



GARDEN SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



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Thoughts for the Week

By Richard Marotta, Ph.D., Headmaster



As we begin the Memorial Day Weekend, it is important of for us to remember that this day was not designed as a day for shopping at blockbuster sales throughout the world of the American Shopping Mall. This was truly a day to remember those who lost their lives in service of their county; it is a day for us to face the reality of the wartime experience and remember that war is not a reality show. This is a day in which memory and historical truth should converge.

Like many of you who have spoken about this with me in the hallway at arrival or dismissal, I am deeply concerned about the dissociation of reality from our public discourse. A number of parents shared this sentiment with me at the Honor Society Induction Ceremony a few weeks ago. In conjunction with the idea of the values embodied with the honor society, we talked about the need for there to be a correspondence between words and reality. We have seen a dramatic increase in this dissociation in our public discourse, particularly in presidential politics.

Our mission as a school focuses on critical thinking and evaluation of material that students encounter in class. This skill needs also to be applied to the world of information or disinformation as a whole. The stunning amount of misinformation, misinterpretation of events, of deliberate distorting of reality for ideological purposes poses a challenge for an educational institution whose values truth, honest assessment of information and the free expression of opinion that results from deliberate and careful self reflection.

Our mission is to help educate a generation of thinkers, who understand the meaning of information, who understand the distortion in ideological rhetoric and who value the truth more than simply winning. This is a powerful mission, since it places the school in a counter-cultural position that schools have never truly faced before. Our electoral process has degenerated into reality show techniques, which places all of our community at the mercy of imagery, demagoguery and the distortion of the truth.

So as we begin the weekend, which remembers those who gave up so much we need to confront the fact that those who gave their lives did so for higher values, values that reflect truth and honesty, not for a charlatan version of television or social media distortion of reality for the sake of profit. Our mission is to prepare out students to confront, evaluate and reject these misshapen versions of reality. We remember, and we think! That is the legacy left to us by those who sacrificed everything.