



# GARDEN SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



Richard Marotta, Ph. D., Headmaster

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## ***Thoughts for the week***

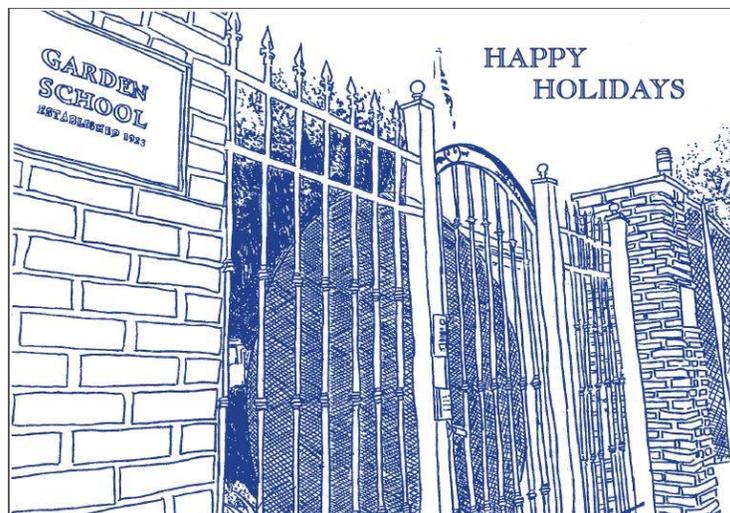
***By Richard Marotta, Ph.D., Headmaster***



As we begin our holiday break, we should always remember that this is a time to pause, reflect and renew our energies for the coming semester.

Although some but not all breaks in schools coincide often with a holiday season, there is also another more educational reason for these pauses in the school year. For the learning and teaching process to remain energetic and dynamic, there needs to be a time of reflection, of self-contemplation and time for the process of learning to deepen its hold on our minds and intellects. From a philosophical point of view, school breaks are those inter-spaces in which what has been learned moves into those permanent spaces of the mind. Daily learning tends to be fast-paced; it is during these off-weeks that daily learning is transformed into permanent knowledge.

We have had a wonderful beginning to our school year, and I want to wish all members of the Garden School family a terrific, re-energized and Happy New Year!



Art by Yongya Xu '16



## DATES TO REMEMBER:

- **Monday, December 22 – Friday, January 2 : School Closed for Winter Break**
- **Monday, January 5 : Classes Resume**
- **Thursday, January 15 – Friday, January 16 : Upper Division Exams**
- **Monday, January 19 : School Closed for Martin Luther King Jr.**
- **Tuesday, January 20 – Thursday, January 22 : Upper Division Exams**
- **Friday, January 23 : End of Second Marking Period**
- **Thursday, January 29 : Report Cards Distributed**
- **Friday, January 30 : Report Cards Returned**



**IMPORTANT SAVE THE DATES!!**



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

## ***Daniel Webster Society***

***By: Richard Kruczek and Philip D'anna***

On Saturday, December 13, after months of practicing and coaching, Garden School's Debate Team, known as the Daniel Webster Society (DWS), won its first ever "School of the Tournament" award in its new league! Garden is the newest member of the Big Apple Division of the New York Debate League, the organization who put on this tournament.

Garden took 3 teams of three students each. Our nine speakers accounted for the following honors:

- 7 of the top 20 individual speaker honors (including 2 in the Top 5!)
- 3 Top Ten team finishes (again, 2 in the Top 5!) and
- the overall "Team of the Tournament" honors!

We are extraordinarily proud of all DWS members; they took home more silverware than any of our other competitors. LONG MAY IT LAST!

Now that we have settled nicely into our new league, **the Daniel Webster Society cordially invites all interested 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders to come and learn about how our team operates. We will meet Monday, January 5, 2015 upon our return to school. We hope to see you all there!**





## **Model United Nations Club**

**By: Sarah Smith**

Garden School's Model United Nations Club participated in the Bronx High School of Science Model United Nations Conference on Saturday, December 13, 2014. Four sophomores and one freshman represented the nations of Vanuatu and Albania. These future diplomats researched and then discussed the issues of sustainability, desertification, and the Ebola crisis in West Africa.

Two students Hanna V. And Dennis A. won Honorable Mention in the General Assembly. They worked with other delegates to form a resolution that would provide a plan for transforming barren land into fertile farm land.

This was a very successful day for these industrious students.



## **Social Studies for Nursery**

**By: Carmela Knopf (Nursery Teacher)**

Nursery has been busy learning about holidays this week. We learned about Hanukkah, Christmas and Kwanzaa. We made holiday projects which included a menorah, Christmas tree puppet and a kinara. On the smart board, we watched and listened to what traditions each holiday has with our Sesame Street friends. We also had a great time singing holiday songs together.



## **Social Studies for Pre-K**

**By: Eileen Reyes (Pre-K Teacher)**

The Pre-Kindergarten class has been learning about different holidays in their social studies classes this month. Each child was asked to bring in a holiday show and tell that represents the holiday that they celebrate with their families. For some, this became an opportunity to make a family project together such as a collage or mobile. Other children brought in traditional decorations and story books about their holiday. The students told their classmates about their special holiday and what their family does to celebrate. A connection was made when we discovered that all the holidays represented had lights as part of their tradition.

The classroom is now decorated with lights along with the wonderful things brought in for show and tell. Some of the books we read this month are: *Amanda Dale's New Year's Parade* by Harriet Ziefert, *Hanukkah!* By Roni Schotter, *Lighting a Lamp A Diwali Story* by Jonny Zucker, *Celebrate Diwali with Sweets, Lights, and Fireworks* by Deborah Heiligman, *Celebrating Christmas* by Kimberly Roark, and *My First Kwanzaa Book* by Deborah M. Newton Chocolate.





## ***Social Studies for Kindergarten***

**By: Kristen Ahlfeld (Kindergarten Teacher)**

In Social studies, the students have been learning about the traditions of different cultures, and how we celebrate the holidays in our own families. We have discovered the origins of holidays we celebrate in December. Why do Jewish people celebrate Hanukkah for eight days? How did the tradition of putting Christmas trees in homes begin? Where did Kwanzaa come from? These are all questions the kindergarten class can proudly answer.

It has been an exciting December and the children are anxious to perform at the holiday show. Best wishes from our class for a healthy and Happy New Year!



## ***Physical Education for Grades 1 to 3***

**By: Amy Ledden (Physical Education Teacher)**

In PE class, the kids have been learning and playing, improving their motor skills. The kids favorite warm-up are tag games such as Line tag and Lion tag. Other warm-ups practiced are exercise stations with multiple physical tasks. We provide four exercise stations for them and they have 1 minute to complete their station. Stations typically include: ABC push-ups, jumping jacks, wall squats, dips, etc. After the warm up they stretch their arms and legs using five different yoga positions.

Last week was our Basketball unit, we had the kids learn how to shoot a basketball and try to make a basket with the correct form. They also learned how to jump rope and had fun doing it. This week we challenged them into an obstacle course around the gym where they had to leap, jump, balance, crawl and run to complete the course. We have really been challenging the kids in so many different ways over the past few months. The kids are having a great week. We've also played their favorite games such as Mr. and Miss Fox, Snakes in the Grass, Tunnel Tag, Help your friends, etc.

When we come back from our winter break they will have wacky Wednesday and Parachute Fridays. It has been challenging and fun few months. Looking forward to seeing the improvement over the next few months. Happy Holidays to you and your families.





## **Art for Grades 4 to 6**

**By: Tiina Prio (Art Teacher)**

The Fourth, Fifth and Sixth grade artists are looking forward to the next remarkable artist they will be acquainted with. Winslow Homer, the classic American artist and his famous The Gulf Stream painting is next on the list. He is considered by many as one of the greatest American painters of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Gulf Stream was based upon studies made during Homer's two winter trips to the Bahamas in 1884-85 and 1898-99.



As the excitement of the season comes upon us and the students get restless, ready for vacation, I feel that Winslow Homer's painting reflects this mood as does The Tennessee Tribune's comment about The Gulf Stream. The Tribune says that, "The tumultuous sea and whitecaps, the sharks, broken boat and waterspout in the distance on the right – all have motion and turbulence. Yet the man seems strangely at ease as he rests on his elbow, looking out. Homer's composition shows that both man and world are a relation of repose and energy, calmness and intensity, serenity and stir."

This project will teach the art students about the many different ways to paint with watercolor. They will learn six methods of applying watercolors and also how to plan ahead to leave spots unpainted on the paper where they would like it to appear white.

## **Math for Grade 7**

**By: Sonia Ambarsom (Math Teacher)**

The seventh graders have been studying two-step equations in which they need to manipulate numeric values and variables in order to solve for a final answer. This week they have extended the skills by using properties learned before, such as distributive and transitive properties. The final step in this learning process is to apply these concepts to solving real-world applications. These vital and necessary applications include temperature change and interest problems.

## **Math for Grade 8**

**By: Lara Leggio (Math Teacher)**

Recently the 8th grade class has been exploring linear functions. We began this unit by understanding what a function is. We created a mapping of the function of people in our class and their heights. It is possible for two people to share the same height but not possible for a person to be two different heights. This concept makes this scenario a function, such that every independent value is mapped to one and only one output value.

We continued working with linear functions algebraically, solving for intercepts. We then extended our knowledge to graphing these linear functions using the slope and y-intercept. We will continue graphing when we return from the holiday break. I hope everyone has an enjoyable holiday and a happy new year!



## **Science for Grade 9**

**By: Lou Albano (Science Teacher)**

In the amazing world of ninth grade Biology, we have taken strides to understand the complexity of living things on the cellular and chemical level. We have broadened our horizons by discussing the intricate relationships between living (biotic) and non-living (abiotic) things, as well as between living thing things. The differentiation between weather and climate were established. The role of climate on ecosystems uncovered the diversity that is caused on living things by environmental factors.



A discussion was had on the role of the Greenhouse Effect on the biosphere. We discussed further community interactions such as competition, predation, and symbiosis. The ecological succession of ecosystems, as a result of natural and human disturbances, have been included in our discussions. The major biomes of the world were revisited. The diversity of land and marine ecosystems were carefully analyzed.

We are regularly discussing topics from the text and analyzing details associated with our investigations. Our labs have coincided with the topics that have been discussed. All in all, the ninth graders are diligently working hard in order to meet the requirements of Biology: The Study of Life.

## **Science for Grade 10**

**By: Marlene Dapice (Science Department Chair)**

Students in chemistry have been learning about ions and how to use the periodic table of elements to predict their charges. Using electron configurations and orbital notations, they are gaining an appreciation of how ions form and how ions of different elements are able to form ionic bonds. By using this method, students can also explain why certain elements are not able to form bonds, an equally important aspect.

The next step, which has begun, is to learn how to name ions properly. This will lead the class into the realm of writing chemical formulas from the names of compounds and vice versa. The two systems of naming ions of transition metals have been reviewed. An understanding of these concepts is among the most crucial to being a successful chemistry student.

## **English for Grades 11 and 12**

**By: James Pigman (English Department Chair)**

"Comment intelligently." That was Mr. Pigman's direction to the junior/senior elective English course entitled "American Novel." They are reading RABBIT, RUN by John Updike.

The passage they were asked to comment on had not been part of the assigned reading. It was a first reading for them all. We wanted to see how much of what we had been discussing in class had registered with the students. Do they see



the beauty of the language, the word choices and sentence structure? Do they understand the difference between the natural, pagan view of nature and the more constrained ideas of "civilized" life? Do they see the symbolism in the garden explained and explored on those pages? It was a challenging task. They were not pointed in any specific direction. We simply asked them to be thoughtful. This pushes students to use the analytic skills they have been taught. The tendency to retell the story doesn't fulfill the assignment, so they are forced to rely upon their own insights and to trust their ability to read and understand. Some chose to focus on character, others on theme, others on symbols. But none will simply tell you what is happening. They know that is not "commenting."

They struggled, which was in itself a lesson. They are surprised by the good grades they receive but we are not. By engaging them in discussion and writing about material they have read, they gain the confidence that they need to find their voice, express their ideas in clear and cogent sentences and create thoughtful paragraphs. Especially when confronting reading or ideas that they had not had filtered through their teachers' views and comments.

## ***AP English***

***By: Dr. Richard Marotta (Headmaster, AP English Instructor)***

The AP English class has been studying a unit based on the concept of the waste land. We have read T.S. Eliot's seminal poem, *The Waste Land*, Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, and we are currently reading Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Our focus has been on how those characteristics of 'the waste land,' the wounded king, the diseased society and the stagnation caused by a particular moment in history affects the nature of a culture.

As part of our study, we have also examined some of the basic tenets of existentialism and how those ideas affected Hemingway's work in particular. Once we complete this unit, we will move on to a more eclectic area that will include studying the works of Dostoyevsky, Ibsen and Wilde.

## **GARDEN SCHOOL SWEATSHIRTS FOR SALE!**

### **Parents, Family & Friends!**

Until December 31st only, the PTA is selling these terrific hooded sweatshirts that everyone wants! The funds collected go to support school community enrichment activities including movie night for our Lower Division, Senior Prom, and much much more. So, consider them as a thoughtful Holiday gift for a current Garden School student, faculty member and/or alum to support and show school spirit.

These sweatshirts are \$35.00 and there are youth – adult sizes available.



The shirts will be shipped within 2 weeks. Please go to the link below to order and thank you for enriching Garden School community life! <http://www.booster.com/gardenschool2014>