



GARDEN SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Richard Marotta, Ph. D., Headmaster

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"Academic Excellence Since 1923"

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Thoughts for the week

By Richard Marotta, Ph.D., Headmaster



Among the many qualities of independent schools, the one that always adds most to the quality of the overall experience for families is communication. Communication touches upon the nature of the partnership between families and schools and almost always enhances the child's educational experience.

All of the literature about independent school mentions the importance of the bond between families and school in the success of the student. Not only are parents a truly important partner in educating children, they often act as the conduit for information and to implement plans that insure the student's success. At Garden, communication is highly valued and it occurs in a variety of ways: parent conferences, planned and impromptu meetings, telephone calls, emails, newsletter and teacher pages on *Think Wave*.

To that end, I look forward to seeing all 8th and 9th grade parents and students at next week's meeting scheduled for Tuesday at 6PM in the school library. The topic of "*How To Make the Most of your High School Years*" will address ways that students and parents can take advantage of all that Garden School has to offer and that each student's experience is positive and academic success is ensured. There will be time for questions and the information presented is intended to enhance your Garden School experience.

Another vitally important aspect of school communication occurs between the school itself and the parent body. Schools need to inform parents on a regular basis about trends in education, about plans for change within the school, about soliciting parent input on various issues and finally about the larger more visionary aspects of school development.

Studies by NAIS (National Association of Independent Schools) and ISM (Independent School Management) regularly confirm that the most important aspects of school are the quality of teacher/student interaction and parent involvement in the life of the school. The greater the parent involvement, the greater the educational experience for the student. At times, parent involvement may center on volunteering for activities and at other times the focus may be on communication. Whatever form parent involvement takes, it almost always enhances the scope of the educational journey. Our new world is a world of partnership.



DATES TO REMEMBER:

- **Tuesday, October 7 : Meeting for Grades 8 & 9 Parents and Students - 6PM in the Library**
"How to Make the Most of Your GS High School Years"
- **Monday, October 13 : School Closed for Columbus Day**
- **Wednesday, October 15 : PSATs for Grades 10 & 11**
- **Wednesday, October 15 – Friday, October 17 : Camp Herrlich Trip for Grades 5 & 6**
- **Tuesday, October 21 : International Bake Sale**
- **Thursday, October 23 : Halloween Parties for Grades Pre-K to 6**
2-3:30 PM in the Gym - Nursery, Pre-K and K
4-6PM in the Gym - Grades 1 to 6
- **Friday, October 24 : School Closed for Faculty Workshop Day**
- **Wednesday, October 29 : Senior Bake Sale**

IMPORTANT SAVE THE DATES!!

- **Garden School General Assembly: November 12, 2014 at 7:00pm in the Gym.**

This will be a meeting with the Garden School Board of Trustees who will discuss the state of the school. I will send you a more detailed explanation of this event next week.

- **The Garden School Gala will take place on Friday March 27, 2015 at Terrace on the Park**

College Visitors Next Week:

Monday 10/6

8:45am Medaille College (NY)
11am University at Albany (NY)
2:00pm SUNY System (NY)

Wednesday 10/8

1pm Rutgers University (NJ)

Thursday 10/9

10:30am Kenyon College (OH)
1pm Utica College (NY)

Friday 10/10

11:15am Wheaton College (MA)



Mandarin for Early Childhood

By: Kelly Yang (Mandarin Teacher)

In the past three weeks, we focused on learning the numbers, facial and body parts in Chinese. I like to use games that incorporate the vocabulary words and make it fun to learn.

In the Nursery and Pre-K, we learned the basic greetings in Chinese, such as "ni hao" (hello), "zai jian" (good- bye), "xie xie"(thank you). To reinforce our lesson, we watched "Sesame Street Mandarin", and the children really enjoyed the songs.

In Kindergarten, besides learning how to count and our body parts, we are also learning family members. As the classes continue, we will use other fun activities that incorporate the language. As their vocabularies grow, we will start to teach the children to say short sentences in Chinese, such as "I have _____people in my family, they are_____, _____, _____." I look forward to working with your children and introducing them to the Chinese language and culture.

Grade 1

By: Jacquelyn Renner (Grade 1 Teacher)

"To help us when we are lost." " To keep us from getting lost." "So we can find the animals in the zoo."

These are some of the reasons First Graders gave for why we use maps. During reading this week, both fiction and non-fiction selections were read to introduce map skills. *On The Map* is an article in which two children describe their town through a map of the places they visit. In *Mapping Penny's World*, by Loreen Leddy, a girl creates maps for her dog, Penny. First Graders viewed maps of the Bronx Zoo, Nantucket, Mammoth Caves and a treasure map to identify symbols. Then the students created a map key for a map of the Hundred Acre Wood. Each student mapped their own world by drawing a map of their bedroom with a map key. To finish up map making, students will design a pirate map and lead classmates to the treasure using the cardinal directions.

Next week, our reading book makes another connection to our Community unit with an article comparing homes around the world.





Grade 2

By: Stephanie Parker (Grade 2 Teacher)

The Second Graders have begun the year in Social Studies by studying their own family history.

Over the past few weeks, the Second Graders have noted that families can be alike and different but that each family is unique. We began by sharing our family traditions. Some students shared that they take a special trip every year, sing a special song or cook traditional meals with their families. A few students were surprised to learn that their names are family traditions. The students also enjoyed completing family trees and learning the names of their relatives and ancestors.



The Second Graders also wrote about what country or countries their families were from. They were astonished at the many different countries we represent. We are a diverse class that shows respect for both our differences and similarities!

Grade 3

By: Nilla Ingravallo (Grade 3 Teacher)

The third graders have begun the school year learning the globe and reviewing map skills. They have studied the names and locations of the seven continents and five oceans. Globe terminology such as "equator", "Prime Meridian", and "hemispheres" have been taught and identified. The students practiced these skills through the use of technology and by creating globes.



The third graders also learned about maps and their features (map title, compass rose, symbols, map key, and locator). They studied various maps for these elements. Then, the students became cartographers and applied their newly learned map knowledge; they made maps of the third grade classroom, computer lab, science lab, and art room.

The third graders will use these globe and map skills throughout the year as they study each continent in depth and use maps to learn about different countries.

Physical Education for Grades 4, 5 and 6

By: Flance Dervishi (Physical Education Director)

Fourth, Fifth and Sixth grades are off to a wonderful start of the school year in Physical Education! They have adjusted to their new floor spots, are working on new warm-up games and stretches and are well into their soccer season, the first sport of the year. After practicing skills including, dribbling, passing and shooting, they started with "steal the bacon" soccer, which enforced the need for speed when playing this fast-paced sport. The students were then assigned teams and have been playing each other all week, supporting sportsmanship and creating team chemistry as well as improving individual skills. Our playoffs and championship game will begin next week. Good luck to all the teams!



Grade 7

By: Richard Kruczek (History Teacher)

The seventh grade is in the midst of wrapping up its study of the colonial era. The students are engaged and motivated and the atmosphere in class has been outstanding!

This enthusiasm was never more evident than when we studied the *Flushing Remonstrance* of 1657. The inhabitants wanted to let the Quakers, a peace-loving people, settle there. However, the governor, Peter Stuyvesant, did not. The settlers then issued their formal protest, in which they invoked the law of love as justification for the Quakers to be allowed to settle. The students were enthralled - not just by the fact that the people were so warm, but also by the fact that it happened mere miles from here. It's like I tell them often: history is all around us. Especially when it's a few stops on the 7 line from them.

I eagerly await to see what their beautiful minds produce in the months to come!

Art for Grades 7 and 8

By: Tiina Prio (Art Teacher)

The Seventh and Eighth grade art students have finished working on the Amate Bark painting project for Hispanic Heritage Month. They learned about the Otomi natives of Meso-America and how they made paper out of bark by boiling and pounding it into a flat surface which was dried in the sun and then painted. The Garden School artists created bark paper out of regular construction paper which looked very similar to the paper used by the Otomi.

The art students studied many different Amate Bark Paintings and drew their own sacred fauna and flora images. After transferring the images onto the 'bark' paper, they used fluorescent paint to create a delightful contrast with the dark surface of the paper.

Learning about another culture and their art form is fun and impresses upon students how important it is to be tolerant and aware of other civilizations. Answers.com states that, "By studying culture we come to understand how the world around us evolves and manifests. We come to understand how people react to life and circumstances, how they live, what they are trained to live by, how that training affects their lives, how they respond to it. We come to understand the difference in humans, what holds us together and what does not. It helps us understand where we come from, how we may improve our lives and how to better understand each other and improve our behavioral connections in this world."





Music for Grades 7 and 8

By: Tom Heineman (Music Teacher)

In order to gain both a new perspective and a greater understanding of Japanese musical and theatrical traditions, 7th & 8th Graders have explored the country's rich history and culture in music class. They were given a historical overview of the nation's ancient past and some insight into the evolution of the written language and culture. Students even had the opportunity to write characters in the Chinese and Japanese written language (Japan borrowed the Chinese written language before developing their own and combining the two).



Currently, students are comparing two ancient forms of musical theatre: Noh and Kabuki. The origins and intended audience of these two art forms were polar opposites, as Noh served the upper class while Kabuki was performed for common people. Equipped with this information, students are able to draw conclusions about other aspects of the music and performances. They will also view a copy of a woodblock print depicting the interior of a Kabuki theater. Kabuki dates back to the 1600s, and the original theaters, made of wood, have long since burnt to the ground. The woodblock prints, therefore, help inform us about the theaters' construction and décor as well as aspects of the performance and the audience. 7th and 8th grade students will garner information from the print the same way scholars do today.



Grade 9

By: James Pigman (English Department Chair)

"I read the story, but I didn't understand it." This is classic ninth grade analysis of a reading assignment. Ninth graders seem to think that one can read something and not understand it. Reading is understanding. The anthology that we have is designed for ninth grade students. And the most valuable lesson to be learned sometimes is what to do when you don't understand something. I tell students that it is the one problem, the one passage, the one idea that is hard to understand that should get the most attention. Their philosophy should be to focus on the one problem that gives them trouble instead of waiting for class and getting someone else to show how to solve or grasp an idea.

Why didn't some understand? First, some didn't begin to read until 8 or 10 PM when no one is as sharp or as energetic or as focused. And if one begins that late, does that leave time for rereading or asking classmates for help? Secondly, there is vocabulary to be absorbed, sentences to be analyzed. Reread key passages and make the end of the story make sense. Third, our anthology has lists of Reading Check questions that will guide one through the salient points of the story and maybe nudge them toward meaning. And, if a student does not understand something, come in with a pointed, specific question that can be brought up at the start of class.

"I didn't understand" can't mean that not a single sentence was understood. There may be ambiguous parts to any work. But understanding starts with the stubborn perseverance to get to the meaning. Students have to develop that attacking attitude and take the responsibility for pushing themselves to use their intellect and other resources to conquer reading sentence by sentence.



Art for Grade 9

By: Tiina Prio (Art Teacher)

The Ninth Grade Renaissance Art students are working well in class drawing with water color pencils. They are working on a book of reproductions of two famous Renaissance artists. The beginning of the book features Michelangelo's frescos from the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. The Hand of Man is the first picture to be drawn and it will be integrated with creative aspects. Each student artist will choose a theme to be carried throughout their book. The Libyan Sybil, Prophet Isaiah and the Delphic Sybil will follow with the chosen theme. Some of the past themes chosen were 'Under the Sea', 'Money', and 'Van Gogh's paintings'.

Students are using watercolor pencils to learn the basics of tonal values and color schemes for their projects. An important yet difficult skill to learn is the ability to create tonal values in their work. Interpreting and creating the light, medium and dark tones takes effort and practice.

The Renaissance art students will view a video of modern day artists recreating Michelangelo's feat of painting a fresco on a ceiling. Students are amazed at how difficult a fresco is to paint and Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni continues to astound the world with his skill.



Grade 10

By: Marcia Elkind (History Teacher)

The tenth grade English class has finished its review of the summer reading and is beginning the study of Greek Drama. The play ANTIGONE was chosen because it features a teen-aged girl as the protagonist. This is in keeping with our overall theme for the year. Tenth graders are asked to consider the question "Who Am I?" In the second semester, they will produce a montage revealing the many sides of their personalities, their interests, plans for the future, special memories from the past. They will stand in front of their peers and explain their montage, and then write about it in a formal essay.

The literature we read this year focuses on the same theme, the question of identity. In the ANTIGONE we consider the difficult choices we are faced with all the time. We begin by exploring dilemmas and quickly learn that there is little in life that is black and white. We live in the grey, constantly testing our abstract ideas of right and wrong against the real life choices we have to make. Students will read aloud in class, rotating the parts so everyone has a chance to play a character. They will consider the themes that are raised through class discussion and written assignments. Questions arise about the role on the individual's conscience in conflict with civil authority, or how do you choose between two equally desirable or detestable outcomes? We ask hard questions and search for answers. In that search to find answers to difficult questions, we begin to define ourselves. and we answer the question, "Who Am I?"



Grades 11 and 12

By: Lara Leggio (Math Teacher)

The Pre-Calculus class has begun the year brushing up on our algebra skills. We first reviewed the Real Number system, followed by simplifying exponents and radical expressions. We also have revisited operations with algebraic expressions, as well as factoring polynomials. More recently, we have been exploring rational expressions.

Our small class allows for our problem solving skills and critical thinking to be shared with one another. We can work together to determine different methods to simplify the same expression. We all learn and think in different ways!

English Language Academy

By: Stella Stenos (ELA English and History Teacher)

Do you know where you live? Do you wonder what our country looks like?

This week, the ELA students have been busy creating a U.S. map! Students each researched three to four states and then created the state shape with facts in it. They not only became familiar with the lay of the land, but also researched and learned some in-state trivia!



Best of all, students worked together to create their map. Come visit our American map outside of room 21!

Middle School Trip To Frost Valley

By: John Hale (Science Teacher)

From the GS Mission Statement: **"We empower every student... to meet responsibly the challenges of everyday life by promoting... personal development and social involvement."**

At the beginning of each school year, the 7th and 8th graders, head off for a three day/two night trip to Frost Valley YMCA in the Catskills (<http://frostvalley.org/#/school-programs/>) for responsibility and team building experiences. While there, they worked on their collaboration and communication skills and their ability to trust themselves and each other. They hiked to a waterfall, took a tractor hay ride, built a campfire and roasted marshmallows, took a ride down a zip line, completed ropes course activities and swung on a giant swing. Most important, they came closer together as friends and as a positive, respectful and supportive middle school community. What a terrific group of students!





Jung Ho Yoon '2003 came by for a visit -- and to share the news of his upcoming wedding!



NACAC Conference

By: Lisa Sohmer (Director of College Counseling)

A few weeks ago, I attended the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) annual conference in Indianapolis. It was a record-setting event, with 6,045 attendees from across the country and around the world -- high school counselors, college admissions representatives, independent counselors and counselors from community based organizations (CBOs) -- coming together to learn from each other and work toward the common goal of helping students as they plan for and enroll in college.

Garden School juniors (along with the junior classes from Friends Seminary, Loyola School, Marymount School, Regis HS and UNIS) participate in our private College Fair at UNIS every spring, but we all know it is important to provide college information and opportunity to all students. That is why I have recently accepted an appointment to serve as co-chair (with Chris Milton of Brooklyn College) of the NACAC NYC College Fair for the next three years. While I was in Indianapolis I participated in the counterparts meeting with the chairs of the 59 NACAC National College Fairs and members of the NACAC senior staff as we planned for the coming fair cycle.



with Derek Dubose, Sr. Asst. Director of Admissions, The Ohio State University



with Jeff Fuller, NACAC President 2014-15 and Director of Admissions, U of Houston



in Indianapolis for NACAC's 70th Annual Conference