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# Garden School News

CIVILITY • RESPECT • HONESTY • KINDNESS



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## Headmaster's Column



At a conference I attended not too long ago, the discussion leader talked a great deal about the role of the Head of School as the chief story teller. Most of the heads in the audience agreed with this assertion, but also wanted to know more about the meaning and the importance of this role.

I think that the speaker was absolutely correct in thinking about the role and the significance of telling a school's *story*. Whenever we think of a school as an unfolding narrative, we have to remember that the school's story is a combination of its history, its values and its ethos. Each school, while fairly similar in curriculum and practices, has its own story, its own set of expectations and atmosphere that give it its unique quality.

Whenever the Head talks about his or her school, that's when the storytelling begins. All schools have academic programs, but how does our

school envision that program in relation to its students; all schools have a sports program, but what values do we want that program to embody; all schools have teachers and administrators, how do we establish and cultivate that relationship; and all schools have students, but how does our school establish and treasure that relationship.

These are the bare bones of the narrative that unfolds year after year in a school. The way we talk about these ideas and issues, the semantic choices that we make, the degree of passion that emerges from our language—these are the revealing elements within each school's story. However, each segment of our community tells part of the story. Parents tell a piece of it along with students, teachers, alumni, trustees. Each part of our community contributes to the communal narrative that becomes the story of Garden School.

## Upper Division Highlights

In the midst of applying to colleges, studying for exams and facing the pressures of "what's next", the senior class comes together each year as a unit (along with Chef Marotta) and offers the Garden School community a night of entertainment, delicious food and community spirit.

The annual "Pasta Night" was held on Friday evening, 12/5 to benefit the Senior Class Prom held each year at the St. Regis Hotel. Families from both the Upper and Lower Divisions enjoyed a taste of Italy served by the senior class and cooked by our Headmaster in the William Poll Dining Room.

This evening capped off a day of celebration for Garden School as we all

## Lower Division Updates

The nursery children have been working on the letter C. They have been working on a winter theme and have been discussing the appropriate clothing to wear, such as hats, scarves, mittens, sweaters, and coats. New books have included *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats, *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* and *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Eric Carle and Bill Martin, Jr.

The pre-kindergarten children have been studying their senses in science class. They read the big book *My Five Senses* by Alike and made Weekly Reader books with colorful pictures. They really enjoyed distinguishing between the different senses while doing follow up activities.

*Continued on page 2*

*Continued on page 2*

**Upper Division Highlights**  
Continued from page 1

kicked off the beginning of our basketball season with a school-wide pep rally in the gymnasium. DJ Dan blasted the crowd and got them going before the game and during half time to cheer on our.....



**Garden  
Griffins!!!!**

## Sports @ Garden School

***“Fantastic Fall” Sports Season and a “Wonderful Winter” Beginning !!!!***

The Garden School Fall sports teams celebrated an incredibly rewarding and successful season.

The coed Middle School soccer team completed its first season of play with some great victories over Trevor Day, Birch Wathen Lenox and Brooklyn Friends School. There were nearly 30 students participating on the team, and we are looking forward to continued success next season.

The girls varsity volleyball team had a remarkable year as they finished in second place in the GISAL Division II League play with a terrific record of 8 wins and only 2 losses, and a place in the tournament semi-finals. It was the best finish for our girls varsity volleyball team since 1999!!!

The boys varsity soccer team had the “season of dreams” this year winning the ISAL Division II soccer championship. The boys won a thrilling final match vs. the Loyola School 1-0 and captured Garden School's first varsity soccer championship in school history.

The basketball season has gotten off to a very good start with all four school teams (Boys and Girls Varsity, Boys and Girls Middle School) playing hard and being extremely competitive in all their games.

**Lower Division Updates**  
Continued from page 1

The kindergarten children have made great academic strides by practicing their reading skills reading to the pre-k students. During math class, they have started to solve their first equations. They have been learning addition and counting with manipulatives.

First, second and third grades are exploring writing techniques that will enable them to relay clear, concise directions to their audiences. First graders taught each other “how to do things,” i.e., make pancakes, eat donuts, and write books. They included materials and sequenced steps using time order words in their instructions. Second graders researched the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. They then designed travel brochures, filling them with facts, illustrations and slogans to attract visitors. Third graders have been working on a cooperative project designing brochures of Queens neighborhoods. They are explaining the origins of the neighborhoods, famous landmarks and bodies of water and landforms. Map making skills will be used to complete the project.

The fourth graders created eye-catching dioramas based on environmental biomes. Some students explored marine environments and recreated the deep waters of the ocean. Currently, the fourth graders are studying natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanoes.

Basic concepts of physics are the current topic for fifth graders. By looking at ancient Egyptian marvels such as the pyramids and the Sphinxes, students realize that these ancient wonders were built with physics principles, but without the help of modern tools or technology.

The sixth grade is examining various theories of dinosaur extinction. They are studying how the dinosaurs lived and eventually died. In conjunction with dinosaurs' extinction, they are also reading about the theories of evolution.



**Leadership Conference***By Stella Stenos***Fall 2008 Boys Varsity Soccer Team**

*Please check our website for the days and times of our games and come out and support all of our teams during the season....*

**"GO GRIFFINS!!"**

On November 13-15, 2008 I had the great opportunity to participate in Phi Delta Kappa's International Summit on High-Performing Educators in San Antonio, Texas. The conference focused on the question of "What makes an effective teacher?" While there I was able to meet with teachers, administrators, union leaders, and professors from all over the U.S. and Canada. The conference sponsored workshops that explored teacher development, improving mentoring processes in schools, school leadership roles, and reassessing accountability in our schools.

Many of the issues discussed at the conference are issues that we have certainly tackled here at Garden School. It was interesting to see that the thrust of our school's professional development workshops is very much on the pulse of the national educational arena.

I am grateful that the administration supports the professional development of teachers. Much of what we learn outside of the classroom setting can be brought into our intellectual and pedagogical lives. Professional development contributes both to the life of the school and to the growth of our teachers.

*Editor's note: Families interested in providing financial support for the Teacher Development Program are encouraged to contact the Headmaster.*



**Lower Division Winter Show**  
**Friday, 12/19 @ 10am**  
**Family and Friends Invited!**

**Garden School Dates to Remember**

- **Monday, 12/8 through Friday, 12/12 PTA Holiday Boutique**
- **Wednesday, 12/10 – Grade 4 trip to IMAS**
- **Thursday, 12/11 – Trustees Meeting**
- **Friday, 12/12 – Upper Division Winter Dance**
- **Saturday, 12/13 – Comedy Night**
- **Wednesday, 12/17 – Kids Reach Out Bake Sale**
- **Friday, 12/19 – Lower Division Show & Upper Division Winter Trip**
- **Friday, 12/19 – Noon Dismissal (No Lunch or After School Programs)**
- **Monday, 12/22 – Friday, 1/2/09 – Winter Break (School Closed) ... ENJOY!!**

## Advanced Placement *by Joan Weiss*

At Garden School we offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses as part of our high school program. These courses comprised of college level work, give students an opportunity to get advanced placement credit that can be used in lieu of taking equivalent courses in college. To receive college credit, students take an AP exam upon completion of each AP course. AP exams are written and administered by the College Board and given at Garden School every May. We offer AP courses in the following subject areas: English, Calculus, Modern European History, American History, Biology, Spanish, and French. Here are brief descriptions of each of these courses.

### AP ENGLISH (12th Grade)

The Advanced Placement English course is an intense study of the three most significant genres: poetry, prose, and drama. Our approach to each involves a detailed study of the characteristics of each genre, the styles, the use of language, the use of figurative and denotative language, the themes and a general sense of a text. In order to enrich our experience of reading a literary work, we also learn to apply some critical theories, such as Freudian, Marxist, Feminist, Reader Response, Deconstruction and Historical criticism. Our goal is to expose the student to a variety of critical approaches, so as to build comprehension of how a text can be examined from a number of different viewpoints and how a text may have multiple layers of expression. We select our texts from a wide range of genres and time periods. Our selections cover literature from the ancient world to contemporary America and Britain, and include works by Euripides, Shakespeare, Ibsen, Joyce, Hemingway, Dostoyevsky, Shelley, Keats, Dickinson, Auster, Miller, Beckett, and McCarthy.

### AP CALCULUS (12th Grade)

The Advanced Placement course in Calculus consists of a full year of work that is comparable to calculus courses in colleges and universities. Most students who take this course will seek college credit (through the AP test), college placement, or both. AP Calculus (AB) is mainly concerned with developing students' understanding of the concepts of calculus and providing experience with its methods and applications. AP Calculus (BC), offered once every few years, is an extension of Calculus AB, with the addition of three extra topics: parametric, polar, and vector functions, improper integrals, and polynomial approximations and series. The AB syllabus includes functions, graphs and



limits, including continuity; derivatives (derivative at a point, derivative as a function, the mean value theorem, higher-order derivatives); applications of derivatives (curve analysis, optimization, related rates, implicit differentiation, slope, velocity, acceleration, elementary differential equations); integrals (Riemann sums, properties); applications of integrals (areas, volumes, lengths of curves, average value of a function, distance/velocity/acceleration, solving separable differential equations, trapezoidal sums). The use of a graphing calculator in AP Calculus is considered an integral part of the course, and is required for every exam including the AP exam.

### AP MODERN EUROPEAN HISTORY (10th Grade)

This college-level course provides a comprehensive study of Europe from the Renaissance to the present. This course is conceptually based, and focuses on examination of primary materials, writing and historiography.

### AP US HISTORY (11th Grade)

This college-level course includes a comprehensive study of the United States, from the Constitution to the modern day. The work is conceptually based, with particular focus applied to writing, historiography and primary source examination.

### AP BIOLOGY (11th or 12th grade)

AP Biology is an in-depth course that deals with all

*Continued Page 5*

*Continued from Page 4*

aspects of living organisms. Extensive laboratory investigations are performed and analyzed. The eight units covered in the course include: The Chemistry of Life; The Cell; Genetics; Mechanisms of Evolution; The Evolutionary History of Biological Diversity; Plants: Form and Function; Animals; Form and Function; Ecology.

#### **AP SPANISH (12th Grade)**

The AP Spanish course is the culmination of the Spanish language studies at Garden School. It covers the equivalent of a third year college course in advanced Spanish writing and conversation through the use of classic and modern literary works. Students who enroll in this course should already have a good command of Spanish language, grammar, and vocabulary because this class is intended for students who wish to develop their proficiency in all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students will improve their ability through a variety of materials, including exclusive use of Spanish in the classroom, challenging reading, listening comprehension activities, grammar review and AP practice tests. Various works of Spanish literature are also studied in order to provide a deeper understanding of culture, idiomatic uses, strengthened grammar structures, and provide a basis for oral and written analysis.

#### **AP FRENCH (12th Grade)**

This course is the highest level of French taught at Garden School. It is intended for students who wish to further develop their proficiency in the language. It reviews and improves the essential grammatical structures, and introduces students to classic and modern works of literature. They read works by Gide, Baudelarie, Maupassant, Camus and other prominent French authors. French is used almost exclusively during class as discussions focus on literature, ideas and philosophy.

We encourage our high school students to take AP courses. Advantages of taking an AP course and getting advanced placement credit include:

- a more impressive High School record – Colleges regard AP coursework as evidence of a willingness by the student to take on challenging work
- a lessening of the need to take introductory college coursework that has already been fulfilled by the AP credit, and consequently students taking AP courses have the ability to move quickly into elective college coursework
- intellectually, the higher level work offered by AP courses provides a more stimulating and thought-provoking learning environment
- students who take AP courses are better prepared to cope with the more rigorous work that they will encounter in their college careers.

We have had much success with students who have taken advantage of our AP program. Many of them enter college with a full semester's worth of course credit and graduate early. All of them report back to us that they find themselves incredibly well-prepared for any academic challenges they meet in college.



President Street Promotions  
Presents

*Comedy Night at Garden School*  
*Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup>*  
*8:00pm*

Performances by:

DF Sweedler

(Featured on "Letterman" and in the NY Times)

Michael Rakosi

(The Comic Strip and Wits End)

Michael King

(Comedy Central)

Elaine Williams

("Saturday Night Live" and "Waiting for Guffman")

Akash Bhasin

(The Comic Strip)

Tickets:

\$30 in advance

\$35 at the door

Including 2 Beverages

[www.gardenschool.org](http://www.gardenschool.org)

To purchase tickets, call 718-335-6363 or e-mail [info@gardenschool.org](mailto:info@gardenschool.org)

No one under 18 will be admitted.