooms for the billionth day in a row (because there will be no distinctions between weeks), so expect much geniality and lenience. Sunday assemblies will be reserved for the fielding of all of our feedback, à la Mr. LaCasse’s “You Can All Leave When You Share One Positive Thing and One Negative Thing.” And every remark will be rapturous, of course, because what will there be to complain about?

In addition, all students will be made to renounce their phones for the entirety of every Sunday in order to gain the full experience of the intensive marathon of classes. Dorm parents will collect them on Saturday evenings. There will be no raffles to incentivize us this time because the spirit of self-improvement will already be rampant. This might actually be recompense for the phone police who now have to deal with us seven full days a week because at least they’ll be on the prowl for seven hours fewer. I also tried to inform you all of what brought about these changes, but the administrators refused to comment. I am perplexed because, as you can imagine, I hardly accosted them. I was bursting with praise.



Photo Courtesy of OpenAI

# Taft Papyrus

The official student newspaper of the Taft School, est. 1893

CXXVIII

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The Papyrus is run by students at the Taft School in Watertown, Connecticut.

Founded in 1893 and issued periodically throughout the school year, The Papyrus is devoted to the ideas and interests of the students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of the Taft School. Since 2020, our newspaper has published content online (taftpapyrus.org).



# Our Favorite Taft Students

ELLY OUELLETTE,  
ALEX WERNER, & AL-  
LISON PALMER  
*Staff Writers & A&L  
Editor*

**Elliott Chan**

Starting with a bang, you’re missing out if you haven’t heard about Elliot Chan. This freshman may look like he’s quietly minding his own business down Wu train, but once you uncover his secret passions, you’ll be wondering how he hasn’t become a Taft legend. Not to mention, this silent warrior has a heart of gold once you get to know him. Elliott’s an expert forager—yes, you heard that right. While most students are scrolling through their phones or heading to practice, Elliott can be found searching for wild herbs, mushrooms, and other natural wonders right on campus. But here’s where it gets even crazier—he’s also a pro with a bow and arrow. As a competitive archer, being at Taft gets tricky in the off-season. To suppress his urges to arch, Elliott practices in the privacy of his dorm room (where rumor has it, his walls are lined with hand-foraged flowers and greenery). Elliott once told me that in his Taft interview, he passionately expressed his urgent desire to start a Taft Archery club: “Let’s Arch!” I’m not sure where in this process he is, but he told me to look out for an upcoming announcement.

**Audrey Kinsella**

You might have heard of her freshman year for her deeply personal photography series: *Squirrels*, which took an in-depth look at comparing the similar facial features of Taft students and the visages of the squirrels. Although this remarkable feat was super impressive to much of the student body, few know about her other, more secretive hobby. Audrey runs one of the most successful underground businesses in the whole school; she rakes in more dough than any fundraisers, dress-down days, or feeds combined by tapping into Taft’s most lucrative market - caffeine addicts. By importing only the finest beans from around the world, in conjunction with state-of-the-art coffee bar technology, Audrey has a monopoly over espresso consumption at Taft. The coffee shop, colloquially known as “The Basement Beans” is open seven days a week from 7:30 to 8:00 a.m. before classes. I’ve only had the opportunity to get my hands on that delectable bean juice once because rumor has it that the location changes so frequently, that the patrons are on an invite-only basis. Even with this exclusive group of customers, Audrey still manages to sell out weekly, and this puts her up there as the Taftie with the most interesting out-of-school hobby. Although she may be a basement lurker, “The Basement Beans” is a must-go for that divine caffeine broth and captivating conversation with Audrey if you ever get the chance. From everyone on the Pap, we can’t wait to see what you do in your next two years here!

**Olivia Young**

I have never once been more intrigued than when I saw sophomore Olivia Young with her nose in the dirt on the KJM field, holding a twig between her teeth, banging it on the ground while simultaneously humming the strangest jolly tune I have ever heard. I went over to ask her what she was doing, but she was so extremely locked in that she didn’t hear my approach until fairly late. When she did hear me, though, oh dear, I have never seen someone look so terrified. She told me to “shhhh” and back away slowly. That is when I saw the worms. Dozens of them at her feet, coming out of small holes she had been poking with the twig in her mouth. She proceeded to stand up and sit with me on one of the bleachers, where she promptly explained to me what she was doing. She boasted that she was preparing for a worm charming competition in the UK. If you don’t know, competitive worm charming is exactly how it sounds; people compete to see how many worms they can lure out of the ground. I have to tell you guys that, Olivia is insanely talented, with an unmatched level of commitment. I mean, wow, I am still impressed weeks later. No one is more deserving of my student spotlight than her. She even suggested that the whole school should take up this special hobby. Maybe we could even incorporate it into a Super Sunday station? Ms. Shanley, what do you think?

# Local Advertisements!

TATE CELEBI  
*Head Writer*



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# Dear Horace...

ALEXIE BLAKE  
Features Editor

Dear Horace,  
Is it true we are entering the Hunger Games?

Dear frantic tribute,  
Unfortunately, the rumors are true. Apparently we have been slacking off too much this winter, and the administration wants to bring back Taft's competitiveness. My advice? Raid the package room to try and gather as many supplies as possible. May the odds ever be in your favor.

Dear Horace,  
I accidentally called my teacher "Mom" - can I change my name and start over?

Dear homesick, horror-struck child,  
It seems to me you'll have to give you teacher adoption papers. But maybe your 'B' will turn into an 'A' in their class?

Dear Horace,  
Can we start renting out our dorm rooms on Airbnb when we go home for break?

Dear up-and-coming entrepreneur,  
I'm impressed by your ability to find profits in such unique areas. It might take a deep clean (or 500) to make your dorm marketable, but that's manageable. Just make sure you mention the bathrooms that don't have hot water, the fridges that leak, and the Wifi that cuts out every five minutes.

Dear Horace,  
What does Lanty mean?

Dear innocent Lower-Mid,  
It's every Senior's heaven and worst nightmare combined. Unfortunately, I'm bound to secrecy. What happens at Lanty stays at Lanty.

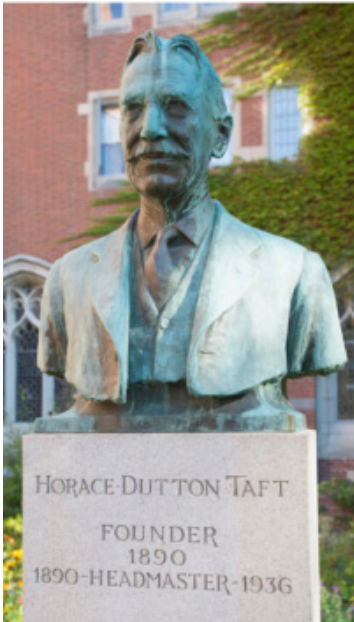


Photo courtesy of taftschool.org

# April Book Recs

ELEANOR PURICELLI  
Staff Writer

**The Day the Crayons Quit - Drew Daywalt**  
Drew Daywalt's *The Day the Crayons Quit* is a story told by various crayons who decide to revolt against their owner, Duncan. The crayons are fed up with Duncan's behavior towards them, and so they individually write him letters expressing their opinions. Red Crayon is overworked, Blue is on the brink of falling apart, and Peach is dealing with an existential crisis. If you're a junior drowning in homework like me, or a senior struggling with senioritis, then the crayon's vivid expressions are sure to resonate with your personal feelings towards the emotionally draining activities of high school. If you're looking for an insightful read to relate to, then *The Day the Crayons Quit* is the perfect book for you.

**Algebra II and Trigonometry - James Stewart**  
For all of my nonfiction lovers, *Algebra II and Trigonometry* by James Stewart is a sensational read. This wordy yet insightful sequel to *Algebra I* is a must-read for ALL Tafties. Filled with various concepts, including logarithms, polar graphs, and the beloved unit circle, Stewart's masterpiece is sure to leave you in hysterical tears. These heavy topics transform confident mathematicians into students begging for a break, but it is a book that you will not want to miss reading. While some say this is a story about perseverance, others say it is designed to crush everyone's morals. Either way, I cannot recommend *Algebra II and Trigonometry* enough, as it teaches individuals critical skills they will use daily in the "real world."

**Elephant and Piggie: We Are in a Book! - Mo Willems**  
*Elephant and Piggie: We Are in a Book!* by Mo Willems is a psychological thriller about questioning the realities of life. The protagonists, Elephant and Piggie, realize that they are confined within a book, and their lives are dictated by an outside child. Although their life was once lighthearted and fun, this crisis leads them to begin to struggle with the fact that their story must end. For those who find themselves in an identity crisis at 3 a.m., Mo Willem's *Elephant and Piggie: We Are in a Book!* is the perfect, relatable novel that will leave readers guessing till the very last page.

**Oxford English Dictionary - James Murray**  
Are you in need of improving your ICPA grade? Reading James Murray's *Oxford English Dictionary* will guarantee you at least a 90 on your next assignment. With over 600,000 different entries, this 20-volume series depicts the absolute beauty that is the English language. A few features include "ambiguous (adj.);" or "hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia (n.)." This book is your one-stop shop for knowing every single word in existence. Without a doubt, and speaking from personal experience, reading the *Oxford English Dictionary* by James Murray will make you the best of the best in your classes, leaving your teachers utterly starstruck by your in-depth vocabulary.



# Taft’s Strange Addictions: Time to Fess Up

ZOE CHIWESHE & MICHAELA LYNCH  
Staff Writers

They say to “never judge a book by its cover,” and honestly, we believe that quote to be true for numerous reasons. One being that you may never know that someone is leading a double life upon first glance. You may find yourself asking, “do I really know this person?” and honestly, *do you?* You never know what the person next to you is keeping from the public, what their secret could be. More than you would think, Taft students and faculty lead secret lives, some of which include very *strange* addictions. In an attempt to educate you all about who you go to school, eat, and live with, we have decided to create a series of feature articles where we spotlight those who have come clean about their uncanny activities. We found some of Taft’s most interesting community members, the ones who live a more unconventional lifestyle in ways we could never have imagined. Our goal is to uncover the secrets of Taft and bring them to light for your enjoyment and awareness. We brought *My Strange Addictions* to Taft and present to you the first of our most bizarre findings. Welcome to Taft’s Strangest Addictions, and this is today’s story:

## “I am Addicted to Taking Bowls from Hibachi Restaurants” (Eva Choussy ‘27)



“I need to come clean about something. I’m a bowl thief. Not just any bowls, but specifically, the ones from hibachi restaurants. It’s weird, I know. But something about them fascinates me more than expensive and rare China ever could. It started innocently, I swear. I was at dinner with my friends, enjoying the onion tower show and the act where they flip tiny pieces of food into your mouth, and that was when the first bowl arrived. It was perfectly imperfect. Carrying a delicious serving of steak-fried rice, it looked just as delicate and gorgeous as some of the finest pieces of art; I just knew that I *had* to have

it. I slipped it into my bag without anyone noticing (after I cleaned the fried rice portion, of course) and was ready for it to be mine. And to my surprise, no one saw or commented on the seemingly unusual action. The adrenaline pumping through my veins ensured the idea in my head that I had to do this again. I didn’t mean for it to escalate, I promise, but right then and there, I developed an obsession over these bowls. The need to collect them took over me every day; I couldn’t think about anything else! Each one has its own individual beauty, containing subtle variation in size or glaze patterns, some even having chipped edges that tell its story. Upon first glance, I can’t help but be drawn to how perfectly each bowl, regardless of its differences from the prior one, fits so nicely in my hands. To be quite frank, *it feels like home*. I have to admit that here at Taft, when my roommates go to Laube, I abandon my homework and spend time analyzing these small ceramic wonders. They garner my undivided love and attention for a couple of hours each day, but they so greatly deserve more. I know I should stop, *but I can’t*.”

Now that we know what Eva is hiding, it is only a matter of time before we uncover the rest of the skeletons in Taft’s closet. Our objective was not to make you all suspicious of your classmates, but if you are in fact, questioning the person next to you, it is probably for a good reason... Stay tuned to see who from the Taft community we will feature next!

Photo courtesy of Michaela Lynch & Zoe Chiweshe

# Breaking News: Taft’s Budget is Leaked - AGAIN!

COURTNEY EDWARDS  
Editor-in-Chief

You heard me right. For the second year in a row, a mole in the financial office has given me a peek into Taft’s budget. Let’s take a look and answer all the rumours we’ve been dying to confirm!

## Mr. Becker’s Candy Jars - \$10,000



How do they always stay so stocked up? The constant replenishment of M&Ms is anything but cheap and has a special place in the budget to ensure no Taftie is deprived of a sugar rush.

## Pokemon Scavenger Hunts - \$100 per QR code



When’s the next scavenger hunt? If you were lucky enough to spot some of Daniel’s hidden QR codes around campus, then you know why this activity is awarded a lenient budget. Daniel really doesn’t miss when it comes to creating clubs, and even non-Pokemon enthusiasts like myself can admit it. But there hasn’t been a Producers Club Meeting in a while...

## “We Are Taft” Chant - \$1



How long did this even last? Before I could form any real opinions on the chant, it disappeared from the end of assembly. Good news - I can cram some last-minute studying in with the 30 seconds I gained back from not chanting. Bad news - I think we crushed Mr. Lacasse’s heart.

## Cum Laude Plaques - \$20,000 per plaque



We’ve all seen them, and we’ve also all asked ourselves what was so wrong with the old ones. Why the need for such dramatic, overbearing wall art in what could be such a pleasant hallway? And why are there three empty ones? I guess I’ll have to trust that whatever interior designer picked them has a vision in mind.

## Student Union Sign - \$100



Student union? What’s the student union? I’ve only ever heard of the Jig.

## Ms. Duffy - \$8 per dress code grade given and phone taken



Most people have or will fall victim to this at some point or another. Whether you get caught stopping in the dining hall on your way back from an early morning workout or miscalculate how long it takes you to put your phone away when you see a faculty member round the corner, you can surely expect an email coming your way (and maybe a Saturday detention, too).

## Smoothie Machines - \$500 + \$10 per smoothie



Now, here’s an expense I can get behind. If anything, we need to allot more money at the smoothie station so that we don’t run out of fruit past 5:30. And maybe buy blenders that have a higher than 50% chance of actually mixing properly.

## Odden Arena - \$2,000,000



If you went up to watch a hockey game all over the winter season, then you might have noticed the recent additions to Odden Arena: new wall decals, varsity team photos and rosters up on the wall, and the giant jumbotron hanging from the ceiling. As a frequenter of the rink, I’m all for it. But why does our athletic training room still look like it hasn’t been touched in thirty years? Just food for thought...

Graphic Courtesy of Dreamstime



# BREAKING NEWS: James Charles to Teach at Taft this Upcoming Fall

ALEXIE BLAKE  
Features Editor

In an unexpected turn of events, social media mogul and beauty guru James Charles has announced he will be taking a sabbatical from the glitz and glam of Los Angeles to bring his expertise in makeup, drama, and self-expression to the hallowed halls of The Taft School in Watertown, Connecticut. The news has left the student body in shock, excitement, and, frankly, a little bit of confusion.

Charles, known for his iconic “Hi, sisters!” and elaborate makeup tutorials, will be stepping into the role of Senior Specialist of Beauty and Branding. According to sources in the Taft administration, the move is part of an effort to re-vamp the curriculum and meet the modern needs of today’s student body.

“We felt it was time to integrate more relevant, real-world skills into our academic offerings,” said Head of School Peter Becker. After all, in today’s world, knowing how to properly contour your face is just as important as knowing the Pythagorean Theorem.

The administration has assured concerned parents and students that the rigorous academic standards Taft is known for will remain intact, with Charles offering his services as a supplement to the traditional curriculum.

Charles will also no doubt integrate himself into all other areas of Taft life. In addition to the new arts electives he will be offering, Mr. Charles will also be taking over our beloved Mr. Fifer’s Collegium and Canto courses and may even introduce more modern song choices into the traditional repertoire. I, for one, cannot wait to hear Mr. Charles’s rendition of Olivia Rodrigo’s “Drivers License” echo through the halls of the Woodward Chapel.



Photo Courtesy of Cosmopolitan

Though this decision may raise eyebrows, it’s clear that Taft is embracing the unexpected. “We’re always looking for ways to innovate, and bringing James Charles on board seems like the perfect way to introduce some much-needed fun into our rigorous academic environment,” said one school monitor. “Plus, we’ve all been waiting for @taftschoo to finally make it on TikTok. Now we know

who our guest star will be.” James Charles’ first day of classes is scheduled for September 14th, 2025. In addition to his regular course offerings, Mr. Charles will conduct a “Welcome to Taft” beauty class for all new arrivals. Students will receive complimentary James Charles eyeshadow pallets and a personalized 5-minute skincare routine to get them through their first couple of weeks. Big things are coming, fellow “sisters,” and this is just the beginning. Taft has turned a new page and finally adjusted its curriculum to the ever-changing modern world. We cannot wait to see what Mr. Charles will add to the glorious Taft community.



Photo Courtesy of Buzzfeed

## April Horoscopes

ELLY OUELLETTE  
Staff Writer

**Aries (March 21 - April 19):** You will make a terrible decision today, and it will be the worst choice you’ve ever made. Also, someone will spill coffee on your favorite shirt. Good luck.

**Taurus (April 20 - May 20):** Today is a day for procrastination. You will be extremely motivated to do nothing. Expect an empty inbox, no new messages, and an overwhelming sense of missed opportunities.

**Gemini (May 21 - June 20):** Your phone will die at the worst possible moment, and you will lose your favorite pair of socks. The stars suggest you try not to panic. It’s hopeless.

**Cancer (June 21 - July 22):** Today, you’ll realize you forgot to buy milk. Then, you’ll spill cereal all over the kitchen floor. You’re going to have a lot of time to think about your life choices as you clean.

**Leo (July 23 - August 22):** Your efforts will be unnoticed, and people will ask you about things you don’t even care about. It’s a great day for existential questioning. Spoiler: You won’t find any answers.

**Virgo (August 23 - September 22):** Someone will recommend a new diet, and you will fall for it. It will end badly. Very badly. Also, you will lose at least three pens today.

**Libra (September 23 - October 22):** You’ll be so indecisive today that you’ll miss a good opportunity. Don’t worry, though, it’s not like it was important or anything. And you might trip over your own feet.

**Scorpio (October 23 - November 21):** People will annoy you for no reason today. In fact, someone will interrupt your most important moment with an irrelevant question. Also, your Wi-Fi will fail at the worst time.

**Sagittarius (November 22 - December 21):** A sudden urge to do something spontaneous will lead to you making a very poor choice. Pack your bags. You might end up stuck in traffic for hours. Just breathe.

**Capricorn (December 22 - January 19):** If you make any plans today, they will all fall apart. Prepare for some awkward moments and minor inconveniences. Also, your favorite shoes are about to break.

**Aquarius (January 20 - February 18):** Expect confusion and frustration in your life today. Someone will ask you for advice, and you’ll give them completely wrong information. It’s your destiny.

**Pisces (February 19 - March 20):** The stars are aligned to make sure your day will be as uneventful and dull as possible. Someone will misplace their keys and then blame you. Also, expect a lot of awkward silences.

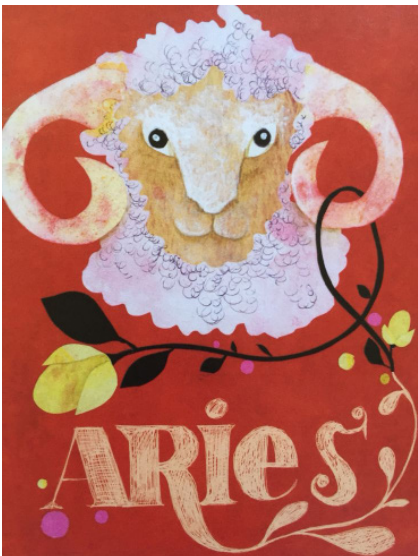


Photo Courtesy of Pinterest



# Game Night Gone Wrong: The Truth Behind We Need A Bigger Table

ELEANOR LEMON  
Staff Writer

Every Saturday, the members of We Need A Bigger Table gather in C130 for a night of seemingly harmless fun: a friendly round of Catan, a riveting game of Clue, perhaps even an occasional heated round of Monopoly. Or so we thought. But what started as a club promoting deceptively wholesome entertainment has spiraled into a dark web of deceit, manipulation, and scandal. After all, there is a reason why the club meets behind closed doors. As the walls begin to crumble, the truth will come to light: there is much, much more than we know to We Need A Bigger Table.

Sources within the club have come forward, risking their futures to divulge the unspeakable: that our beloved board game club is merely a cover for Taft’s vast, deeply entrenched underground gambling ring. Like unsuspecting marionettes, we have all been played. It was never really about the board games.

If you’ve been fooled (like me), I don’t blame you. A few students, gathering around the table, rolling dice and competing to buy the coveted “Boardwalk” and “Park Place” in Monopoly is a pretty innocent picture. But if you were to look a little closer, you’d see it is not flamboyantly colorful Monopoly money ruling the game board. That’s right, the banker isn’t dealing bright orange \$500 bills adorned with Mr. Monopoly’s smile. Five crisp, green Benjamins are exchanging hands. And it does not stop there. Grooming the next generation of underground casino moguls, these numbers have escalated into multi-million dollar bets. A source reports, “The second I passed ‘Go!’ and collected \$200, I knew I was in it to win it. Victory was basically in sight, and I put \$300 million down” (after describing their bitter defeat, they went on to ask me to source them a dollar, and I was happy to do so but honestly, I think they’ve got bigger problems to worry about).

Many have come forward to caution future generations of Taft-ies from falling down this dangerous rabbit hole. The string of losses experienced by members of the club is no mere coincidence. The games themselves are not random: they’re rigged by a man only referred to in the shadows or in whispers as the “Game Master.” A mogul turned high-school-student-predator, the “Game Master” weaponizes his arsenal of tricks amassed from years in the business to carefully manipulate the cards. Even if you think you’re winning, the cards are never in your favor.

Each new member is lured into the game with low-stakes bets: an IOU from a failed game of Yahtzee for a smoothie from the Jig can quickly turn into you betting your recently topped-up laundry card, your coveted single in Centen, and in the case of one desperate senior- your college acceptance (we’re still trying to fact-check that one). Like I said, lose, and you lose way more than money. It costs you your pride, your dignity, and- in some extreme cases- maybe even your *fob*. As the members accrue debt in this secret underworld, they become tied irrevocably to the unknown syndicate’s control. Once you’re in, there’s only one way out– graduation.

If you think you’re safe, think again. Your best friend might be knee-deep in debt. That cute boy in your History class might be a player. Your roommate may even owe the “Game Master” a favor: why do you think they keep going to the Jig for a smoothie late at night, only to return empty handed? One thing is for certain: the table is always bigger than it seems. The next time you hear dice rolling, or cards shuffling, *run*. Run for your life, for your future, and most importantly, for your ability to get into Main Hall after they lock the doors. The game is rigged- and is not over for us yet.

(If you or a loved one has been affected by We Need A Bigger Table, please contact us at [papyrus@taftschool.org](mailto:papyrus@taftschool.org). We can’t help, but we’re not one to turn down a good story.)



Photo courtesy of Freepik

# Mr. Werrell’s Art Heist

SKY COMFORT  
Editor-in-Chief

With the same pomp and circumstance as the Yale Art History scholars before him, Mr. Werrell has been entrusted with cataloging and curating the Taft collection. Yet, much like the Yalelite Egyptologists of the day, his tenure has been marked by an air of ambiguity, maybe even mystery. Many works donated by alumni have mysteriously gone “missing” since his appointment to this newly created role.

In an effort to prevent Main Hall from being further defaced by TVs, decals, and other modern atrocities, I took it upon myself to investigate. The first case? The disappearance of *The Boat with a Red Sail*, my favorite piece in Main Hall. Coincidentally, it was also a favorite of Mr. Werrell, who once mused, “If I could hang any piece in my office, it would be that one.” Unfortunately, Mr. Werrell’s office doesn’t have room for that piece, and thank god. I think we’d lose that painting in the organization system under his desk. Even if he had somehow wedged it into the English office, the painting wouldn’t have lasted long under his aggressively bright sunlamp, the secret, he claims, to his youthful glow. Between the fluorescent lights, the ceaseless sound of students pleading for a better grade, and the occasional stray coffee spill, *The Boat with a Red Sail* would have met a tragic end in record time.



*The Boat with a Red Sail* - Photo Courtesy of Sky Comfort ‘25

Then, I had a revelation: he likes *The Boat with a Red Sail* too much. While he often professes to be a socialist, the reality is that he wouldn’t want to share such a masterpiece with the English department. He’s more of an idealist.

That left only one possibility: the painting had made its way to his house. The winter blues had set in, and what better cure than a stolen work of art to brighten up the home? Or, at the very least, to keep Ms. Otis, his beloved bull terrier, in the company of something culturally enriching. Of course, I couldn’t just barge into his house and start snooping. A more sophisticated plan was required. So, in a stroke of investigative genius, I offered to walk Ms. Otis one day. As Mr. Werrell retrieved her leash, I seized my moment, peeking around his living space. And there it was.

*The Boat with a Red Sail*, tucked away, but curiously, none of the other “missing” pieces were in sight. What I did find, however, was an envelope from Sotheby’s Auction House laying on coffee table. Suspicious, I later scoured Sotheby’s website, where I stumbled upon a recent estate sale from a certain *Madame Otis de Terrière*. The collection was filled with striking American classics, exactly the kind of works that had disappeared without a trace. With a few French flourishes and an air of aristocracy, Mr. Werrell’s dog had been reborn as *Madame Otis de Terrière*, the mysterious art collector. The perfect crime, until now.



Ms. Otis, Photo courtesy of Mr. Werrell



# Taft’s Curling Team: The Untold National Victory

HOLLY RICHARD  
Staff Writer

While the recent cold and icy weather has Taft students thinking, “When will it be over?” it has me thinking, “What’s the curling team up to?” Taft’s Varsity Curling team, though sometimes overlooked, is a group of skilled and dedicated athletes that swept their way (pun intended) to this winter’s national championship. Founded in 1973 after a particularly icy winter, the Taft Curling Team has long been a cornerstone of Taft culture. Some students refer to the team as an urban legend: “My friends always said there was a Curling Team, but I thought it was a metaphor for how life keeps sliding out of control,” admitted school monitor Alexie Blake.

Under the master leadership of Wayne Middaugh, a former Canadian curling champion who retired to Connecticut in 1988 to commit to full-time coaching, the team swept their regular season competitors after many years of being “so close, yet so far” from a spot at nationals. Yet, the curlers overcame their lack of motivation due to the years past and finally hoisted the national trophy. The championship match against Minnesota’s Granite Falls Academy, the reigning champions prior to this year, was nothing short of unforgettable. While the Curlers prepared for their final delivery, the tension became increasingly intense, and the score was still tied. In the eventful finale with the stakes high, junior skip Alex Werner delivered what is now known as “the shot heard round the rink,” a precision throw that ricocheted and miraculously—and surprisingly—landed in the dead middle of the house. The audience roared with excitement while the team erupted in excitement and celebration. At the end of the victorious day, Werner confessed that her throw was “either a complete accident or supreme skill,” though admitting that she has no recollection of most of the finale due to the intense pressure.



The 1973 Taft Curling Team - Photo Courtesy of Curling History



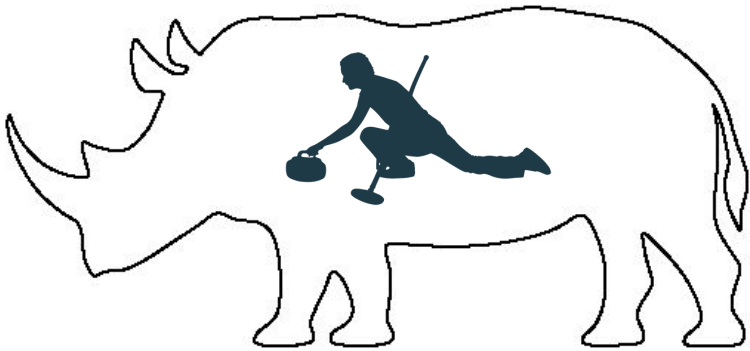
Wayne Middaugh - Photo Courtesy of National Post

Notably, this victory finally ended the Taft Curling Team’s notorious title drought, the longest in our athletic history. Many alumni, after hearing about the win, posted their nostalgic memories of the Curling Team with blurry photos of past matches (losses). Rumors have already started to circulate that the legendary victory will be portrayed in a new Apple TV+ series, with Tom Hanks portraying Coach Middaugh and Hailee Steinfeld portraying Werner. Additionally, local media teams have joined the Taft community in celebrating, with the *Watertown Gazette* publishing the headline: “Taft Curling Team Sweeps Nationals.” Even Hotchkiss students have offered their congratulations, though obviously jealous their school doesn’t hold a national title or less, even have a curling team.

Looking ahead, the team is starting to prepare for off-season training, including rigorous balance exercises, strategy planning, and an intense bracket of Mario Kart to keep their competitive instincts sharp and unceasing. As the season comes to a close and the campus returns to rhythm, one thing is certain: the legend of the Taft’s Curling Team will live on in school lore for years to come. While the curling dynasty may be fictitious (for now), here’s to celebrating imagination, school spirit, and a good laugh. And who knows? Maybe next winter, the curling team will reveal their secret basement training bunker.



Our resident curling extraordinaire, Alex Werner ‘26! Photo Courtesy of Alex Werner ‘26.



Graphic Courtesy of Pinterest & Vexels

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