



# The Wheaton Wire

Wednesday, October 29, 2025

Volume LVI, Issue #4

## The closure of the Wheaton Archives

### *Pieces of the college's history sit in silence*

By Grayce Howe '29

Nestled in the basement of Madeleine Clark Wallace Library lives the Marion B. Gebbie Archives and Special Collections, known more commonly as the Wheaton Archives. Beloved since 1980, when they were officially established, the Archives are home to Wheaton's history, including a variety of primary sources, donated documents, and alumni records. In the past, Wheaton has ensured that the archives have been taken seriously, maintained, and prioritized. Now, a lack of resources has raised issues for its current and future state.

As of now, and until further notice, the Archives have been closed to students. Along with this closure comes a major loss to the Wheaton community, as a multitude of research materials are no longer accessible. On special occasions, and by appointment only, access to the archives is permitted to professors and student classes. Legitimate access to the Archives for any other purpose, however, is not permitted.

"We're losing our heart and soul here," said student leader and former archives student employee Katelyn Spader '27, "At the heart of Wheaton has been the arts and humanities."



Photo taken by Grayce Howe '29

The closed entrance to the Marion B. Gebbie Archives and Special Collections.

Spader worked in the Archives for the last three semesters, with the final one being this past spring. The closing of the Archives, Spader explained, is not only a loss of resources, but also a "blatant

disregard for the ongoing projects that students were working on." Projects such as The Wheaton Wire metadata cleanup—a project established to ensure that the information in the database is reliable

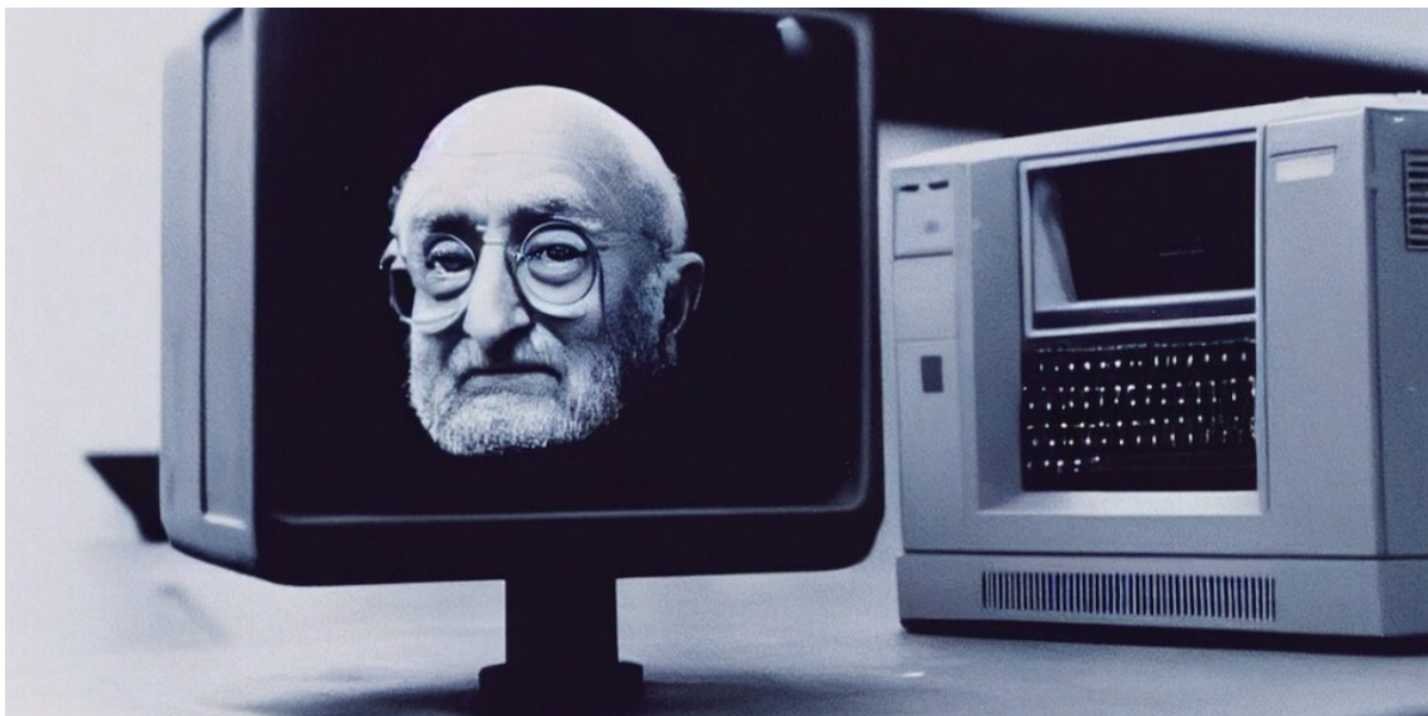
and up to date—are no longer able to continue. Spader stressed that projects like this one are necessary for the Wheaton community to function, and to maintain the flourishing liberal arts education the college promotes.

Spader, of course, is not alone. Similar reactions come from student workers across campus, who, after being employed in the Archives for multiple semesters, feel now that they have lost not only a resource, but also a beloved community and place to exercise their passion.

"It isn't just a room with old papers and books; it is a useful and unique resource that should not be neglected. The inability to have access has been largely felt," said Mags Fox-Moore '26, who has been an avid volunteer and employee in the Archives for over two years. "The Archives is an integral historical and academic resource of the college, and one of very few places in which the intersection of the current culture and setting of the college intersects with the history and legacy that proceeds it. I truly believe that these [historical and academic intersectionalism] are not mutually exclusive of one another and much can be gained from having access to the contents of the Archives within the Wheaton Community."

**Archives closure, continued on page 7.**

## Reclaiming AI for the humanities



Created by Vince Warne with Midjourney

A generated portrait of Vilém Flusser.

By Logan Markwell '28

Joerg Blumtritt, professor of practice for digital media and communications, is currently in charge of the Wheaton Institute for Interdisciplinary Humanities (WIIH). The WIIH provides a platform for professors to bring ideas to the forefront of a discussion series, where they can host lectures, collaborative roundtables, other themed events, and run courses related to their selected theme. They are given a small budget to bring speakers to campus, virtually or in person, and to fund their themed programming.

Working with Patrick Johnson, the professor and department chair of film, new media, and communications, Blumtritt chose the theme of "AI Humanities." Explaining the

concept of AI Humanities, Blumtritt focused on AI's uses in creative work rather than automated tasks and argued that this necessitates a conversation about what this use means for humanities fields, drawing on humanities such as philosophy, ethics, law, and others.

Blumtritt originally thought the intersection of humanities and AI was something valuable to look into when "seven or eight years ago [he saw] that there was a rise in interest...and [he] noticed the applications...were much more [focused on] natural language processing, [in particular] understanding or trying to make sense of text."

Blumtritt provided an example: "There is a lot of humanities work [being] done with AI and machine learning systems, for instance, the

deciphering of charred scrolls of the Villa dei Papyri" in southern Italy, near the Gulf of Naples (Herculaneum, now known as Ercolano to be exact). These scrolls are "philosophical texts that can be deciphered [using] advanced image processing," and likely would not be very accessible otherwise. Such significant use of AI in the humanities underscores why it is a crucial topic to discuss.

"Reclaiming AI for the Humanities" explores how AI fundamentally changes the way academic work is done, and that engaging with this idea is inherently a question for scholars of the humanities. In completing projects, AI and machine-learning systems are sometimes used as "toy models of how systems like the brain might function."

However, AI and humans are not alike.

Perhaps the most accurate way to look at the differences between humans and AI is with language and information acquisition. "You can show [children] one or two examples and they can generalize from that; no neural network will ever do that," said Blumtritt.

Blumtritt says this raises important questions, primarily: "What is the alien-ness that AI has?" The speakers who have visited the WIIH to talk about this topic have insights.

The first talk was given by Vincent Warne, editor of Millennium Film Magazine in New York, who has written "poignant critiques on the most buzzy AI art projects." Per Blumtritt, Vincent Warne does not naively condemn AI, but draws on the perspective of philosopher Vilém Flusser to address the role of the humanities within AI.

Flusser wrote about the future of writing and photography in the 1970s and 80s, and maintained a speculative, but cautious view on the evolving role of technological devices. In his book *Does Writing Have a Future?* Flusser was pessimistic, saying that writing might just go away once machines would be able to write in a "sufficiently good way," framing writing as a code that could be learned by machines.

This prompted Warne to raise the question: What does that leave the author to be afterward? This is one such question that must be answered by humanities scholars.

**AI and humanities, continued on page 5.**

## Letter from the editor

Dear Wheaton,

It is now far colder than it was when I wrote to you last. We are past midterm season, officially done with over half of the semester, and I'm mourning the fact that I've been unsuccessful in evading the cough that has been circulating around campus.

On a completely different note, I want to highlight an activity called a Harkness Discussion that happened last week in the journalism course I'm currently taking. For those unfamiliar with what that is, a Harkness Discussion is a student-centered teaching method where peers sit in a circle to engage in open, collaborative discus-

sions. In this iteration, half of the class sat to observe the conversation while the others engaged in the conversation before switching places. During this activity, the professor of the course acts more like a moderator than an instructor for the period of time, letting the learning connections for the central topic be controlled by the students. One's grade from this is determined by how much they contribute to the discussion, how prepared they are with the reading materials, and how well they listened and followed along. Ultimately, the main purpose of the Harkness Discussion is to push students to take the lead by asking and answering questions to facilitate critical

thinking about one or more topics.

There's one thing in particular I thought went especially well for my class: we actually listened to each other. Seems crazy, right? Not only that, but we interacted with what others were saying in order to provide a response of our own, formed by our own opinions and shaped by the perspectives around us. As I was sitting there, forming questions and taking notes, I realized that this is what I've been missing so desperately—an environment where not only is it important that you listen to others, but that you express yourself as well.

I sound like every communications major, trying to stress that the most important thing one can ever do is connect with others,

but I mean it. When was the last time you had a conversation that changed your mind about something? Did you allow your opinion to be influenced and stop to think why, or did you accept it at surface value? Issues only fester in silence, and this is my unsolicited reminder to everyone not to get too consumed with your own voice and thoughts. Instead, try seeking out a second opinion, even if it's different from yours. Ask the questions, even if they're hard to express and ultimately get shut down—not for everyone else, but for yourself.

Sincerely,  
Moira Sankey '26  
Khushi Parikh '26

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The Wheaton Wire is looking for students who are interested in joining our staff. Open roles include issue writers, copy editors, artists, columnists, and photographers. The level of commitment varies by position, printing schedule, and personal interest.

Have a question, comment, or writing piece for the Editor or Wire staff? Email us at: [thewheatonwire@gmail.com](mailto:thewheatonwire@gmail.com).

## Student opportunity spotlight

The Life and Career Design Institute is encouraging students to apply for the Creative Artists Agency (CAA) Summer 2026 Paid Internship Program, now accepting applications through November 7.

CAA, a global leader in entertainment, media, and sports, represents artists and professionals across film, television, music, theatre, and sports. The internship

offers hands-on experience assisting agents and executives in departments such as motion pictures, theatre, brand consulting, and sports media.

Eligible applicants are current undergraduates graduating between December 2026 and May 2027. The Life and Career Design Institute can provide guidance on the application process and materials.

Full program details are available on CAA's internship information page, and applications may be submitted through the agency's careers portal at [www.caa.com/careers/internships](http://www.caa.com/careers/internships).

This is a highly competitive program, but the LCDI is available to help interested applicants prepare their application.

## Romanceylvania: A Suburban Dracula Adventure

By Emma Zhou '27

### ROMANCEYLVANIA: A SUBURBAN DRACULA ADVENTURE



\* ALL DRACULA LINES MUST BE READ WITH AN EXAGGERATED VAMPIRE ACCENT

## AI and humanities, *continued from front*

The second talk was given by Bruce Sterling, who has twice won the Hugo Award and was on the cover of the first issue of Wired magazine. He spoke about Italian author Primo Levi and his stories about the electronic poet “Il Ver-sificatore,” which could automate poetry when given prompts.

Sterling also drew on H.P. Lovecraft’s literary idea about “The Old Ones”, an ancient humanoid race on Earth millions of years before humans, who owned faceless blobs called shoggoths. After centuries of performing menial tasks for the Old Ones, the shoggoths mutated and killed their overlords, building their own cities in the ruins.

In a way, AI will be like this, a faceless blob but with a human facade. However, Sterling was clear that AI itself won’t kill people, as it has no will of its own, no *joie de vivre*. Rather, it is a machine or tool that others will use and tweak to fulfill personal goals and wishes.

Lisa Lebduska, professor of English, chair of the department of English and philosophy, and director of college writing at Wheaton, also offers an insightful analysis of AI and its limitations and of how humanists are to play a role. Lebduska is currently teaching a senior seminar called *Narrating the Machine: AI, Social Media, and the Literature of Digital Consciousness* in which students are reading fiction that directly engages with issues of social media and AI, and “running some experiments, doing work, trying out different products, seeing what their limitations are, and then reading about different aspects of AI.”

When asked about what “re-claiming AI for the humanities” means to her, Lebduska said that “the values of the humanities are part of the conversation around AI, whether it’s the philosophers talking about the ethical implications,” or the call for kill switches on AI because we simply don’t fully comprehend their limits. This raises a question for Lebduska: “Is this almost an existential crisis for

the humanities?”

Addressing a potential approach if it indeed is a crisis, Lebduska offered that “part of [dealing with AI] will be embracing a kind of nimbleness and fluidity... sometimes I think the humanities are misperceived as being very rigid, [like] we’re holding on to what is and what will always be, and should never change.” Lebduska explained that this is not how the humanities are, and just because we may be perceived this way, we should not dismiss AI as something for computer scientists and technologists to deal with. We should take an active role.

Taking an active role herself, Lebduska said that the end-of-course goal for her senior seminar is for her students to “not be afraid of this, and yet [not] be just consuming it mindlessly — thinking about when to use it, [and] what it does for our cognitive development,” so that they, in short, are “practic[ing] critical AI literacy.”

A similar opportunity is available next semester, when Blumtritt will teach a new course titled *Understanding AI*, which will serve as a conceptual introduction to AI. Blumtritt’s class seeks not to skim the surface of AI, but also not to get lost in math and computer science. He wants to introduce applications of AI that are not “ready-made shiny boxes,” as AI has limits to its use. To explore technologies for creativity, but not just by tweaking prompts, but by maybe coming up with something that doesn’t need prompts.

There will also be a conversation on Nov. 19 for students interested in the theory, practice, and future of AI, with more details coming soon.

With these action items in mind, Lebduska offers a positive note to end on, perhaps a guide as we navigate the near future and interact with AI: “We shouldn’t be approaching from a perspective of fear or threat, but rather [in a way that] we have something really useful to contribute.”



Art by Devin Kwarula '27

Re-drawing of alien creature “Mudflow” from the mobile video game *Monster Legends*.

## COMING EVENTS

**KAOS WORKSHOPS**

**BLACK CAT NERO** CHESHIRE - ITZY  
- ATEEZ  
OCTOBER 25, 6-7PM  
OCTOBER 25, 7-8PM  
BITE ME - ENHYPEN  
NOVEMBER 1, 5-6PM

BALFOUR HOOD DANCE STUDIO

**CHAPEL AFTER DARK**

Wednesday Nov. 5 | 8:30 pm

Join us in Cole Memorial Chapel for singing bowls & poetry by Jayanna DSilva. Come as you are.

You're invited to SHAG's

**GHOULS NIGHT OUT**

29th October 7-9p Chapel Base

MOCKTAIL POTIONS | SEXY GAMES | COSTUME CONTEST

**Gloss and Lounge**

October 30<sup>th</sup> 7-9pm in the Base

Lipgloss making, games, and community

**SPOOKY! Pub Night** COME FOR THE BOOS  
7:30-9:30  
Oct 30th

Class of 2026 only

Wear your best halloween costume!

Hosted in Emerson Dining

Wheaton and state ID required for entry  
\$2 per drink - CASH ONLY - small bills preferred  
Must be 21 to purchase hard cider, seltzer, and beer  
Mocktails will also be available

The Accessibility Board and Pre-Law Society Present:

**ADA Kahoot**

Join us for a chance to win prizes by playing a fun Kahoot about the ADA and how it might impact your academic and post-graduate journeys!

From 7:30 PM to 8:30 PM

Wed 11/5

Meneely 301

If you have any additional questions, concerns, or need accommodations, email [Russo\\_Emma@wheatoncollege.edu](mailto:Russo_Emma@wheatoncollege.edu)

## COLUMN

### The unfiltered transcript

By Julie Mahoney '28 and Sierra Bausemer '28

Juggling assignments, sports, and work can be a daunting enough challenge without the additional task of checking the news. I have compiled some of the most prominent news stories from the international, national, and campus spheres to keep you informed and up to date.

In Wheaton news, fall break was a weekend of rain for those who remained on campus, although many students traveled home to visit family and friends. One day of classes later and MAP day arrived on Oct. 16. All students began their day with faculty-led panels on the topic of reciprocity and abundance, a call-back to the first year common reading of *The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. The remainder of the day included academic programming, a graduate school fair, and various fun activities around campus.

In sports news, Wheaton Men's Water Polo took their first victory in program history on Oct. 18, in a 16-13 win over Washington and Jefferson College.

With Halloween fast approaching, Dean Irish is ahead of the game with an email sent to the student body on Oct. 17, reminding students of the drug and alcohol policy, the Title IX policy, how to report a bias-related inci-

dent, and a reminder on respectful costumes. Additionally, Dean Irish encouraged students to attend the SGA Halloween on the Dimple, this past Saturday from 2-4 p.m., which followed the Norton Halloween parade at 12 p.m.. If you are still looking for a treat, a campus obsession offers free drinks once a week. Aroma Joes, the popular coffee spot located only a few minutes off campus in Mansfield, offers free rushes every week from 3-4 p.m. on Wednesdays.

The U.S. government shutdown remains at the forefront of many news outlets, as it reaches nearly four weeks' duration. Since the shutdown began on Oct. 1, thousands of federal employees have been laid off or furloughed. An Oct. 15 ruling put an end to any layoffs currently underway and ceased any more until the government shutdown is resolved. Despite this, a large number of Reductions in Force (RIFs) are still occurring.

This led to Saturday, Oct. 18, which saw 7 million people organize in over 2,700 U.S. cities for "No Kings" protests. Protestors rallied peacefully against policies of the Trump administration and what is being described as President Donald Trump's abuse of power.

Internationally, the Gaza ceasefire was tested on Sunday, Oct. 19, following Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip. However, the Rafah border crossing, which allows



Photo courtesy of @artatwheaton via Instagram  
Students partaking in MAP day activities outside of Watson.

Palestinians to access Egypt for medical care, remains unopened. The next steps of President Donald Trump's ceasefire plan include the disarmament of Hamas, as well as Israel's withdrawal from Gaza.

In France, the Louvre was robbed on Oct. 19 just as the museum opened. The thieves stole nine pieces of the French Crown Jewels in a seven-minute heist that ended in an escape on electric scooters. Experts say that because the items are so notable, they can

not be sold; therefore, they will either be melted down or a buyer was secured prior to the heist.

Sadly, Diane Keaton, Oscar-winning actor of "Annie Hall" and "The First Wives Club," passed away on Oct. 11 from pneumonia.

On a more uplifting note, the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to María Corina Machado on Oct. 10. She received this award in recognition of her work to promote the democratic rights of the people of Venezuela.

### Issue #3 crossword answers

1	A	2	L	3	T	4	S	5	G	6	E	7	T	8	T	9	A	10	N
11	L	I	R	A	12	A	T	H	O	M	E								
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31	R	E	C	O	U	P		32		33	L	I	N	T					
34	I	N	R	O	M	E				35	C	R	E	E					
36	S	E	E	R	E	D				37	H	E	R	E					

### Issue #3 sudoku answers

6	9	8	7	2	4	5	1	3
7	4	3	5	1	9	6	2	8
2	5	1	6	8	3	7	4	9
1	6	2	9	7	5	3	8	4
9	7	5	3	4	8	1	6	2
3	8	4	1	6	2	9	5	7
4	1	6	8	9	7	2	3	5
8	3	7	2	5	1	4	9	6
5	2	9	4	3	6	8	7	1

8	2	7	9	4	5	1	6	3
3	9	6	7	2	1	8	5	4
5	4	1	3	8	6	7	2	9
7	5	9	6	1	4	3	8	2
1	8	3	5	7	2	9	4	6
2	6	4	8	9	3	5	1	7
4	3	5	1	6	7	2	9	8
9	7	2	4	5	8	6	3	1
6	1	8	2	3	9	4	7	5

To connect with the The Wheaton Wire, contact: [thewheatonwire@gmail.com](mailto:thewheatonwire@gmail.com)  
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 Call: 508-286-3821

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Got an article? An op-ed? A letter to the editor?  
 Perhaps some art? Poetry?

SUBMIT TO THE WIRE HERE:

SCAN ME!



# Trustees luncheon communication frustrates students

By Grayce Howe '29

On Friday, Oct. 17, Wheaton College hosted its annual Board of Trustees luncheon. The previous Friday, on Oct. 10, many students received invitations to the event, including GLAMs (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums) student Ryan White '27.

White, along with a handful of merit-stipend students, received an email from Mark Kenyon, Director of Experiential Education and External Engagement in the Life and Career Design Institute, on the morning of Oct. 10. "Dear Students," it read, "I wanted to reach out to invite you to participate in the upcoming Board of Trustees Lunch on Friday, October 17th. As a Wheaton College student who received summer funding, this is a wonderful opportunity to share your experiences with the Board and highlight the impact of their support."

According to the email, the lunch would take place around 11:00 am or noon, and asked students to reply as soon as possible to secure a spot at the lunch. "If you are available and interested, please let me know as soon as possible, since we will need to communicate our participants' names to the President's Office shortly."

White, who spent his summer funding working on metadata cleanup for the college's syllabi repository and Wheaton Wire collection, jumped at the chance to attend the lunch and quickly replied to the email. After Kenyon's email to students on Oct. 10, White replied, expressing gratitude for the oppor-

tunity and confirming interest less than an hour later.

White's email to Kenyon wrote, "Good afternoon, I would love to participate in this Board of Trustees Lunch next Friday," wrote White, "What would be the estimated end time? I have a class to attend at 1:00, but feel strongly about attending this lunch as well. It shouldn't be an issue, but I'd like to know if I should make arrangements with my professor."

A week later, White and a few other students who had received the initial email from Kenyon had yet to receive a follow-up email. However, a handful of students who had also received the initial "invitation" were sent an email expressing that although their interest in the invite was appreciated, the event had reached its capacity.

Therefore, students like White, who had received the initial invitation but not the email expressing regret that they wouldn't have a spot at the lunch, assumed they would be attending the event. Between Monday, October 13, and Friday, Oct. 17 students were waiting for details about the time and location of the lunch. They had received no further information from Kenyon or any other Wheaton faculty. In the days leading up to the event, White made numerous efforts to contact Kenyon about the event, on one occasion even speaking to him in person.

"After receiving no response, I sent another email on the 15th," White told the Wire, "I spoke to Mr. Kenyon in person on MAP day, the 16th, and he said that details would be sent out shortly, but after

receiving no more information, I sent another email early the morning of the 17th."

On the morning of Oct. 17, White thought he would be attending the event, he then received word from Kenyon.

"At 9:25 AM on October 17th, less than 3 hours before the trustees' lunch would be taking place, I received an email from Mark Kenyon that while my name had been forwarded as a nomination, I had not been selected to attend," White said.

"Not everyone nominated could attend 'due to space limitations.' There had been no indication before this point that we were nominated with the possibility of not being selected. I know of some other students who had received a notification much sooner that the lunch was already at capacity, so why was this decision made so last-minute? I was also concerned about the selection criteria, so within the hour, I responded to this email asking about this." White had received no response as of Tuesday evening.

The Wire contacted Kenyon and Dr. Darnell Parker, Vice President for Student Affairs, regarding the nomination process for student attendees at the Board of Trustees lunch.

"Students invited to meet with the Board of Trustees were nominated by offices across campus, including Advising, the Life and Career Design Institute, Residential Life, Inclusive Excellence, Athletics, and SAIL," Parker wrote to the Wire in response to a request for comment. "Each year, this process aims to include a diverse group

of students representing a range of class years, majors, and campus involvement, while ensuring that new voices are included. The number varies based on student interest and space available. We're grateful for the strong participation for the recent October meeting and look forward to additional student engagement opportunities in February and May. If any individual has concerns, we encourage them to reach out to me and I will gladly answer any questions."

When asked specifically about the number of students who were able to participate in the event, Parker responded, "I am not providing the number of students that attended the luncheon. If there are students concerned, I am more than happy to meet with them as I always have an open door policy."

Kayleigh Illingworth '26, who was able to attend the lunch, was able to recall a rough estimate of the student attendance at the lunch. "I believe there were around 15 students at the lunch," she said.

When asked if he had any further comments regarding the Trustee lunch and student attendee nomination process, Dean Irish wrote, "I do not have any further comment at this time."

"I feel that there is a very strong disconnect between decision-makers and the student body at Wheaton College, which is a shame given how strong I feel the student and faculty's sense of community is at this school," said White, "These decisions seemed short-sighted to me, and I was frustrated by the lack of communication and transparency on the part of the college."

## Midnight Ramblings: A case for xianxia

By Khushi Parikh '26

Set in pseudo-historic China—think *Journey to the West*, but with more swords and far fewer monkeys—xianxia, literally "immortal heroes," is a fantastical roast of social, economic, and political life. Rooted in Daoist and Buddhist myth, the genre throws readers into sprawling, mythic worlds where power, morality, and destiny are constantly tested, all through distinctly Chinese cosmologies.

At the heart of xianxia is cultivation: leveling up your spirit, boosting magical power, and basically grinding like a spiritual video game. But don't think it's free XP. Cultivation runs on a brutal, capitalist-style economy: spirit stones, pills, secret manuals, and sect backing are the currency, and scarcity isn't a plot device—it's law. As Feng Zhi warns in *Nine Star Hegemon Body Art*: "A whale couldn't be raised in a fish tank. A dragon couldn't

be raised in a pig pen. ... Without the support of resources, even geniuses would become mediocre." Translation: even dragons need infrastructure—and students navigating college, internships, and networking would nod knowingly.

Protagonists scramble for resources, hoard techniques, and negotiate patronage, showing that ascension isn't meritocratic—lineage, wealth, and access matter as much as talent, raising the question: who truly deserves to "ascend", and at what cost?

Digital platforms have shifted the genre: novels like Cannon Fodder's *Guide to Getting Rich*, *Rescuing the Beautiful and Strong* yet *Miserable Second Lead Character*, and *Today, The Villainous Couple Settles Scores Again* flip the script, smashing male-centric, rags-to-riches, harem-driven tropes with feminist rewrites, meta-humor, and

savage social commentary. Destiny? Overruled. Heaven's favorites? Questioned. Side characters? Given a shot at glory.

One of my favorite scenes involves a transmigrator adopting a "hopeless" Pure Heavenly Water Spirit Root disciple—whose body, conveniently, boosts cultivation when paired... creatively (yes, sexually). Using a mix of modern science and magic, the mentor teaches her to turn water into ice weapons and—brace yourself—freeze blood with surgical precision. By the end, she transforms from vulnerable to deadly, offering a fantastical yet sharp commentary on gender, bodily autonomy, and surviving hierarchical, exploitative systems.

Even the heavenly Dao, supposedly the impartial cosmic referee, is anything but fair. Some get smacked with cosmic injustice

while others skate by, all thanks to a glitchy moral scoreboard deciding who's "righteous" or "evil," a cosmic nod to entrenched privilege and political arbitrariness.

Commercially, xianxia has become an IP juggernaut, but global streaming platforms are still lagging on the uptake. They spotlight only a handful of "safe" or love-centric, aesthetically polished adaptations, flattening plots, flattening moral complexity, and flattening culturally specific philosophy to suit the widest possible audience. In the process, innovative, incisive xianxia takes are confined to web novels inaccessible to the global audience, leaving the truly wild, brilliant, and subversive stories to gather virtual dust.

Yet like the best young adult fiction, xianxia is more than spectacle. It teaches resilience, empathy, and imagination, framing cultivation as ethical becoming: confronting failure, learning balance, and rewriting oneself. Its worlds cram resource scarcity, hierarchies, class drama, and the occasional demon uprising into serialized adventures that mirror real-world inequities. Ascension isn't virtue-dependent—it's scheming, clever maneuvering, and surviving a system stacked against you.

Blending economic hustle, social critique, and philosophy, xianxia turns guilty pleasure into a playground for exploring inequality, ambition, and what it really takes to rise—sometimes with swords, sometimes with brains, and sometimes with a dash of cosmic luck.

P.S. This article is titled *Midnight Ramblings* because it was written between 12:02 and 12:44 a.m. on Tuesday, 28 Oct.

## Dreams of Norton

By Deren Sozer '27



## POETRY CORNER

### The American Nightmare

By Lilly Martinez '28

Old hotels with new purposes  
 No renovation needed  
 An influx of people charging through their doors  
 Shelter and sanctuary were unknown meanings to the people in charge  
 And here we are now  
 Hotels being funded and flooded by our government for the excess of  
 people flowing into our cities  
 Seeing themselves in the staff as they try to keep comfy in the least com-  
 fortable situations ever  
 Tossing and turning their heads to make sure they know what safety  
 looks like for them  
 Chasing the American Nightmare  
 No one seeks out these hardships when they come to the land of the free  
 Like sand after a nice day at the beach it sticks to you.  
 Each grain hiding where you can not see  
 Getting tangled up in your hair  
 Never really washed away until you take the time to do a full cleanse all  
 on your own  
 There is no real help anymore  
 Chasing the American Dream  
 It was a lie we were fed to keep us blissfully ignorant to the atrocities  
 that happen in our cities  
 Each part of our country acting in spite of the other and going against the  
 grain of what makes a harmonious society

### Diamond Princess

By Lilly Martinez '28

You started out a dirty piece of coal  
 Burned poked and gassed up  
 Till your fire was too hot  
 You flames grew big and pretty  
 But dangerous and reckless

You were reborn a new as ore  
 Rough around the edges and jagged  
 Heavy as the burdens you carried  
 Broken by the stress and pressure forced on you  
 Exposed till all that was left was your core

You are a diamond princess  
 Put on a pedestal as a prize  
 Something for others to look up to  
 Something you grew conscious of  
 Brilliantly you shone  
 Hard enough to break the challenges coming  
 But just strong enough to break yourself in the process

## Rushlight Magazine submissions open

Wheaton Creatives,

Submission for Rushlight's newest issue is now open! Our theme is Oddities and Curiosities, though submissions of any theme are welcome! Use our QR code to upload any medium: poetry, prose, short stories, visual art, and photography. Email [rushlight@wheatoncollege.edu](mailto:rushlight@wheatoncollege.edu) with any questions, and be sure to follow our Instagram for updates and event opportunities (@wheatonrushlight).



## Arts in Ireland and Norton

Students enrolled in Wheaton's "Arts in Ireland" program over this past summer received recognition on Friday, Oct. 17, during an hour long showcase in the Wheaton Mars Arts and Humanities building. The art and writing selections, created during their trip to Ireland, are still hanging in Meneely and available for the campus community to view.

One student, Darcy Alder '27, wrote the following artist statement about her exhibition titled, "Sea, Swallow Me."

"As I grew up, I was surrounded by strong and inspirational women who taught me about feminism and what it means to be a woman. Over time, I've defined these ideas in my own terms and allowed it to be a large part of my life and identity, not only as a person but also as an artist. The majority of the art that I create features women or covers various themes of feminism or womanhood; my exhibition,

titled "Sea, Swallow Me," is no different.

The title "Sea, Swallow Me" derives from a song by the Cocteau Twins of the same name, something that was a huge inspiration for the project. Coming to the Burren, I was immediately drawn to the ocean. I connect the vision of the sea as a woman, representing femininity. The violent crashing of the waves at shore juxtaposed with the calm waters further at sea reminded me of female rage and the process of change and growth. And then, on my first morning here, I pulled "The Empress" tarot card, representing the divine feminine, creativity, and nature. It was a perfect trio of concepts to guide me. "Sea, Swallow Me" is about the development of a woman, exploration of sexual identity, and growth."

Follow Alder's art Instagram account at:

@extraterrestrialclementine.



## Double sided

By Tala Bridgeland '28



Wednesday, October 29, 2025

## Archives closure, *continued from front*

Along with more than a dozen of Wheaton students, Fox-Moore was employed at the Archives this past summer, working personally on a project regarding materials transported from the college's former off-site storage facility, Iron Mountain. Fox-Moore's project was to see whether they were still eligible to be kept by the Archives or needed to be ethically destroyed. Fox-Moore explained that they had sorted through roughly 10% of the materials they had planned before their project was discarded by the administration.

On June 12, 2025, Fox-Moore was working on the Periodicals level of the Library, kicking off what they thought would be a summer-long project with the materials from Iron Mountain.

"I received a text message from the archivist [Taylor McNeilly] that they were asked to come in for a meeting and would speak to me after," said Fox-Moore, "Then just before 4 p.m. that day, they met me in the library and informed me that they were let go: effective immediately. There was no information at that time about the status of my job, or the Archives altogether."

And such was the dismissal of beloved archivist Taylor McNeilly. McNeilly was the singular faculty member of the Wheaton Archives (2023-25). During their time at Wheaton, McNeilly not only led a multitude of imperative research projects, but also fostered lifelong friendships and mentorships with students.

"Taylor was the first trans/queer adult I had ever met, and the fact of their existence allowed me to see a future for myself for the first time," said Sam Avelar '28. "This is a feeling that several of my coworkers have shared, illustrating the true impact of this loss. It is no secret that many of the staff members who have been laid off belonged to marginalized groups, and I have lost a lot of faith in Wheaton's 'inclusive' reputation as a result."

Student employees had to grapple with the loss of a prominent role model, without any explanation from the administration regarding McNeilly's layoff. One student in particular, Ryan White '27 was working as the project lead for a Wheaton Wire metadata

cleanup and recalls no warning of McNeilly's layoff.

"As we neared the end of the syllabi, we had a meeting scheduled with Taylor to talk about issues that had come up and how we would wrap up the syllabi and move on to the Wire metadata," said Ryan White '27, "The day before this meeting, we received an email from Mags Fox-Moore that Taylor had been suddenly let go from their position. Taylor did not have access to their email to let us know, so I don't know how we would have found out about this if Mags was not working on campus at the time."

Not only that, but student employees within the Archives were not initially informed that McNeilly's layoff meant a complete closure of the Archives. "It took over a month for us to be informed of the changes and the closure of the archives," said Spader. Additionally, they were not told what to expect for the duration of their summer projects, let alone what the fall semester had in store regarding the projects they had been intently working on. Although McNeilly's layoff occurred in early June, the student employees in the Archives were not informed of McNeilly's dismissal or the Archives' closure until July 21, via an email from Thomas Scharff.

"I never found out officially that they were closing. I never got any sort of email from the school telling me that I was going to lose my job," said Lorcan Lemay '26, who returned from a semester abroad to find the Archives shut down. "I found out about the closure of the Archives and the dismissal of Taylor from hearsay sources. Wheaton College said nothing to me about my loss of employment."

"From what I have heard, Taylor was not told of their layoff until the day they needed to move out of their office. There was no warning and no grace period," said Sam Avelar '28, "Myself and my coworkers were emailed the news only weeks before school began, and we were faced with the decision to pursue a new job or none at all. This was incredibly shocking to me because we were not explicitly informed about the layoff, and I had assumed that I would be



Photo taken by Katelyn Spader '27

These books come from the Seminary Collection, the college's first library collection and include books from Wheaton's founding era.



Photo taken by Katelyn Spader '27

This multi-colored collection of texts originates from the nineteenth century.

working for Taylor until my senior year. We were given little-to-no information, and we are still trying to put the pieces together as to how this happened."

As for student employees like Fox-Moore and White, summer projects were completely discarded. Fox-Moore told *The Wire* that before the month of June was over, they were taken off their summer project, and transferred to work in the library beginning the first week of July.

"My supervisor was transferred to Thomas Scharff in the library who, along with former Dean Brooks, decided that I should stop working on the project and work for the library for the rest of June, after they met the provost who allegedly did not want the project to continue," said Fox-Moore. "This project has not been continued since I was let go and most of the Iron Mountain materials are still in the cage on the Periodicals level of the library. There has not been a proper inventory of these materials due to this, and there is no certainty of what materials there are required to be accounted for by the college."

Thomas Scharff rejected permission to photograph anything beyond the closed door to the Archives when asked for a brief photo for this article this past Tuesday.

It is no secret that Wheaton has had budget cuts that have resulted in numerous lay-offs, along with other losses across campus. But, on this topic, they [administration] have been mostly silent. "We get dozens of emails about mundane things, but the emails about important topics are conspicuously absent," wrote Lemay. "Their policy of silence does nothing but hurt Wheaton students," they said. "I understand the closure of the Archives, even though I do not agree with it. I do not understand their silence."

Many students previously employed in the Archives have little hope that they will be reopened in the foreseeable future, or at least during their time at Wheaton, as many will be graduating in the next year or two. Along with stripping the Wheaton community of a vital resource, students have voiced that the administration has failed to ensure appropriate communication with their students.



Photo taken by Katelyn Spader '27

The books in the archival collection above include eighteenth century works on Jewish history.

# Fall favorites

Created by Max Aaronson '26

### Across

- 1 Native American tribe based in Arizona
- 5 Popular name in skin and hair care
- 11 \_\_\_ splints
- 12 Game show and TV series protagonist Sandiego
- 13 Golden brown variety of pear
- 14 Pass
- 15 Part #5 of a Halloween classic
- 17 Part #1 of a Halloween classic
- 18 Food for a horse
- 19 The tallest one in the world is roughly 380 feet
- 20 Common eye color - and the last word of the Halloween classic spelled out through combining 15-, 17-, 23-, 26-, and 27- across!
- 23 Part #3 of a Halloween classic
- 24 "\_\_\_ Lang Syne", Scottish song sung on New Year's Eve
- 25 Fair workplace hiring initials
- 26 Part #2 of a Halloween classic
- 27 Part #4 of a Halloween classic
- 31 Spoke
- 33 Of a stable mind
- 34 Write or record in a specific form
- 35 Dry drinks
- 36 Meeting points between land and water
- 37 U.S. actress \_\_\_ Harper

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11				12					
13				14					
15				16		17			
20	21	22			23				
24				25			26	27	28
29				30					
31			32		33				
34					35				
36					37				

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- 2 Phrase you might hear from Santa, but backwards
- 3 Locale of a famous tower
- 4 Group of 'hip' people
- 5 Score a 100% on a test, you might say
- 6 Valley, in poetry
- 7 "The end of an \_\_\_"
- 8 The Romans had a famous one
- 9 Iced tea brand owned by Nestle
- 10 A fifth of some tennis matches
- 16 \_\_\_ party, beloved pastime of gamers
- 19 Drug education and harm-reduction group
- 20 They're passed during a relay
- 21 Scooby-Doo catchphrase
- 22 Starbucks coffee line featuring extra virgin olive oil
- 23 Jewel
- 25 Bros
- 27 \_\_\_ Davidson, SNL comedian
- 28 Vitamin-rich veggie
- 29 17th-century Hispanic writer and philosopher Juana \_\_\_ de la Cruz
- 30 Part of the name of a well-known loch
- 32 Sticky stuff

### Down

- 1 Biggest bank in Europe

## Unhinged horoscopes

By Willow Whitelaw '26

### Aries

(March 20-April 19)  
Try thinking of others for a change.

### Taurus

(April 20-May 20)  
Paint a pumpkin, because you can't be trusted with sharp objects.

### Gemini

(May 21-June 20)  
Put yourself out there, you never know what you'll find.

### Cancer

(June 21-July 22)  
Stay warm and sleep in.

### Leo

(July 23-August 22)  
New opportunities are coming your way.

### Virgo

(August 23-September 22)  
Trick or treat? The choice is yours.

### Libra

(September 23-October 22)  
Everyone is waiting for your move.

### Scorpio

(October 23-November 21)  
Keep stirring the pot.

### Sagittarius

(November 22-December 20)  
Wear a costume this Halloween, don't be boring.

### Capricorn

(December 21-January 19)  
Someone has their eye on you.

### Aquarius

(January 20-February 17)  
Don't let other people get to you.

### Pisces

(February 18-March 19)  
Watch out for witches.

## Tic-Tac-Toe

X					

# Sudoku puzzles

8		7			4			9
1		9	8		2	3		7
	3	5			7	4		6
6		4	7	8		9	3	
9		3			1		7	
7	8				3	1	4	
	7	1	4		9	8		3
4	2		3	7	6		9	1
3	9		1		8	7		4

5		1		9	6		3	8
9		8	7	5			6	
	3		8		1		9	5
3	7			8			5	
	8	5	6	1				3
	6		3		5		8	
	5	3	1	6		8		9
6	1			3	8	5		2
8	9		5	7			1	6

## The Wheaton Wire's Publishing Cycle

1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday

PITCHES GIVEN  
6:30-7:30PM  
@THE WIRE'S OFFICE,  
BALFOUR

1<sup>st</sup> Thursday

LET'S  
**connect**  
@ OPEN HOURS, 6-8PM  
THERE WILL BE PIZZA!

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday

WEEKLY MEETINGS  
(SOMETIMES JOURNALISM WORKSHOPS)  
ALSO 6:30-7:30PM @THE WIRE'S OFFICE, BALFOUR



ALL CONTENT  
DUE 11:59PM

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday

6-8PM, OPEN HOURS!!  
MORE PIZZA!!

ALL EDITED ARTICLES  
DUE 11:59PM



**NEW PAPER**

**ALERT!**

3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday

PAPER SENT FOR  
PRINTING!

3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday

NEW PAPER  
CAN BE FOUND  
ACROSS CAMPUS!!

& PITCHES GIVEN FOR  
NEXT ISSUE!

so, also 2<sup>nd</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday

article writing ongoing

article writing ongoing

editing ongoing

layout design ongoing