

# COMMUNIQUE

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## NEWS



Issues involving new mailroom address being resolved. **Page 3**

## OPINION



YikYak's anonymity gives an outlet to hate, but also joy. **Page 4**

## LIFESTYLE



Fun things to do while the cold weather remains. **Page 6**

## FORUM



Help the opossum solve a winter-themed crossword. **Page 8**

## University expected to cut laptops for all new students

Bella White and Carson Gates  
News editor and Editor-in-chief

Chatham University is exploring the idea of cutting the program that provides computers to all incoming students as a cost-saving measure to decrease the University's financial deficit. Sources tell the *Communique* that the University pays around \$750,000 per class for the laptops it leases. There are no changes expected in the 2023-24 academic year.

Students currently pay a technol-

ogy fee each semester at Chatham. For the 2023-24 academic year, the technology fee for full-time undergraduate students was \$978 per person.

"We are paying for having the laptops and having access to these technologies," Aidan Bobik '24 said. "I don't think it is an absurd thing to say that if you are going to eliminate this program, that that fee should be reduced."

The Chatham University website states that "the technology fee is **SEE COMPUTERS, PAGE 2**

## *Snowfall blankets Shadyside campus*



Snow covers the roof of the Mellon Center. Sarah Naccarato/*Communique*  
**SEE WINTER, PAGE 7**

## *Women's basketball team's historic 14-game winning streak ends*

Josie Barton

Sports editor [@josiejosie.b](https://www.instagram.com/josiejosie.b)

The women's basketball team has been making history each game since its trip to Puerto Rico for a tournament over winter break. Not only did the team beat a nationally

ranked team for the first time in program history, but each win collected increased their win streak.

Unfortunately, all good things must come to an end. After 14 games, double the previous record set in 2021-22, the women's basketball team finally lost a game.

The Cougars dropped a contest on the road to Washington and Jefferson on Jan. 20.

Head coach David Saur has always been confident in his team's efforts. Several key players returned from their Presidents' Athletic Conference (PAC) finals run

last year, and Saur is excited for his team to see the results of the team's hard work.

"The bottom line is we have really talented basketball players," Saur said. "This is what we felt like we could do at our peak."  
**SEE BASKETBALL, PAGE 5**

## With laptop program in question, students concerned about potential negative effects

COMPUTERS, FROM PAGE 1

mandatory for all full-time undergraduate students and entitles each student to a laptop computer (must be returned if leave before graduating), laptop warranty, accidental damage protection and a computer backpack. In addition, the fee helps fund Microsoft software licensing, Helpdesk support and repairs (7 days a week) and other campus technology investments and infra-

structure.”

The Communiqué has reached out to the University for comment and is awaiting a response.

The potential for the program to be cut has some students raising questions about what benefits could be lost for incoming students.

“Having a specific laptop that we know every student has, that all your classmates, that all your professors have, you have this

whole ecosystem where you know what to have, so you know that if you are going to take a class, you are going to have the resources that you need,” Bobik said. “I think you will see a number of negative effects with getting rid of the program.”

The University is working to find potential solutions for incoming students if this change is made. Current students are not at risk of

losing their laptops

Without University-issued laptops, students would still be required to find and provide their own. The University would be planning on issuing a hardware requirement for students to take courses that use laptops as part of its coursework.

Follow [@Communique\\_CU](#) on [Instagram](#) for continued coverage.  
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## Grants needed as University prepares for potential updates to Thomson House



Outside the Thomson House located on Fifth Avenue. Sydney Altfather/Communique

Sydney Altfather

Contributor

By Chatham University’s entrance at Woodland Road on the Shadyside campus, the historic Thomson House is set to receive some updates. The building has stood for more than a century, and with the help of potential grants and funding, the University aims to address three main areas to renovate the Thomson House: electrical, plumbing and accessibility.

The three-story house at 5850 Fifth Ave. was constructed in 1909 and passed down for three generations, ending with Robert Thomson, who handled insurance for Chatham University. Upon his death in 2014, the house and all its contents were gifted to the University. However, the University did not have sufficient funds at that time to renovate the property.

“The challenge with historical preservation and redevelopment is finding the funds,” President Rhonda Phillips said.

Dr. Phillips explained that the house had never been renovated since it currently had the knob and tube electrical system.

Bill Campbell, vice president of marketing & communications, expressed excitement that the University was gifted the property and that it is vital to the Institutional Master Plan. However, he mentioned that the next steps for the house and renovations will take time as funding is sought and uses for the property are considered.

*Scan the QR code below to find the rest of the story*



## Updates to mailing address leads to some packages going missing

Bella White

News editor [b.el.la.w](https://www.facebook.com/b.el.la.w)

Chatham University announced on Jan. 10 a change in the student mailing address on the Shadyside campus in an effort to better support first-responder responses.

Following this change, some mail has successfully arrived on campus, but several packages were sent to the wrong location, about 20 minutes north of the Chatham mailroom. The property receiving the Chatham mail shares the same address as the new one suggested by the mailroom, with the only difference being the zip codes.

“Amazon is changing the zip code on packages in their shipping stream,” Copy and Mail Center Manager Ed White said in an email. “I have contacted Amazon

to get this corrected as quickly as possible.”

White reported that the Post Office drove to the other location and retrieved the missing packages.

Following the mistake, some students reported receiving a refund from Amazon for orders placed with the new address and a notification that their packages were returned.

Amazon issued a refund. So I’m not entirely sure if it didn’t get anywhere, if it just went back to the hub or if it got to the address, because I’ve never received anything and they didn’t say,” Carmela Capasso ‘27, a student who recently placed an Amazon order with the new mailing address, said. “They just said, here’s our refund.”

All students impacted should still notify Amazon to get these

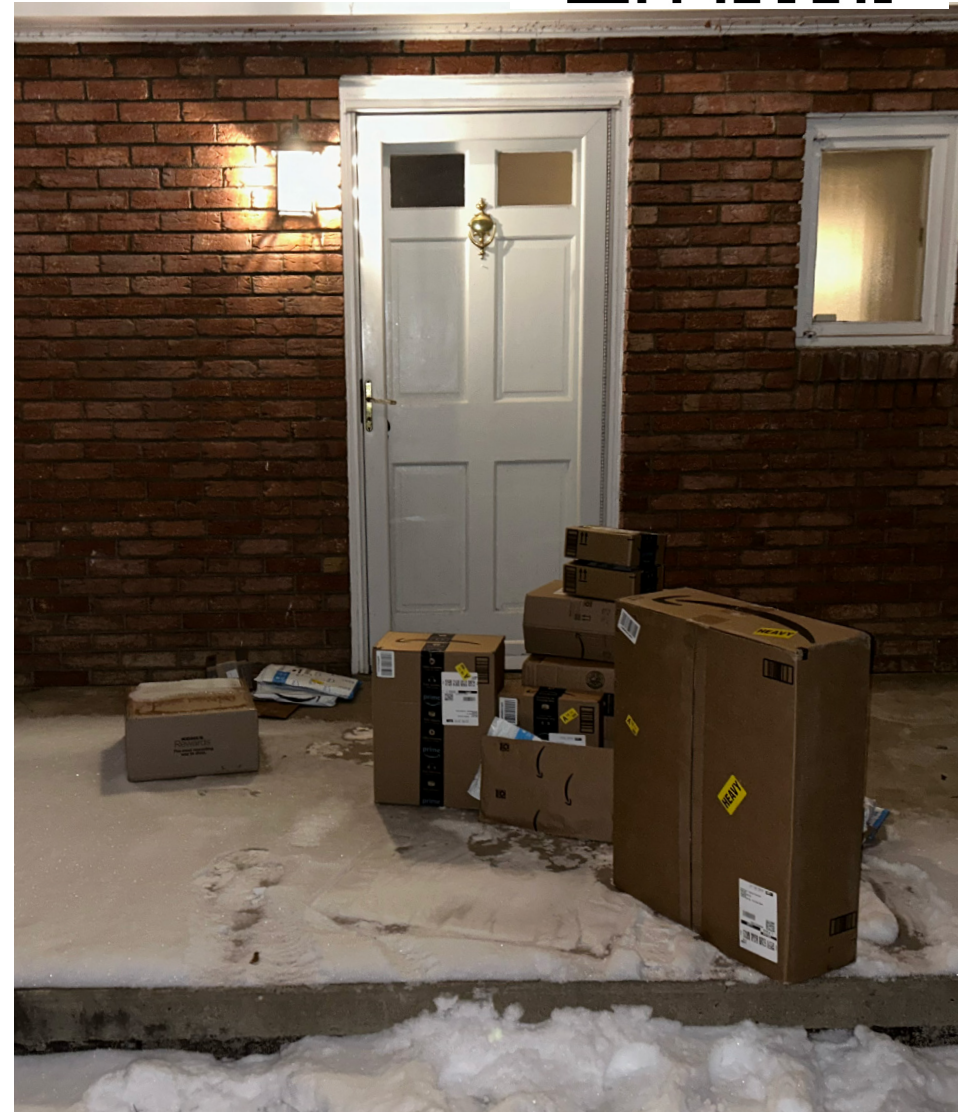
mistakes on file and speed up the progress toward addressing the problem, and receiving a refund.

Students are still suggested to use the mailing address provided by the University, which is:

**Chatham University  
(Name & SMB #)  
107 Woodland Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15232**

[IsabellaR.White@chatham.edu](mailto:IsabellaR.White@chatham.edu)

Scan the QR code below to view our on-sight coverage



Packages meant for the Chatham University mailroom delivered outside the wrong address. Carson Gates/Communiqué

## POLICE BLOTTER

All information is provided by Chatham University's Public Safety

**Jan. 4** – Officers responded to Pelletreau Apartments for a family moving a student in. When they arrived, they noticed property in the apartment. It is believed they were at the wrong apartment.

**Jan. 6** – Officers were dispatched to Chatham Apartments for a criminal mischief report. Upon arrival, officers observed the damage and placed a report on file.

**Jan. 9** – Officers were dispatched to Chatham Apartments for the smell of marijuana. Upon arrival, officers found no smell of marijuana in the building.

**Other updates:** Officers did three medical transports to MedExpress or UPMC Shadyside Hospital. Officers also received lost property at the police station. If students lost something, contact Chatham police at 412-365-1230.

## YikYak is a two-headed beast: anonymous joy and cruelty

Abigail Hakas

Opinion editor  thathakas

YikYak, the anonymous social media app that shut down in 2017 after being banned by some schools amid criticism for cyberbullying, has steadily made its presence known at Chatham University since it reemerged under new ownership in 2021. Chatham students can log in with their student emails and get access to the Chatham YikYak feed where users can anonymously discuss and gossip about college life and beyond.

Essentially, YikYak is a place that any grumpy old curmudgeon would rail against in the pages of your local newspaper. Before I downloaded the app, that's what I planned to do, but YikYak is a two-headed beast.

For the most part, YikYak's posts are benign, even enjoyable. Complaints about classes, funny anecdotes and discussions of relationships are some of the mainstays of the app. But YikYak's anonymous nature means there are little consequences for cruelty.

The first post I saw when I downloaded YikYak in October was someone calling for less negativity on the app, a relatively uncontroversial take. When I saw it had more than just a few comments, I clicked on it. Someone was throwing vile, racist comments at the original poster.

That moment started my months-long obsession with the app. For

this story, I read semesters of posts and saw the worst of our campus. I've seen body shaming, misogyny and bigotry run rampant in comments and posts. I've seen people ask invasive questions about student athletes' sexualities and relationship statuses.

I've also seen people use it to discuss the difficulty of classes they were considering taking. Students have asked about assignments, professors' grading and how to use campus resources.

YikYak has been acting as an anonymous hub of information at Chatham, good and bad.

After YikYak returned, the new owners laid out the community guidelines to prevent further cyberbullying. YikYak has a one-strike policy if a poster violates the rules.

But the rules are weak, at best. For every protection put in place, there's an easy loophole that can be exploited.

Staff and faculty are fair game for photos and public discussion in the guidelines, but students are supposed to have protections. Posting photos of other students is not allowed unless the face is blurred or covered by an emoji, the guidelines say. While you can't name students specifically, initials are allowed. The guidelines leave a vague warning that any information that could potentially identify

someone is against the rules.

Simply put, the rules aren't made for a university like Chatham. At a small institution like ours, it's not difficult to recognize people based on their clothes or hair in a photo with their face obscured. Initials aren't particularly subtle either, and it begs the question of why YikYak has these loopholes at all.

Chatham's YikYak feed has a perfect case study of the failures of these new guidelines. A user posted an image of two students in fur suits on the Shadyside campus. The comments were a mix of admiration, surprise and hate. One of the comments identified one of the students by their campus job and hair color, and a reply again identified the other by hair color.

At a larger institution like the University of Pittsburgh, a comment saying that someone had a unique hair color would not do much to identify someone, but that isn't the case for Chatham. If I was able to figure out who the two students in the photo were, I'm likely not the only one.

Another post made fun of a student for swimming in the Athletic and Fitness Center's pool while wearing a mermaid tail. Completely harmless, fun activities like dressing up have led to students being mocked by an anonymous crowd much too eager to name and

shame others.

This is the core issue of YikYak: the posters are anonymous, but the people they're discussing may not be. YikYak's one-sided anonymity means those targeted by negative posts and comments are facing the consequences of an app that, because of its anonymity, doesn't even allow them to know who is harassing them.

With everything that I have seen, I could easily write off YikYak as a hellscape unfit for our phones. But after downloading it last semester, I confess that I probably use it more than most people on this campus. So perhaps better than most, I can say YikYak is the most dangerous thing for a social media app to be: YikYak is what we make of it.

It's not inherently evil, but it's a place where cyberbullying and hate can fester. It's also a place where people have shared personal triumphs, moments of queer joy and difficulties they've been facing that otherwise may have gone unheard.

While I downloaded the app with the intention of tearing it to pieces, I found myself amazed and overwhelmed by the scope of its use. It is with this newfound appreciation for the app that I urge people to use it carefully and kindly. YikYak, at its best, is an entertaining place that lets students spread joy and useful information. At its worst, it doesn't deserve to be back on the app store.

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## Rest of season not a layup for record-setting women's basketball team

**BASKETBALL, FROM PAGE 1**

Guard Aurielle Brunner '25 has been a large asset to the team's recent success. With a strong belief in her team's triumph, Brunner is humble and believes that the team's "underdog attitude" is what will guide them to success.

"I knew we had the ability to be successful ever since last year. Even though our outcome wasn't the way we wanted, we came back this year hungrier than ever for that championship," Brunner said. "It is evidently noticeable that we want this win and will do everything in our power to do so."

Guard Ashlie Louden '25 is a determined and positive player on and off the court. Expecting success since her first season with the team in their 2022-23 season, Louden is confident in her team's ability to finish the season strong.

"I will never expect anything less from this team, knowing the depth and talent we have," Louden said.

Both Brunner and Louden have earned PAC Player of the Week honors throughout the course of the season, and have both been key members of their team's success.

The team appreciates

their fans' efforts and hopes for more student attendance to give them the support they need to win their last games and make it to the championship.

"Ever since my freshman year here, we've barely had students supporting us or coming to our games, but we don't let it phase us," Brunner said.

**“It's great we're winning and having a successful season, but the reason we're doing all of this is to win a championship.”**

**-Ashlie Louden '25”**

"We're hoping to host the PAC championship, which I think will bring a lot of people out to support us," Louden added. "However,

the ones that have supported us through and through, we are very thankful for their support."

Saur's coaching strategy is as follows: one day at a time, one game at a time. His approach is crucial to his players' mental capabilities when they step onto the court. By focusing on the present, his team can compart-

mentalize and put their full effort and skill into each and every game.

"We have players that love the game and love to work, and I think when you have that combination ... that's a recipe for success," Saur said.

Saur's players appreciate his commitment to their success. His strong positive coaching attitude has fostered an environment where players feel confident in their efforts against any opponent.

"Coach [Saur's] attitude is a lot like mine," Louden said. "It's great we're winning and having a successful season, but the reason we're doing all of this is to win a championship."

Saur and his team recognize the work of the team's assistant coaches Alumni Britney Smith '21 and Olivia Barkley '19, who have played for Saur in the past and have assisted the team now for two years.

"With the work that they put in outside practice and having great

relationships with our players, their work has been as much as anything to the success we've had last season and this season," Saur said.

The team was picked third in the PAC preseason poll and are currently in second place behind Washington and Jefferson.

The women's basketball team looks to get back in the win column once again at 6 p.m. on Jan. 24 when they host Bethany at the Athletic and Fitness Center.

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### Upcoming home games

#### Women's basketball

*Games played at the Athletic and Fitness Center*

6 p.m. Jan. 24 vs. Bethany  
Noon Jan. 27 vs. Franciscan

*Alumni Game*

#### Men's basketball

*Games played at the Athletic and Fitness Center*

8 p.m. Jan. 24 vs. Bethany  
2 p.m. Jan. 27 vs. Franciscan

*Alumni Game*

#### Women's ice hockey

*Game played at the Hunt Armory*

7 p.m. Jan. 26 vs. Lebanon Valley

3 p.m. Jan. 27 vs. Lebanon Valley

#### Men's ice hockey

*Game played at the Hunt Armory*

7 p.m. Jan. 27 vs. Fredonia

*Senior Night*

#### Men's volleyball

*Games played at the Athletic and Fitness Center*

7 p.m. Feb. 1 vs. Saint Vincent  
11 a.m. Feb. 3 vs. Carlow  
3 p.m. Feb. 3 vs. Penn State Altoona



Aurielle Brunner '25

### Standings

#### Women's basketball

Overall record: 15-3  
Second place in PAC

#### Men's basketball

Overall record: 10-8  
Third place in PAC

#### Women's hockey

Overall record: 8-4-3  
Seventh place in UCHC

#### Men's hockey

Overall record: 5-11  
Ninth place in UCHC

## COUGARS CONQUER COLD

*How to navigate bad weather, enjoy the snowy season on campus*

Leyna Laurent

Contributor  leynalaurent

As the spring semester commences, one thing is inevitable: the apex of winter draws nearer. The change in seasons can often bring about unpredictable and challenging conditions, especially considering the already erratic Pittsburgh weather. Chatham is renowned for its natural surroundings and outdoor amenities, but harsher weather can pose issues for students, both residential and commuters. Here is a guide to help you get through the inclement weather that often persists sporadically throughout the next few months:

Staying aware of email notifications from Chatham University Communications and Public Safety can inform you of any changes to campus operation levels. Enabling notifications on the ChathamU app for updates is another way to stay updated. Your own judgment may also play a vital role when commuting to campus as commuters may face adverse road conditions. If this is the case, and the weather does not permit traveling, contact your professors about remote learning options until the conditions improve.

Finding a warm place to go in between classes can also be difficult, especially for commuters. Luckily, there are many student lounge areas throughout campus,

many of which can be found within the academic buildings. If you'd prefer using this downtime to study or complete assignments, the Jennie King Mellon Library offers the option to reserve both group and individual study rooms.

There are also plenty of recreational options for students during winter weather. Sledding used to be commonplace on Chapel Hill before its ban last year. But if you're still looking for options to fulfill your sledding desires, Mellon Park, Frick Park and Flagstaff Hill at Schenley Park are some potential solutions while there is still snow on the ground.

If sledding is not quite what you're looking for, the quad can be used for snowman (or snow-cougar) building. Of course, there is



Snow builds on the cougar statue outside Café Rachel. Leyna Laurent/Communiqué

a plethora of indoor activities to choose from, such as watching movies, reading, engaging in art projects and so many other options to explore. The Carriage House provides an inviting setting for leisure and relaxation during any downtime. It offers a variety of amenities, including board games, video games, a cozy fireplace and a TV equipped with surround sound. The lounge is accessible 24 hours a day with student ID. To enhance the enjoyment of your chosen activity, consider pairing it with a warm beverage. If making your own isn't feasible and you prefer staying on campus, Café Rachel has an ever-changing seasonal menu with several options.

Even with the obstacles often posed by a typical Pittsburgh

winter, embracing the array of both indoor and outdoor recreation avenues can allow you to make the most of the inclement weather. Regardless of how you choose to spend the snowier days of this semester, your safety should always take precedence.

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**PUBLIC PLACES FOR SLEDDING IN PITTSBURGH** 

**Flagstaff Hill**  
Schenley Park, Oakland  
If you're looking for a sledding experience with great views, this is the spot for you. Overlooking Oakland, this hill is popular with college students. Also, check out the park's ice skating rink!

**Mellon Park**  
Shadyside  
Not to be confused with Mellon Pond, this is a great sledding option if you want to stay close to campus. 

**Seven Bumps Hill**  
Highland Park  
There is a free ice rink and plenty of other hills in Highland Park, though this one has the best ratings. 

**Dormont Park**  
Dormont  
With two sledding hills, one little one, and one more intense, Dormont has something for any type of sledder. 

**Boyce Park**  
Monroeville  
If you're willing to travel a little further, this experience is definitely worth it. Boyce Park offers professional snow tubing. 

**Have fun and "slide" responsibly!**

Graphic by Madison Butina

## Shadyside campus covered in snow



Snow falls on the quad. Sarah Naccarato/Communiqué



Sled trails on Chapel Hill. Carson Gates/Communiqué



Footsteps fill the snow-covered quad. Sarah Naccarato/Communiqué

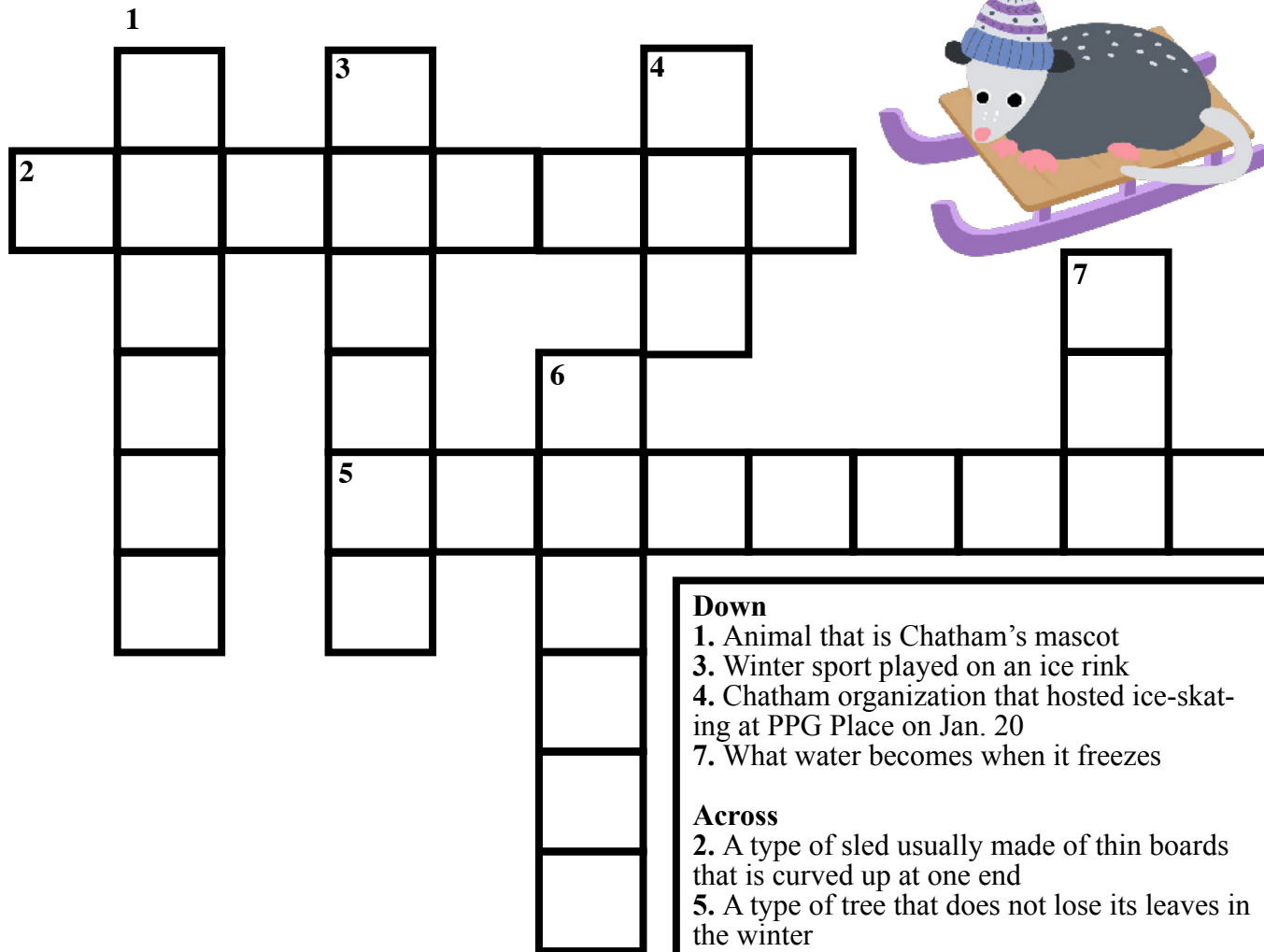


Snow falls on the porch at the Rea House. Ireland Kennedy/Communiqué



Chatham banner on Woodland Road. Carson Gates/Communiqué

## Winter crossword



- Down**
1. Animal that is Chatham’s mascot
  3. Winter sport played on an ice rink
  4. Chatham organization that hosted ice-skating at PPG Place on Jan. 20
  7. What water becomes when it freezes
- Across**
2. A type of sled usually made of thin boards that is curved up at one end
  5. A type of tree that does not lose its leaves in the winter
  6. The name of a park near the Shadyside campus available for sledding

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The Communique welcomes readers to submit letters to be considered for publication. Send your reactions to stories, thoughts on Chatham University and whatever else is on your mind to opinion editor Abigail Hakas (abigail.hakas@chatham.edu)

**Corrections**

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