



# GARDEN SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



Richard Marotta, Ph. D., Headmaster

Volume 92 Number: XXVIX

"Academic Excellence Since 1923"

Friday, May 15, 2015



## Thoughts for the week

By Richard Marotta, Ph.D., Headmaster



Several weeks ago there was an interesting piece in the New York Times about the nature of discourse and debate. In this op editorial piece, Nicholas Kristof explored the concept of how debate has changed in the modern world. Traditionally the idea of debating an issue required careful research, presentation of one's arguments, listening to the opposing view and then answering those arguments with reformulated arguments of your own.

Mr. Kristof's main point focused on how the skill of listening to the opposing view has all but disappeared from both public and private discourse. Debate as practiced in our world consists of repeating the same argument over and over again without any incorporation of what the opposition says even if those counterviews have genuine validity. Debate has become a matter of taking a position rather than exploring an idea.

I think that there is some real validity in Mr. Kristof's argument, especially in the area of private discourse. Schools encourage debate more as an exchange of ideas rather than supporting a position. For students to engage in a genuine exploration of an idea requires profound listening skills as well as verbal skills. Listening is not a passive activity; in fact, it should and can be a very dynamic activity. Listening to an oral argument resembles what we do during the process of reading. In reading, we actively evaluate what we encounter; in listening, genuine listening, we actively evaluate what we encounter. There is really no difference.

A genuine conversation shares the characteristic of good acting. One actor listens intently to what the other says and responds with an engaged response. Whenever we witness a terrible acting performance, it usually means that the actors are not listening actively but merely waiting for the other to finish his or her lines. Reciting is not acting. Position taking is not thinking.

For students and adults to master the art of problem solving means that each individual needs to cultivate the ability to hear the other arguments before formulating the response. Then the response and, indeed, the entire process of discourse, emerge as an authentic and profound exchange of ideas. Understanding the problem, the issue or the idea is a prerequisite to genuine and authentic thinking.

\*\*\*\*\*

Please participate as generously as you can in the collection of supplies for The Samaritan Village. Thank you!



Please help the  
**Samaritan Village**  
organization

Samaritan Village is an organization that supports families without homes. One local residence is currently home to about 200 families, including about 350 children.

**Help these children and families and be a good Samaritan!**

Hello, I am Kyle Campbell, a Garden School Junior and a Boy Scout, working to become an Eagle Scout (the highest award a Boy Scout can earn). To attain this rank, I must complete an Eagle project, a project that will directly benefit my community. My project is collecting supplies to give to a local residence in Queens for homeless families.

The **Boulevard Family Residence** provides a place to live and various living supplies to parents and their children while they work to get their own homes. It is my goal to collect at least ten boxes of supplies to donate to this residence, helping to improve the lives of these families.

Please donate items from this list to help improve the lives of others

- Diapers
- Baby formula
- Recreation items-jump ropes, soccer and basketballs, hula hoops
- Books for kids and teenagers to read, puzzle books, or notebooks for writing
- School supplies – notebooks, pens, pencils
- Toiletries – shampoo, soap, combs, deodorant
- Business attire (clothes suitable for a job interview)
- Arts and crafts supplies

A box for donations is located in the main hall. Thank you!



## DATES TO REMEMBER:

- Tuesday, May 19: "Spring Fling" Lower Division Theater Production, "Into The Woods"
- Thursday, May 21: Senior Prom at the St. Regis
- Friday, May 22: Senior Breakfast
- Monday, May 25: School Closed for Memorial Day
- Tuesday, May 26: Senior Dinner
- Thursday, May 28: Music Recital in the library - All welcome
- Thursday, May 28: Upper Division Yearbook Dance
- Monday, June 1 – Friday, June 5 : Upper Division Final Exams
- Tuesday, June 2: Lower Division Talent Show
- Friday, June 5: Moving Up Ceremonies – Kindergarten (9AM) and Grade 6 (10:30AM)
- Friday, June 5: NOON Dismissal
- Tuesday, June 9 : High School Graduation at 7PM



**Dare to venture into the woods and come to the SPRING FLING.**

### Featuring the Sixth Grade in



**The Pre-K through Fifth Grades will be performing with the Sixth Grade in the celebrated fairy tale themed musical on May 19, 2015 at 12:00 Noon in the gymnasium.**

**Please dress your child in spring attire. No shorts please.**

*Children should come to school dressed for the show, and they may stay in their show clothes all day.*

**Early morning drop-off and school begin at the usual time.**

A regular school day will commence at the conclusion of the show.  
Afterschool and clubs will be in session as usual.

*SO JOIN US AS FAIRY TALES COLLIDE IN A  
MODERN MUSICAL TWIST ON  
HAPPILY EVER AFTER.*

**ALL ARE INVITED TO ATTEND**



## ***Student Council Elections***

***By: Sonia Abramson (Student Council Advisor)***

Student council or student body government is a group led by students in order to serve and engage students in learning about democracy, leadership and teamwork. The function of student council is often to help raise funds for school activities, including dances, spirit week activities and games.

Student council is made up of class representatives, who are elected to serve by their peers and also consists of officers including president, vice president, secretary, and treasure. Each has a vital role to play during their leadership terms. The elections for president and vice president are held every year during the second week in May and students in grades six through 12 are eligible to vote. The candidates must be nominated and subsequently approved by Dr. Marotta. Their ideas and platforms are discussed with administrators and student council moderators.

The next step is the campaign process. This begins with posters and slogans. On the Friday of elections, both of the candidates and their campaign managers prepare a speech which is delivered in the morning to their future constituents in the gymnasium. The candidates and their managers then go from class to class answering any questions that students may have. Voting takes place later in the day while the candidates are sequestered. Ballots are counted and tallied in the presence of Dr. Marotta, campaign managers, and current student council officers in order to ensure proper protocol and legitimacy.

This electoral process allows both the candidates and the voting body to communicate and understand one another in order to have a most successful year.

## ***Student Council***

***By: Maya Hodson (Student Council President, 2014-2015)***

The positions of president and vice president of Student Council are tasking jobs. You must be able to silence a gym full of students, plan trips and events, and work with fellow

students to make decisions and develop ideas. My advice to our future leaders, or any leader, is to learn to accept the fact that there will always be unhappy customers. It does not matter how well you plan it, with as many personal touches your fellow students may have contributed, there will always be some complaints and you may not always have the greatest attendance. Though this may sound terribly frustrating, that is the focus of this statement. This position is difficult and time consuming, but it is worth all the frustration to see your friends having a great time at your event.

Our president and vice president elects, Cesar Carvajal and Caitlin Walker, have seen it all from the perspective of a secretary and class representative, and are more than prepared to take on the challenge. They campaigned their ideas to the grades six through twelve, expressing their future plans for Garden School. Through their hard work and achievements, they have proven themselves more than worthy to the upper division. Congratulations to the new president and vice president of Student Council.





## ***English for Nursery***

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

The Nursery students love to begin the day looking at books! They can be heard retelling many treasured stories in their own words, and my, have their vocabularies grown! The English language is all around them throughout the Nursery

day. It's in routines, songs, books, and conversations.

Observations of the change (metamorphosis) of the five caterpillars into five Painted Lady butterflies is an anticipated activity. Conversations have centered on the symmetry of the butterflies and our own bodies. We, too, grow and change each day with each new activity.

## ***English for Pre-K***

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

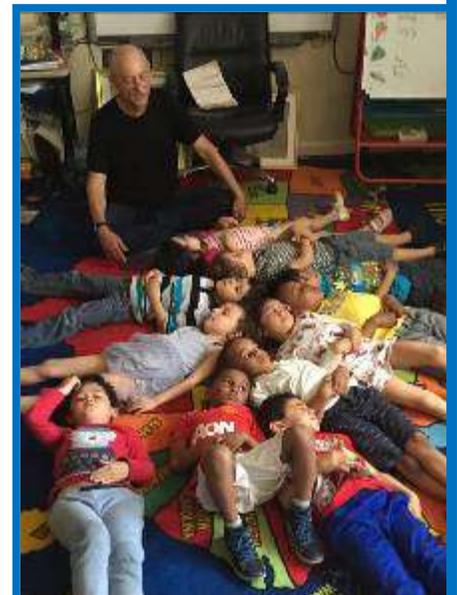
Reading aloud to children helps them acquire early language skills. It builds word-sound awareness which is an important skill for beginning readers. During the school day, the Pre-K children are read to several times. Reading stimulates their imagination and expands their comprehension of the world. The students are being prepared to understand the written word. At this point in the school year all Pre-K students know that words on a page have meaning. Many are learning to read independently. The children have a one-on-one reading time with the teacher on most days. Story discussions are also had during this individualized reading time.

Our goal is to foster a love of books and to motivate children to read. Take some time each day to relax with your child and enjoy some precious leisure moments reading. Be sure to continue this story time throughout the summer months.

## ***English for Kindergarten***

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

The kindergarten continues to work on their growing reading and writing skills. They are eagerly reading in reading groups and writing in their journals daily. The students are learning to write inventive spelling stories using capital letters and punctuation in appropriate places.





This week in our transition visit to first grade the students enjoyed a lesson on syllables. This is a very valuable skill for readers to learn. Knowing how to decode syllables will help children become more fluent readers, which also benefits comprehension. The kindergarteners learned syllables by clapping the beat of syllables in words, and also by placing their hand under their jaw as they say the words. The mouth will open for every sound which represents a syllable. This will help the children to move as readers into multi-syllabic words and word patterns.



Kindergarten had a special visit from Annika's Grandfather. Annika shared with the class her family traditions of meditating. Annika's Grandfather taught the students some tips on meditation techniques. Meditation helps children develop focus, emotion control and to pay attention inside and out. The children enjoyed learning and sharing their own thoughts and own practices on meditation.

## ***Science for Grades 1 to 3***

***By: Patricia Georgi (Science Teacher)***

For the past few weeks, the first grade students have been exploring the physical world around us. They were introduced to the subject of matter and learned that matter is anything that takes up space. They have explored solids and learned that it has its own shape and does not change its shape when moved from place to place. They have also explored liquids and gases and learned that both take up space and can change shape as it takes the shape of its container.

This week, the **first graders** concluded the topic of matter as they learned about chemical and physical changes. Next week, the first graders will begin exploring movement and sound.

The second graders just finished learning about fossils and how they provide evidence about the plants and animals that lived long ago. This week, the second graders were introduced to the topic of matter. They began the topic by identifying the properties of water and oil. They then observed to see what happens when oil is mixed with water. From their observations, the second graders learned that water and oil do not mix, but instead separate into different layers. This is because water and oil are two substances with different characteristics.

Next week, the **second graders** will continue to learn about matter as they explore solids, liquids, and gases.

The **third graders** have been learning about rocks and how they are formed. They have learned that rocks are made of one or more minerals. They have also learned that rocks can be placed into three main groups: igneous, sedimentary, or metamorphic. The third graders have also learned that minerals are the most common solid material found on Earth and learned how to identify minerals. They identified some minerals by testing its hardness.

The third graders have also been learning about soil and why it is important. We will continue to explore soil as we learn about its layers. Next week, the third graders will also begin learning about the Earth's layers.



## ***Foreign Language for Grades 4 to 6***

***By: Gabriel Gomis (Foreign Language Teacher)***

**Fourth Graders** completed the cardinal numbers in French from 0-100 last week. They practiced counting up to a hundred. In addition, they were divided in pairs to create dialogues relative to greetings, likes and dislikes, and the weather.

The **Fifth Grade** spent the last week working on their projects relative to the understanding of the historical and touristic monuments in France. Each of them did an oral presentation of the different museums, monuments. They talked about the Eiffel tower, the Louvre, Notre Dame, Montmartre...

**Sixth Grade** French students completed the lesson on the interrogative questions by learning different ways of formulating questions in French. They tested their skills by asking questions using either the inversion or the idiomatic expression "*est-ce que*". We also had a dictation where the kids worked on the handwriting and spelling.

## ***History for Grade 7***

***By: Richard Kruczek (History Teacher)***

The students have just wrapped up World War II. The kids were particularly inquisitive when it came to the decision to drop the atomic bomb (twice) on Japan. The ethical dilemma, however was absorbed and filtered - understood - rather quickly, a testament to their ability and their capacity for critical thought. Do we wipe out whole cities full of civilians? Or does the US invade Japan, leading to the estimated (consensus, as well) deaths of over a million people, soldiers and civilians? The debate was healthy and spirited and, again a testament to their keen intellect. On to the middle of the twentieth century!!!

## ***History for Grade 8***

***By: Sarah O'Sullivan (History Teacher)***

As the end of the school year approaches, we are closing the curriculum with a rich look at the geography, culture, and history of Latin America. To begin this unit, each individual student selected, investigated and presented a physical feature that they found most interesting. Many students created power points while others created elaborate posters or acted out their own skits. Students were exposed to the beauty of such places as the Galápagos Islands, Angel Falls, Amazon Rainforest and the Atacama Desert.

The unit continues with an examination of indigenous empires of Latin America and students discussed the impact of conquistadores such as Hernan Cortes and Francisco Pizarro. Many wondered what would happen if Montezuma had immediately used force and defeated the Spaniards. Lastly, we examined the development of the diverse population of Latin America. Students discussed how Spanish culture blended with indigenous and African cultures who create what is today the culture of Latin America. They then studied how this diverse population would at times work together to defeat Spain and become independent nations through the leadership of heroes like Simon Bolivar, Miguel Hidalgo, and Jose de San Martin. Then it's on with finals and a great summer to be had by all!





## Writing for Grade 9

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

One of the prompts this week was to give each student a quotation that he/she could relate to and upon which they could comment.

“Live as if you were going to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were going to live forever.” Gandhi.

In a twenty minute exercise of thinking and writing, the student came to an original response. Another starting point for one was Dr. Seuss:

“You have feet in your shoes and a brain in your head. You can go anywhere you choose!”

That prompted a nice story about challenges and goals.

Later in writing about an eccentric relative, inspired by the Isabel Allende story “Uncle Marcos,” a student began, “My grandpa’s a real gem, literally in a sense because he works with jewelry. He worked as a jeweler in Russia and continued as a hobby here. Scrunched in his own-made chair at home...” Another starts, “We live in the vast universe, with the cosmic planets and stars; we are smaller than dust...” The best advice to promising writers is to write as frequently as possible and in as many forms as possible. The ninth grade is doing a wonderful job of taking on the challenges of writing and it is simply another way for our students to become writers.

## Art for Grade 10

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

The Tenth Grade is completing their study of Chinese Art. They watched a BBC documentary on Ai Weiwei titled, Without Fear or Favor. “Alan Yentob explores the story of Ai Weiwei's life and art, and reveals how this most courageous and determined of artists continues to fight for artistic freedom of expression while living under the restrictive shadows of authoritarian rule.”

One of the amazing art installations that the video spoke about was Ai Weiwei’s Sunflower Seed Art. “Ai Weiwei initially conceived 'Sunflower Seeds' for his Unilever Series commission at Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, opening in October 2010. Ai Weiwei's take on the large hall was simple and complex, poetic and disturbing at the same time: He filled the Turbine Hall with a thick layer of sunflower seeds handcrafted in porcelain, a total of 100.000.000 seeds, with a total weight of 150 tons. The layers of seeds, though simple in form, embody multiple meanings. The sunflower seed is a common street snack in China, an everyday object from the artist’s childhood. It evokes the memory of hardships and hunger during the Cultural Revolution, and the era of socialist planned economy with the collective worship of the sun.”

Another amazing art installation was his backpack art installation called Remembering. “Ai Weiwei created a large 10x100m installation, made out of 9000 children’s backpacks, displayed on the facade of the Haus der Kunst in Munich, Germany. Each backpack represents a life lost in the earthquake that took place in the Chinese province of Sichuan in 2008. Ai used five different colors that make up the sentence **For seven years she lived happily on this earth** in Chinese lettering, a sentence with which a mother of one of the earthquake victims commemorated her daughter. The bright, vibrant colors, such as blue, red, yellow and green reflect the psyche of a child, their joy and innocence.”





## ***Physical Education for Grades 11 and 12***

***By: Flance Dervishi (Athletics Director)***

We just finished our Volleyball unit in PE class. Students understand that Volleyball is a very difficult sport to pick up and they need to practice, even outside of PE class. As the school year is coming to an end, there will be one week of soccer, basketball and softball to see how much the kids have improved over the past year in each of these units. We will also have a full PE class of fitness, push-ups, sit-ups, jump rope, and mountain climbers. The weather is getting warmer and soon the kids will be out in the pool for PE. It has been a very productive year for our juniors and seniors.

## ***Garden School Tennis Team Playing Well***

***Recent 4-1 win against LREI***



***(The Afterschool Foundations Dance Recital Film is coming...)***



## Garden School Walkathon 2015

