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Garden School News

CIVILITY • RESPECT • HONESTY • KINDNESS



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Headmaster's Column



One of the more important sections of the accreditation process centers on the idea of 'the culture of the school.' For most schools this means an analysis of the core value system, ranging from traditions, values, mythologies, customs, ethical and behavioral standards, styles of teaching and learning, atmosphere and ambiance and on and on.

The culture of a particular school is that which gives the school its identity, its flavor and its mission. This is not always easy to define, especially since independent schools tend to be very complex entities; however, once we begin the process of articulating our cherished ideas of leaning, behaving, thinking and our methodology for embracing others, then we come closer to understanding our own identity.

This culture results from many years of traditions that support the work of the school.

Traditions such as festivals, sports policies, expectations of personal attention, the formal or an informal atmosphere, all together create the school's culture.

If for example, a school treasures the custom of an open door policy for parents, then that becomes part of the culture of the school. If a school believes that the Head should be involved with the daily life of students, then that helps shape a different school culture from those in which the Head is seen as a fundraising link to the community.

Each school will establish different traditions, and it is these traditions and practices that give the school its culture. As we tell the story of our school, we reveal just how that narrative embodies and cherishes our identity.

Upper Division Highlights

On Wednesday we had a very special event for grades nine through twelve. Organized by Mary McKenna, eleventh grade, and as part of the United Nations world-wide program to prevent violence against women, we had a speaker address the high school about the issue of violence against women.

Ms. Liv Elin Indreiten, parent of Victoria and Nils, and a specialist for UNIFEM, spoke to the high school about this very important issue. She presented some shocking statistics about how thirty percent of women will experience some form of violence. This violence cuts across nations, ethnic, religious, cultural and age boundaries and occurs everywhere throughout the world community.

Continued on page 2

Lower Division Updates

The nursery children have been learning about Thanksgiving. They have been enjoying tracing their hands and making the most unique turkeys along with some exciting construction paper cornucopias. They read a Tomie de Paola book called,

My First Thanksgiving and walking by their classroom you can hear them singing an old favorite, *I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Pie*, by Allison Jackson.

Pre-Kindergarten has just finished up a Science unit on zoo animals. They have



Continued on page 2

Upper Division Highlights

Continued from page 1

Ms. Indreiten made reference to various forms of violence, from physical to psychological and from personal to organized violence against women and girls as a weapon used during military conflicts.

At the conclusion of her presentation, she pointed out the ways in which the UN has developed 250 initiatives in nearly 100 countries since 1997.

To help, please fill out a post card (main office has them) to support the project. The Avon Corporation will donate one dollar to the UNIFEM fund for each signed card. In the year 2008, UNIFEM, through the United Nations Trust Fund has set a goal to donate twenty million dollars to projects around the world which aim at ending violence against women and girls.

**We've had a Facelift!!!**

So what do you think??

I'm told there comes a time in all our lives when we contemplate a "nip and tuck". So it was for *Garden School News*. A facelift was definitely in order. With a little help from our 'friends', (especially Mrs. Marlene Lipson, parent of Miriam) we now have a new look, and we'd like to know what you think.

Email us at info@gardenschool.org with your comments.

**Lower Division Updates**

Continued from page 1

been reading books about the zoo animals and their habitats and coloring and cutting out zoo animals. Each child put together a book about a trip to the zoo. They were able to compare their books about a zoo trip to their actual zoo trip that they took two weeks ago. The Pre-K students have also been reading numerous books to help them learn about the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday. Each student has been busy making Native American regalia and Pilgrim costumes which were worn to their Thanksgiving Feast this week.

The Pre-K, Kindergarten, and First Grade took advantage of the mild November weather by visiting the Bronx Zoo. The students saw many animals in their habitats, and they especially enjoyed watching the sea lion demonstration and feeding.

Autumn was a beautiful time of year to see the Bronx Zoo. The Kindergarten class collected a variety of leaves that colored the grounds. In class, they discussed the different shapes, types, and colors of leaves. The students made lovely leaf rubbings from their findings. The Kindergarteners also enjoyed the new Madagascar exhibit. They attempted to count the numerous lemurs that frolicked in their lush habitat. During Social Studies class they continue their study of Native Americans.

First, second and third grade strengthen their writing skills by writing in different styles. Currently first grade is ending their weather unit by writing a weather report. Special weather words were researched by reading stories and watching news reports. After practicing, the reports will be delivered from the classroom weather station.

Second grade is writing from the *I Am From* poem. They are brainstorming what makes them special, where they are from, where their families are from, and aspects of their everyday life. Final drafts will be typed during computer class and delivered during an in-class poetry reading.

Third grade is working on a personal narrative. They have brainstormed personal memories they would like to share. Many writers chose important firsts like their first airplane ride. First drafts have been written and students are now working with a partner to edit their work. Final copies will be compiled in a class book.

Continued on page 3



Lost & Found

Take a look in the conference room on Monday and Tuesday to reclaim any lost items. We have an array of clothing, shoes and lunch boxes to pick from. Unclaimed items will be donated to charity on Wednesday evening.

Lower Division Updates

Continued from page 2

As autumn is upon us – our Language Arts curriculum is reflecting the season. The Fourth grade has been studying characterization. They recently gave character traits to turkeys!

The Fifth grade has been busying itself studying nouns and reading folktales from Native American tribes.

The Sixth grade is doing a Washington Irving author study. They read his famous novella, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. The author study will be followed up by a visit to the author's "Sunnyside" estate. The students will be able to soak up the colors of autumn in the country and to see in person the actual setting of this wonderful literacy masterpiece!



Happy Thanksgiving

Garden School Dates to Remember

- **PTA Food Drive Continues through December 19th**
- **Monday, 11/24 – Sixth Grade to Sleepy Hollow**
- **Tuesday, 11/25 - Eighth Grade to United Nations**
- **Wednesday, 11/26 – Senior/Alumni Breakfast**
- **Wednesday, 11/26 – Ronald McDonald Jean Day**
- **Wednesday, 11/25 – Interim Reports Mailed**
- **Thursday & Friday, 11/27,28 – School Closed for the Thanksgiving Holiday**
- **Friday, December 5 – Pep Rally**
- **Friday, December 5 – Senior Pasta Night**

History in the Eighth Grade *by Nancy Massand*

If you've heard students breaking into an impromptu chorus of "Free Nelson Mandela," you're listening to an overflow of the eighth grade curriculum. There's no better way to learn about a culture than to immerse oneself in it. In studying the history and culture of South Africa, the eighth grade has examined fact and fiction while experiencing the arts. During the past month, in Area Studies, English, Music and Art, South African themes have driven the curriculum and students have been infused with an appreciation and respect for the struggles that have led to freedom and opportunities we now enjoy.

In Area Studies with Ms. Smith, students learned the history of South Africa and analyzed the laws of Apartheid. The political movements spurred by racism and violence were a powerful force for change, a theme that still echoes even in our recent election. Some students were moved to tears while viewing the film *The Power of One*, a devastating account of one person's efforts to unite people as one to eliminate the injustice of Apartheid.

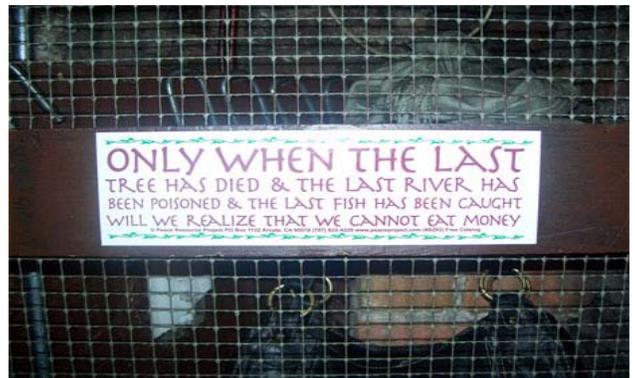
In English with Mrs. Massand, Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country* chronicled the fictional journey of a man whose son was caught up in the chaos of Johannesburg in the pre-Apartheid era. Although his journey ended in heartbreak, he was left with hope that his country would one day attain his dream. Students examined speeches of Martin Luther King or Abraham Lincoln and discovered parallels between the articulations of these great fathers of freedom and the actualities we consider our rights today.

In a joint Area Studies/English project, groups of students created a newspaper combining factual and fictional reports of Apartheid events with op-ed articles and political cartoons. As a culmination to celebrate the end of Apartheid and the end of their hard work, the eighth graders shared a delicious South African meal at Madiba Restaurant in Brooklyn's Fort Greene, followed by a discussion with the owners about what it is like to live in South Africa today. Madiba was a name given to Nelson Mandela, meaning father of his country.

Art teacher Mrs. Prio added a hands-on element to the study of South Africa with a study of animal symbolism in African art. Students created headdresses traditionally used in ceremonial rituals enacted to control the forces of nature, other tribes or the future. The strength and patience of the elephant and majestic power of the lion were popular themes. Music teacher Mr. Heineman led his students in experiencing African music, especially songs of the Apartheid era, while reinforcing the history of the movement that students were learning in Ms. Smith's Area Studies course. Hence, "Free Nelson Mandela" echoing through the halls of our multicultural Garden School, itself a testimony that the seeds planted and watered with the blood of freedom fighters has born fruit.



Eighth Grade @ Mandiba Restaurant



Message to the World from Mandiba Restaurant

Upper Division History Courses

- US History – Grade 7
- Area Studies – Grade 8
- Ancient/Medieval History – Grade 9
- Modern European History & AP Modern European History – Grade 10
- US History & AP US History – Grade 11

Elective Courses – Grade 12

- Macro/Micro Economics
- Revolution & Terrorism
- Political Philosophy
 - Current Affairs
 - Anthropology
- Comparative Religions