

Issue of School Safety Becomes Top Priority

By DARINA SHTRAKHMAN (V)

As many students and faculty members may have noticed, the administration has been working hard this year to increase awareness of potential dangers in the building. From fire to armed entry, they have been educating the community about potential hazards and have emphasized the necessity for the student body to practice not only fire drills but also lockdowns.

This begs the question: how safe is the school? The answer to this is threefold; to examine it, one must look at the efficiency of fire drills, lockdowns, and security at the entryways to the school.

The school has adopted a new policy of making students within each grade line up in alphabetical order during a fire drill.

As Headmaster Nat Conard explained, the goals of a fire drill are to empty the building and figure out who is missing. He has found both at his previous school and at numerous other schools that he has spoken to that alphabetical order is the most effective way of achieving the second goal.

Head of the Upper School Jon Leef considered the first fire drill of this year to be a success. "What we were striving for was more accurate attendance. I would say it was less of a social gathering than usual and went faster than I thought it would. Lining up creates order," he said.

Not all students agreed that this new method was more efficient than the previous one, in which students found their advisors and advisory groups.

"In the case of an actual fire, remembering your spot in line is going to be one of the last things on your mind. This is not even mentioning the fact that it takes a while for one member of student government to go down the long line to make sure that everyone is there. It is much easier to go to your advisor group and make sure that a small group of people is accounted for," said Jenny Gorelick (III).

Mr. Conard countered that "the reality is, the drills are only effective to the extent that people take them seriously."

He added, "Although we all hope to avoid such drills, we need to practice in case something happens and people's lives are at stake."

Lockdowns, however, are handled very differently. The key in a lockdown situation is to get people out of the hallways; when the police come in, they need to be able to identify the culprits immediately, Mr. Conard noted.

"We had never done this before, so we had to start at square one and do our best. We knew that the windows and locks on the doors presented a challenge. But you just have to make the best of a difficult situation. The Bernards Township Police Department sent several officials to monitor the lockdown drill and make suggestions so that we can be even more efficient next time," explained Mr. Leef.

No attendance is taken at lockdowns because there is no way of communicating the information from room to room.

Since the police department has advised the school that no

Continued on Page 8



Six pieces of student and faculty art were damaged over Thanksgiving break.

Courtesy of Ms. Laurinda Stockwell

Vandals Destroy Art in Sculpture Garden

By CONNOR SHEEHAN (IV)

As the Martinsville community learned in morning assembly the week after Thanksgiving break, vandals had defaced artwork in the sculpture garden some time during the holiday. The sculpture garden, outside the Arts Wing, is filled with pieces produced by students, faculty, and staff. Six pieces of student artwork and one faculty piece were damaged or destroyed.

Mr. Richard Freiwald, the sculpture and clay teacher, discovered the damage on the Monday that classes resumed after the weeklong break. When he glanced out his window, he saw

one piece blown over. He mistakenly assumed that it had been knocked down by the wind, but after he went outside to set it back up, he saw the full extent of the damage.

Mr. Freiwald proceeded to inform the administrators, who then called the Bernards Township Police Department, which has been very supportive of the school in the past, from walking through the construction of the new Middle School to helping organize the recently introduced "lockdown" drills. Head of the Upper School Jon Leef said, "They're just a pretty helpful group."

There is no word yet as to any leads concerning the

investigation, but there has been some progress. Marks from skateboard wheels littered the ground, and skate wax was discovered on the stone benches, providing some clues about the identities of the miscreants.

"My guess is that it was perhaps a group of kids looking for somewhere to skate, who made some bad decisions," said Mr. Leef. The administration believes that it was someone that isn't closely affiliated with the Pingry community.

As Mr. Freiwald explained, "It just doesn't make sense, you know?"

The specifics concerning the method of the vandalism are vague, although it appears that one piece was thrown off of the staircase, due to the presence of paint on the top stair. Mr. Freiwald is currently in the process of attempting to fix three pieces that were not beyond repair.

The sculpture garden has been a part of the Arts department since 2001, when the new Arts wing was constructed. It has become an important part of the sculpture classes. "It's our

Continued on Page 4

Quiz Bowl Team Competes on Television

By LIANE GOLE (III)

On November 18, 2006, the Quiz Bowl team competed on The Challenge, a televised tournament taped at Rutgers University and broadcast on Cablevision News 12.

The team consisted of Ajay Tungare (VI), Max Horlbeck

(VI), Josh Freedman (VI), Isaac Davis (VI), and first-round alternate Julian Quintanilla (VI). Tungare, Horlbeck, and Freedman are the three captains.

Each member is positioned on the team for his specific area of expertise. "If each person has his own role on the team, more questions can be an-

swered," Freedman explained. While Max handles mostly science questions, Isaac answers math related questions. Josh does sports, pop culture, and politics, and Julian specializes in history and languages. Though he does not have a specific best subject, all of the other teammates agree that Ajay is the most well rounded

member on the team.

Despite the fact that the members specialize in different topics, they all work together as a team. "I don't think there was just one particular person answering all the questions," said Mrs. Ronalee Newman, physics teacher and an enthusiastic supporter. "They all contributed in different ways. They all had different strengths."

The team's first match, which was against Union Hill from Union City, consisted of three rounds. In the first round, each team started out with one hundred points. Answering a multiple choice question correctly from one of four categories earned five points, while answering incorrectly earned none. The team that answered correctly earned the right to choose the next category.

Even though the Quiz Bowl team was not used to being filmed, they adjusted quickly to the different setting. "I wasn't really nervous for the taping," said Tungare. "There wasn't a big difference from our normal tournaments." Freedman agreed, noting, "At first it was a little nerve-racking with all the lights and cameras, but then

Continued on Page 4



Courtesy of Powertolearn.com

The Quiz Bowl team on the set at Rutgers University.

Inside The Record



J. Au (VI)

Cans donated by students, faculty, and staff for Mr. Nazario's food drive fed 150 families on Thanksgiving.

Pingry or Phillips Exeter?

Columnist Ned Adriance (IV) evaluates the new Harkness tables that are being put in classrooms. P. 2.

Seniors Apply to College

Darina Shtrakhman (V) explores early application statistics and trends and talks to college counselors. P. 4.

Parent + Artist

Parent of a current student and esteemed artist Gary Komarin put his work on display in the Art Gallery. P. 5.

A Diverse Range of Opinions

Students and faculty share their opinions about the diversity letter controversy. Special Report, P. 6-7.

Mourning a Friend

Evan Rosenman (V) remembers former Pingry student Kat Werner, who lost her life in a car accident. P. 9.

The Inconsistency of Beck

Connor Sheehan (IV) reviews Beck's latest album, "The Information." P. 10.

Trophy Extravaganza

The fall sports season was capped by team championships and individual honors. P. 12.

Sections

News.....	1,4-5,8-9
Commentary.....	2-3
Special Report.....	6-7
Arts.....	10-11
Sports.....	12

EDITORIAL

The Colorblind Generation

Since my freshman year, "The Record" has covered diversity. In every editorial and column that we have published on diversity, writers have complained about Pingry's relative homogeneity and inaction. It was odd for me this time that the anonymous author(s) of the letter that Mr. Conard, administrators, and parents received thought the school was being too pro-active.

Even more striking than the author(s)' stance was the author(s)' eloquence. At first glance, the letter seemed to be well thought out and rational. With a closer look, however, I found three ridiculous claims. One was that minority students had more family problems than white students. Another was that minority students were less ethical. The last was that underachieving minorities were lowering the school's academic quality.

As for the first assertion, the author cited an example of a Lower School student coming into school every day afraid that her father would kill her. He then tried to connect family problems to diversity, which, as many students know, is completely unfounded.

The second statement is equally as ludicrous. The inclination towards unethical behavior is not determined by race.

But the more pressing question was presented in the last claim, which was really the crux of the student body's concerns. The author(s) imply that academic standards are lowered by the school's diversity but, in the end, do not present any convincing evidence.

The author(s) complain that over half of this year's kindergarten class is made up of minority students, who are supposedly bringing down the academic quality of the school. That is not the case, however. Admissions statistics show that, in this case, minority students actually scored better than white students.

According to Assistant Director of Admissions, Dr. Diana Artis, "the standards of our school have not changed. We are still creating a community in which excellence is the standard, and the only thing that has changed is the face of that school. Students from diverse backgrounds who are qualified, who would in the past have considered other independent schools, are now considering Pingry."

Frankly, finding out the facts about the academic credentials of our diverse students should make us all proud.

We should also be proud that the value of including students from diverse backgrounds is apparent in all aspects of school life. As you can see in this issue of the Record, talented soccer players attract droves of fans to the stands while a talented singer/songwriter moved the audience on Rufus Gunther Day.

The value of diversity is even more visible in our classrooms. One day in my Freedom class, our class was discussing nuclear proliferation. While listing countries with possible nuclear power, North Korea and Israel quickly came up. As a Korean, I spoke about the widely-held hopes for unification between North and South Korea, while a Jewish student elaborated on the Arab-Israeli conflict. I realized that students learn from each other, and they also learn tolerance as a result. Exposure to various cultures imbues the student body with worldly knowledge and tolerance.

Particularly at a younger age, it is important to give students a chance to learn from and play with students of diverse racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. As we are better able to attract minorities at a young age, the school is setting the stage for a true meritocracy in the future, a community which eliminates and corrects past racial and socioeconomic injustice. Contributing to the creation of a colorblind meritocracy is what, I hope, even the author(s) of the letter want.

—Catherine Chong

Demagoguery at the Dinner Table

By HEATHER BENJAMIN (VI)

The man had been sitting on the bench across from me for at least ten minutes, but we hadn't made eye contact. He was dressed simply and was slightly stocky, with an obviously Hispanic complexion. When he eventually caught my gaze, we exchanged a smile, and he asked me if the next train was going to New York. I told him it was, and he thanked me.

It was hardly a noteworthy conversation, but a minute later, I inexplicably felt surprised. With some thought, I realized that I actually hadn't expected this man to be able to understand what I said, let alone respond in accent-free English. I proceeded to completely beat myself up about such a ridiculously unfair assumption—why had I assumed him to fit such a stereotype?

Try to imagine how different your worldly opinions would be if you'd never been exposed to anyone else's opinions, if you'd been left to figure it all out yourself from scratch. Now try to imagine how it would be if you'd first been exposed to every side of an issue, and, unbiased, had viewed each opinion as an equal piece in a larger puzzle.

Even the least politically aware teenager acknowledges that the times have changed since our parents were in their prime. Yet we tend, like good little children, to revere our parents to the point where we accept their political opinions as pure fact, especially when those opinions deal with issues we aren't familiar enough with to judge by ourselves. Until a few years

ago, my uncle's confident political spiels over dinner either passed over my head or were blindly absorbed into my system. Around the beginning of my teens, I began silently questioning his dinnertime politics. And now that my younger sister sits in on his lectures along with the rest of the family, I find myself even more concerned with my uncle's words.

I accept that he has a larger array of experiences to draw upon than I do, but I also think it's important for me to take my parents' and other relatives' opinions with a grain of salt. I should speak up when I disagree with something, even if it leads to an unpleasant dinner, simply because I don't want my sister taking outdated, radically conservative opinions as

fact. No matter which end of the political spectrum she eventually ends up on as an adult, I'll respect her choice, but I think it's unhealthy for her not to be exposed to each and every side of a given political issue.

During a recent dinner conversation, my uncle asserted that all Muslims are fundamentalists. It would be a waste of energy for me to stress about his completely unfair generalization; it's far more important for me to use our conflict constructively. By thinking the issue over and doing research to educate myself and form my own ideas, his opinion is acting as a catalyst for my intellectual growth. But the responsibility I feel towards my sister, to ensure

that she grows up accepting, compassionate, and tolerant, prevents me from merely quietly disagreeing with my uncle—I have to be vocal.

It's not as though my sister's nine-year-old mind even knows exactly what a fundamentalist is, but my uncle's ridiculous generalization is not the sort of thing that she should be mindlessly repeating to her friends. Would she raise her hand and contribute that sentence to a class discussion on religion? Does she know which of her friends are Muslim? Would she jump to conclusions about any woman wearing a headscarf? The later in life, the harder it is to unlearn bigoted, practically jin-

goistic attitudes when they've been planted like sour seeds inside you since childhood, when

they're reiterated over the dinner table every evening. Save yourself the trouble of trying to reconstruct your personal politics later in life—question everything now, whether or not you think you'll end up agreeing with it in the end.

Since that night at the train station, I've found myself reevaluating all my opinions, as well as those of my parents. I'm positive that I have no prejudice against Hispanic people, but obviously narrow-minded ideas were stashed in me at some point in my past. I figure that many of these unreasonable views stem from radically conservative relatives, embittered by job losses and whatever other negative experiences they've had that just happened to include

someone of Hispanic descent. And those ideas weren't necessarily instilled in me point-blank by lecturing relatives; they more likely came in the form of subtleties and attitudes which, being younger, I took for granted. I wasn't exactly well versed on U.S. foreign policy (or, for that matter, racism) when I was seven, so anything any adult said to me about it seemed legitimate to me.

Obviously, this is now a situation that necessitates skepticism, on my part, towards those relatives' attitudes. Those experiences that they draw their opinions from may be legitimate experiences, but they didn't happen to me, so why should they shape my thoughts? Yes, it's important for me to respectfully listen and understand everyone's opinions—how else can a person make informed, reasonable decisions? But it's essential for young adults to use the opinions of their elders as starting points to build off of, rather than blindly accepting their parents' hand-me-down politics.

I can't stress enough that I'm not advocating total rejection of all our parents' ideas. On the contrary, exposure to all perspectives, no matter how outdated or outrageous, is vital to an intellectually healthy lifestyle. All I ask is that my peers not absentmindedly follow the politics of their elders without doing a bit of investigative thinking themselves. Whether you choose to agree or disagree with them on a given issue is your own respectable decision—I just hope that when you decide one way or the other, you're doing it because of what you, not they, think.

Question everything now, whether or not you think you'll end up agreeing with it.

How Great is the Harkness Table?

By NED ADRIANCE (IV)

It is eighth period, and I'm listening to my history teacher talk about French absolutism in the 17th century. I won't be called on if I raise my hand because it isn't permitted, but I have something I'd like to say. I start to talk, but I'm quickly cut off by someone louder and more assertive than I am.

A recent furniture change in room 320, my history classroom, has replaced the 18 desks with a large, ovalar

Harkness Table. The table is the keystone of the "Harkness Method", a teaching philosophy that originated at Phillips Exeter Academy, which was designed to encourage students to speak more openly and see their instructors as equals.

As the aforementioned incident has made clear, however, this purported, "Harkness Table-induced" feeling of freedom and willingness to take risks in class has yet to strike me. Rather, I have endured a competitive classroom dynamic, where only those who have the ambition to make their voice the loudest are endowed with the right to chime in on the discussion.

It is in our community's blood to compete with one another, be it on the sports field, on the stage, or in the classroom. After all, Pingry is a college "preparatory" school that teaches its students that the importance of our entire high school career is to receive admission to the best college possible.

Pingry's adoption of the Harkness Table in at least four of its classrooms symbolizes a valiant effort to diminish this unhealthy culture of animosity. It is clear that we are trying to improve the level of rigor and encourage real thought on the part of the students. However, inherent in any new initiative,

there are several problems with the system that severely conflict with the interests of the students.

I don't mean to paint a negative picture of the Harkness Method. To the contrary, I am making an attempt to point out that the changes must be made in our own community of faculty and students, rather than in the method itself.

First, the classes that sport the new tables must have a maximum of 12 students, a requirement that the method's creators decreed. In my sophomore World History class, there are 17 students, and it is quite the struggle to fit each of us around the table. I believe that the number of students in my class contributes to feelings of censorship—we are all fighting to be heard by one man.

My English class has incorporated the Harkness Table as well, but in this case, there are significantly fewer students, and the table has had a much more positive impact on the classroom experience.

Also, if a teacher makes the decision to utilize a Harkness Table in his or her classroom, he or she must adopt the Harkness method in its entirety. I find that in all three classes that use the method, my teachers haven't fully embraced the philosophy. For the Harkness Method to truly be successful,

a teacher must fully embrace the idea of students being their equals, and the teachers must also keep their moderation to a bare minimum. Essentially, the goal of the Harkness Table is to allow students to teach themselves.

We cannot neglect our role as students in the educational process. Students must make a conscious decision about whether or not they truly want to learn. If their answer is yes, the student is obligated to be respectful of the opinions of others at the table and refrain from interruption, while at the same time feeling prepared to contribute to the discussion.

Although this may sound like the "Guidelines for Discussion" sheets that are doomed to be crumpled in the bottom of students' backpacks, there is truth to this decree: students play the biggest role in their education.

Finally, the entire Pingry community—faculty and students alike—must be able to separate themselves from the outside world when participating in a Harkness classroom.

That may not be a feasible request, but to whatever extent it is possible, the win-lose, cutthroat academic attitude must be dropped. Without it, and only without it, will the Harkness Method succeed here at Pingry.



The Pingry Record

VOLUME CXXXIII
NUMBER 2

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No Longer an Amish Paradise

By DAVID YOUNG (V)

It is always heartbreaking whenever one hears news of any school shooting, and there have been quite a few lately. But there is something overwhelmingly sad and troubling about the recent Amish massacre that refuses to leave my mind.

It was not just the brutal nature of the massacre that stood out, even though this massacre was as brutal as possible. On October 2, a beautiful morning, thirty-two year old Charles C. Roberts IV walked into the West Nickel Mines Amish School, a simple one-room schoolhouse in Lancaster County, and killed five innocent little girls. The man then pressed the gun against his own head and blasted a fatal final shot. It could have been worse: the girls could have been sexually assaulted and then killed had the police not stormed into the schoolhouse.

More of the macabre plot unfolded with the subsequent investigation. The murderer, who possessed no previous criminal record or history of psychiatric illness, had in fact molested two young relatives twenty years ago. This was only clarified through the note that he left behind to his wife, Marie. The note also said that he was upset with the loss of their infant daughter nine years ago.

It was not, however, the sum of all these sinister details that made this massacre different from the others. What stood out, and what refuses to leave me, is the harm inflicted on a community that is known for its God-loving innocence and its self-made choice to stay frozen in time for centuries, away from the technology that is ubiquitous in the surrounding world. I am talking about the use of horses and buggies at a time when high-powered cars are the norm, and about

the house-to-house delivery of news when we are used to connecting to the world with electronic gadgets and the flick of our fingers. I am also talking about the brotherly love and respect for each other in a community in which everyone looks out for the welfare of others.

The Amish way of living stirs the deepest roots of nostalgia for a bygone time. I recall relishing annual family visits to the Amish country since I was young. In many ways, this annual trip had become my personal pilgrimage to achieve meaning and renewal. There is a certain joyful stillness and an everlasting peaceful quality to the Amish lifestyle that has been imprinted permanently in my psyche.

What also stood out about this sad incident was how the Amish mourned in its aftermath. They mourned with forgiveness. Thousands of mourners stopped in each of the victims' homes to view the sad little corpses dressed in white. They also stopped by the murderer's home to embrace his wife and children with forgiveness. While reluctantly accepting donations for the victims' families, the Amish requested to have funds sent to the murderer's family as well. The funerals were carried out in privacy; all mourning was done from within, away from cameras or any other public fanfare.

When asked why they needed to be supportive of the killer's family, one of the Amish seniors simply replied, "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

Enos Miller, the grandfather of two sisters who were both killed, was with the girls when they died. When a reporter asked him about the murderer, he said simply that, in his heart, he had already forgiven Roberts "through God's help."

Without so much as raising

their voices, the Amish have provided us with a moral and ethical compass for these troubled times. It contrasts markedly with all else that has gone wrong in this world. The feuds that we seek with other nations on the false pretext of national security and ideology, the dirty partisan and personal attacks aired continuously just to gain a few extra votes, the flashy aura of consumerism that underlies the core foundation of our times: the list goes on and on. It even belittles all the endless discussion about ethical conduct in school and the merits of the Honor Code, as worthwhile as this may sound. For, in the eyes of the Amish people, we have solely missed the point. The Honor Code is simply a code of conduct that one abides by naturally, not because the school demands it, but because it reflects a deeper understanding of moral values. Education should not be solely about the academic race and pressure that the school advocates through its rigid and hierarchical grading and awards distinction systems and its emphasis on the pitfalls and the draconian consequences that violations of the Honor Code will bring. Education ought to be more about developing a "whole person," so that the student can truly learn for fun and for self-motivated interest, away from the fear of early academic failure that fuels the need for breaking the Honor Code.

In this sense, the Honor Code is a by-product of a higher ethical understanding that must be abided by everyone, not just students. To continuously emphasize the effect rather than the cause is tantamount to healing an illness without understanding the underlying root.

In many ways, I find that the Amish, for all their "backwardness and living in the past," are in fact better prepared for the future than the rest of us.

Student Government Update: Responsibility and Privilege

Dan Davidson (VI)

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

There are a tremendous number of exciting things happening right now in Student Government, but before sharing them with you, I'd like to give some credit where credit is due. Lisa Thomas (VI) deserves some serious kudos for the effort she dedicated to planning and executing Homecoming, which I thought was a great event in terms of turnout and levels of fun. Thanks to all of you, we now have plenty of money in the bank to use towards great upcoming events, which you will probably start hearing about soon.

Student Government is currently working very hard to make some improvements around school that will benefit us in our everyday activities here. What I'd like to stress in this article, however, is that Student Government can only do so much when it comes to influencing administration policy.

This year, your leaders will do a stellar job in securing you new privileges, but these privileges come at a cost. As members of the Pingry community, we are obliged to not take advantage of our privileges for the sake of our fellow students. If, for example, sweatpants are once again allowed on Dress Down Days, you will be presented with a choice. You can abide by the standards of decency that the administration put forth, and preserve the privilege, or you can take advantage of the rules and have the privilege rescinded. The actions of a few can easily put to waste the hard work of Student Government and the good intentions of

countless other students who do not push the envelope on Dress Down Days.

This theory can and should be extended to everything we do while at Pingry. The freedoms we are given are often taken for granted; yet when our freedoms are restricted, we look not to ourselves, instead finding others to blame. It is exceedingly easy to clean up your lunch table, and yet many of us still leave a mess in the cafeteria. How can we expect the administration and faculty to give

us respect when things like this occur?

There's no time like the present to change the little things in the way we act at school that will make a big difference in the way we are viewed by teachers and administrators. A change in attitude coupled with Student Government successes will lead to a Pingry in which we can all enjoy our freedoms without fear of having them taken away. Let's all do our part to make this place better for one another.

EDITORIAL

Making the Safe Choice

The directions for students and faculty during the lockdown drill were very simple: find a room, get in it and out of sight of the doorway, and lock it. It seemed pretty simple, until somebody voiced the question that had plagued me since Mr. Leef and Mr. Conard began their explanation: what if someone is locked out of all of the rooms? If students are supposed to get into a room as quickly as possible and lock the door, won't some students be helpless against the threat, whatever it may be, that has free roam in the hallways?

Mr. Leef vacillated, then explained that "those who are slower to react" (the politically correct way to group anyone who is left out) should, if they try to enter a room that has already been locked, move on to the next room and attempt to enter that one. A good suggestion, but what happens if all of the rooms are locked? I can picture the haunting image of a helpless student, trying to open door after door in vain and hearing the clicking of locks all around.

Imagine a student inside a locked classroom, crouching in the corner with a number of other students and teachers. He or she hears a loud, frantic knocking on the door. The person outside could be one of those people who is "slower to react," or it could be the killer that caused the lockdown in the first place. Since the student was instructed to not reveal themselves through the window of the classroom, they cannot see who is outside. Should this student open the door and let in the helpless classmate who is stranded in the hallway and risk the possibility that it is the killer?

Personally, I am not sure what the right course of action to take is in this situation. Leaving the door locked would, in essence, leave the person in the hall at the mercy of the killer. On the other hand, opening the door would put the many people in the room in danger to just save one person. The students and faculty in the room have to make an instantaneous decision one way or the other and then live with whatever consequences may ensue.

My gut feeling is that most students would open the door to let in the stranger; Pingry students, myself included, would probably just open up the door assuming that the knocking is from a classmate in distress. There is a sense of trust in the school, a sense that everything is just a precaution, that fire drills are drills and not real fires.

Very few of us, if any, have ever experienced a real fire or a real hallway threat; every precautionary measure we've taken has been exactly that.

Technically, the correct course of action to take in the lockdown situation is to leave the student in the hallway locked out to save everyone in the room. With the only drill experience we have, real situations will also be like drills. The student in the room will let those who are locked-out into the room without hesitation; after all, the only harm that can be done to them is being yelled at.

The world outside of the school is a dangerous one; watch one half-hour of news and you'll be inundated with enough tragic occurrences to think about for a week. Inside school, everyone is sheltered from the outside world. There are no fires, no threats inside of the school community; instead, there are only fire drills and lockdowns to prepare for some unimaginable occurrence.

The lockdown drill, therefore, is either good or bad but cannot be both. If we are to take the lockdown seriously and be fully prepared for a threat, we will destroy the environment of trust that exists inside of the walls of the school. We will forever bring the dangers of the outside world into the school community. If, however, we do not take the lockdown seriously, the school will be unprepared for a situation like those that have happened in schools around the country.

This year seems to be filled with choices, ranging from moral questions that pit honor against friendship to safety questions that force each of us to decide whether or not we will open the door. None of them have right answers, putting the onus on every one of us to make our own choice.

In this situation, I value the trust in the school community over the regimented laws that claim to be the safest. Without the ubiquitous air of trust everyone who walks through the hall breathes, the concept of Pingry, along with anyone who is "slower to react," would be gone forever.

—Josh Freedman

Santa Claus

BRINGS PRESENTS TO GOOD GIRLS AND BOYS EVERY CHRISTMAS.

The Tooth Fairy

EXCHANGES MONEY FOR CHILDREN'S LOST TEETH DURING THE NIGHT.

Diego Denial

HAPHAZARDLY REPLACES LETTERS OF COLLEGE ACCEPTANCE WITH LETTERS OF COLLEGE DENIAL.



By MATT LAUD (VI)

Form III Discusses Issues on Peer Night

By MORGAN MCCOLLUM (III)

On Thursday, October 26, freshmen joined their parents and Peer Leaders for the annual Parents Night.

The event began with three skits written by the Peer Leaders. The skits showed parents how they should approach their children when they receive a bad grade and how to appropriately reward their children when they receive a high grade.

The students and their parents were then separated into different rooms. Each room held two peer groups and approximately fifteen parents whose children were in other rooms.

Both the parents and the students wrote down questions that they wanted to see answered from the others' perspective. First, the freshmen had to sit inside a circle while the parents sat outside in chairs. The parents were not allowed to say anything while the kids answered questions. Then, the parents and the freshmen switched places,

and questions were directed at the parents.

Questions from both sides included, "What do you really talk about on Instant Messenger?" and "If you had to do it all over again, would you go to Pingry?" There were questions about drinking, parties, and many other topics, which students generally avoid when talking to their parents.

"It was funny because some of the parents avoided certain questions, and others just agreed with what everyone else said," Bozhena Lisko (III) noted.

Ms. Laura Yorke, one of the heads of the Peer Leadership program, said, "It was a great success because I think everyone left with some valuable information."

She added, "The seniors did an excellent job facilitating the discussion between parents and kids."

In the end, there seemed to be a consensus that both the freshmen and their parents left with a better understanding of one another.

VANDALS DESTROY STUDENT, FACULTY ART ON DISPLAY

Continued From Page 1

outdoor classroom," Mr. Freiwald noted. "We can build big out there."

So far, no action has been taken to prevent this kind of vandalism from happening again, but the police have recommended that the school install a motion sensor camera.

Mr. Conard explained the victimization of student and faculty artists who have had their pieces destroyed, saying, "The senselessness and anonymity of the act is disturbing. Generally, it is tough when you've been the victim of this sort of thing. Your space has been invaded, which leads to a sense of vulnerability with exposure, and your creations have been destroyed. Will these artists be hesitant to show their work again? Probably and understandably."

Number of Seniors Applying Early to Colleges Increases

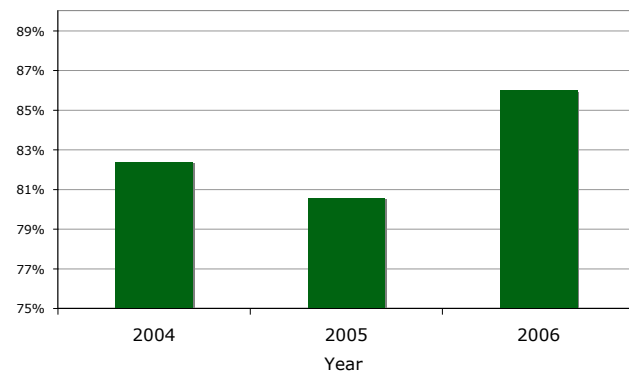
By DARINA SHTRAKHMAN (V)

As of December 2, 105 seniors, constituting 86% of the senior class, had submitted early applications to the colleges of their choice. These seniors have submitted 144 early applications in total.

Last year, 80.6% of the senior class applied early and 82.4% of the senior class applied early in 2004, showing the early application trend to be fairly consistent. Director of College Counseling Mr. Robert MacLellan said the percentage of early applications submitted might be up a little due to a smaller class size.

There are three main types of early applications. The most popular, Mr. MacLellan said, has always been early decision, in which a student can only apply to one school and is required to matriculate there if accepted. Fifty-seven students applied early decision this year, which shows a slight decrease from the 60 that applied last year. Early action is different from early decision in that a student can

Percent of Seniors Who Applied Early



apply to multiple schools, and if accepted, the student can decide whether or not to attend that school by May 1. Thirty-nine students applied early action this fall. Restrictive early action limits the student to one early application but is not binding and is used only by Harvard, Yale, and Stanford. Seventeen restrictive early action applications to these three schools were submitted this year.

This year's senior class shows an increase in applying early to Ivy League Colleges, with 42 applications submitted compared to last year's 33 applications. On the other hand, 51 applications were submitted early to the Ivy League two years ago. Four seniors applied to Princeton this year compared to three seniors last year, and eight students applied to Harvard early this year compared to five students last year. Yale, however, was the most popular Ivy this year, with nine

students applying early, up from seven last year and four the year before. Last year, 69 students were eventually accepted to the school where they applied early. This does not mean that all 69 got accepted in December: some of those students were waitlisted or deferred but accepted in the spring. In the Class of 2005, 68 eventually got in where they applied early, showing the trend to be fairly consistent. Not all of those students necessarily ended up matriculating at those schools.

Mr. Robert MacLellan said that many colleges favor early decision over other forms of early applying because it shows a real commitment to the school. Several schools such as University of Pennsylvania and, more recently, Columbia University, give advantages to students who apply there early. U Penn also only counts legacy as an advantage to a student's application if the student applies there early.



The school donated soccer equipment, including old jerseys, to Cameroon.

Courtesy of Mr. Gerry Vanasse

Community Service Projects Go Global

By DIANA JIANG (IV)

In the coming months, the Pingry community will raise money for several charitable organizations with a slew of dress-down days, drives, and other fundraisers. In the fall, the school participated in Señor Nazario's highly successful can drive and the Middle School's "Funky Sock" Day. The can drive collected food to provide underprivileged families with a Thanksgiving meal, while the October 31st sock day involved students and faculty wearing quirky footwear as they collected new, unused socks for Bridges.

Recently, the Shades of Color Club hosted a dress-down day for the Tanzanian Children's Fund. Started by India Howell in 2003, the fund "provides financial and intellectual support to projects and programs designed to improve the lives of children in need." It sponsors several initiatives to combat poverty, most notably an orphanage in Tanzania. The orphanage is unique in that it does not allow adoptions but instead serves as a true home for children. It pays for its students to attend grades one through seven at the local village school, and some students go on to college.

Howell's orphanage currently houses forty-one children, and

her goal is to care for seventy-five children and ultimately help them develop into future leaders of Tanzania.

Ms. Sara Boisvert, Head of Admissions, volunteered at the orphanage for three weeks this past summer, teaching English to young students. She said, "I got incredibly attached to the kids, and it was very hard to leave."

Last year, the Shades of Color Club raised two hundred dollars for the Children's Fund by hosting a dance at the end of the year. This year, they will again donate to the fund. Dr. Diana Artis, Assistant Director of Admissions, said, "Education is a great focus at this orphanage, which fits with the Pingry mission."

Early next year, Meredith Skiba (V), Evan Rosenman (V), and Anthony Parisi (III) will host a dress-down day to raise money for two organizations: the Support Our Siblings Autism Foundation and Stepping Stones. Support Our Siblings provides opportunities for autistic children to acquire skills necessary for life in the real world and to become more independent. Stepping Stones is a non-profit school and early intervention center for children up to the age of nine who suffer from Down Syndrome and other disabilities. The school teaches children basic tasks and helps them develop as

people. Skiba, who has volunteered at the organization for five years and served as an assistant to the physical therapist, said, "Working with these kids really makes me appreciate the basic tasks I do everyday. Seeing the improvement throughout the year is really enjoyable."

In the coming months the school will also be donating to the Youth Soccer Program in the West African nation of Cameroon. Pingry's involvement in the program began last year when athletic director Mr. Gerry Vanasse started a plan to give a soccer ball to each player in the program. He first heard about the Cameroon soccer players' plight when he sat down with Albert Nguidjol, a member of the Cameroonian national soccer team and assistant coach at Pingry's summer camp. During soccer practice, an old soccer ball had been kicked into the woods. Nguidjol immediately said, "Don't worry. I'll go get the ball." The players all tried telling him that it was no big deal, but Albert said, "No, no. In my country, a soccer ball's worth more than gold."

The collection was a phenomenal success last year. Colleen Tapen (IV) gathered one hundred soccer balls and Dr. Tom Hakes, CEO of C/S Group, provided for the shipping expense. Altogether,

five hundred soccer balls, one hundred pairs of cleats, and many sets of Pingry soccer uniforms were sent to Cameroon. Mr. Batamak Pierre Joseph, the President of the Cameroon Youth Soccer Association, wrote to Mr. Vanasse, "You cannot believe the happiness those packages will bring to the young Cameroonians after this World Cup... Thank you for everything... May God bless all of us for this action."

This year, the motto for the program is "One Ball, One Heart." Seventeen other schools in Somerset County are also getting involved, especially Somerville and Somerset Vocational Technical Institute. With the help of other athletic directors and volunteers, Mr. Vanasse is hoping to reach his goal of 7,200 soccer balls - for 7,200 players - by the end of the year.

The program is in its early stages, but two hundred soccer balls have already been collected this year. Steady progress has been made on cleaning, deflating, packing, and shipping the thousands of balls.

Mr. Vanasse says, "I think more students should have an awareness and appreciation for how fortunate they are. This is our chance to think about others and make a major impact on a country thousands of miles away."

Quiz Bowl Tournament on Television

Continued From Page 1

we settled down and it felt like any other tournament." Despite the fact that the team members may have been nervous, they did a great job of "keeping their cool," explained Dean of Students Mrs. Joan Hearst. "They didn't seem nervous. These kids just did it so calmly it was incredible."

The first round's categories included The Constitution, Decimals, Arthropods, and Novels. Even though these categories are extremely diverse, the Quiz Bowl team proved to be confident in each of them. "Once you practice the format enough, it's not that hard," Freedman noted. "Most of the questions are related to topics we've learned about during regular classes." Although Union Hill started out strong, Pingry finished the first round in the lead with a score of 140 to 115.

The second round, known as the "Lightning Round," provided each team with sixty seconds to answer a total of ten questions in a specific category. Union Hill went first and correctly answered six out of the ten questions in the category "Horror Movies." Pingry went second and scored a perfect ten out of ten in "T.V. Parents." This victory gave the team ten more points and increased its lead.

In the third and final round, a correct answer earned ten points while an incorrect an-

swer subtracted ten. In this round, the four categories were France, Osteology, Angles and Fantasy. Again, the Quiz Bowl team proved to be well rounded as they successfully answered almost every question thrown at them. The game ended in a 330 to 125 Pingry victory, meaning the team will continue on in the single-elimination tournament draw.

Even though this was an exciting accomplishment, the team is not finished yet. The next round of The Challenge featuring the team will air in March against Midland Park, which also won its first match.

If the team continues to win, it can gain the title of New Jersey Challenge champion and earn a prize of \$2,500 for the school. The tournament, however, does not end in New Jersey. The winners from Connecticut and Long Island play the New Jersey champion to compete for an overall victor. This team who is the overall winner is awarded a prize of \$10,000 for its school and an additional \$500 per person on the team. "We're all looking forward to the next round and seeing how far we can go," Horlbeck said.

Even though the Quiz Bowl team has only advanced one round so far, all of the captains expect to "go the distance" and are extremely enthusiastic about the whole tournament. "We have a strong team in general," Tungare explained, "so we expect to do well."

Veterans Day Speaker Shares Emotions Service and Laughs Together on Halloween

By MORGAN FOSTER (III)

On November 11th, Pingry welcomed Dr. James Finn, a United States Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, to speak at the annual Veterans Day assembly.

After being drafted, Dr. Finn served in the Navy from 1969 to 1973 as a top-secret polyglot, trying to keep tabs on enemy units and preventing them from winning southern Vietnam. During his last two years in Vietnam, he was a field interpreter for the Navy Special Forces Unit.

While discussing his days in Vietnam, Dr. Finn brought forward many differences that gave the American soldiers a disadvantage: the climate, culture, values, and language. The climate tends to be ex-

than most languages because of the different tones of the words, and American soldiers had a hard time communicating with locals and figuring out who was on which side of the war. Dr. Finn brightened the otherwise somber mood of the assembly by telling some amusing stories about certain phrases gone awry when they were translated to Vietnamese.

One of the biggest differences, though, was the variation in their value system. As Vietnam had been involved in constant warfare for many centuries, many of the citizens were numb to the suffering and destruction. Dr. Finn noted, "[The Vietnamese were] willing to take appalling casualties in order to obtain their long-term goal."

Although he willingly discussed his "war stories" with the Pingry community, it was quite evident that reminiscing about his friends, some of whom were survivors and others who were killed in Vietnam, was painful for Dr. Finn. He mentioned a few times that he felt guilty for surviving while some of his friends had not made it through the war. When asked if he had revisited Vietnam, he replied, "I would feel even more guilty about surviving it if I were to go back."

Dr. Finn's combination of humor and heart-wrenching stories also contained an important message about the American dream and the troops who fight in wars. He commented, "Freedom that we take for granted is really our most valuable possession. However, freedom isn't free."

Dr. Finn's combination of humor and heart-wrenching stories also contained an important message about the American dream and the troops who fight in wars. He commented, "Freedom that we take for granted is really our most valuable possession. However, freedom isn't free."



A. Hui (V)

Dr. James Finn spoke to the school about his war experiences in Vietnam.

tremely hot, different from the seasonal weather most Americans experience. The culture is also vastly different, leading to confusing misinterpretations. For example, simple hand gestures that Americans would consider polite or friendly could come across as offensive to a Vietnamese citizen.

The language difference created another barrier between the Vietnamese and the Americans. The Vietnamese language is harder to master

By IAN MARTIN-KATZ (IV)

On Friday, October 27, students participated in Rufus Gunther Day activities, including an assembly and various community service endeavors.

The day began with an assembly led by the Student Activities Committee (SAC), which worked tirelessly to put together videos, jokes, and performances to entertain the school. Sam Waterbury (VI) and Matt Laud (VI), the heads of SAC, served as emcees.

The assembly kicked off with appearances by 9th graders who were dressed for Halloween, and the costume that received the greatest crowd reaction was "A Pirate on Vacation" portrayed by Brian Green.

The 10th grade winner was "The Quiz Bowl Team" portrayed by girls' soccer players, and highlights of the 11th grade costumes included "The Breakfast Club" and Scott Lalli's duct tape interpretation of "A Robot." The unanimous winner in the senior class was Russell Simpson's "Phil Artis," which received roaring applause. The Pingry faculty participated as well, featuring a lacrosse-stick-wielding Mr. Hedengren as "Kim Kimber."

"The costumes were great and added a fun component to the day," stated Brian Quinn (IV), "but it would be more enjoyable if a greater percentage of the community participated and dressed up."

The faculty afforded the audience even more laughs

when teachers were compared to celebrities and historical figures in the SAC slide show. The slide show also included predictions of what the offspring of select members of the Pingry faculty would look like; the results both shocked and terrified the crowd.

Musical performances also entertained the students. A trio consisting of Connor Sheehan (IV) on drums, Dan

performances.

In addition to musical performances and Halloween spirit, the main features of the Rufus Gunther Day assembly were the videos submitted by students. One video depicted Pingry's mascot Big Blue on an everyday excursion to the Bridgewater Mall, and another portrayed a homeless student, played by Kevin McNulty (IV), who joins the student body. "I

efforts around the Pingry campus, doing projects such as planting bulbs, painting lacrosse nets, and cleaning buses. The 12th graders were divided among several tasks, including organizing mailings for Bridges, FOP Research, Kids Cancer Research and working at the Veterans Association Hospital. In addition to the grade-by-grade community service assignments, Girls Chorus, Drama



A. Hui (V)

Mr. Bugliari gauges audience support for juniors presenting their costumes.

Davidson (VI) on guitar and saxophone, and Ted Moller (VI) on vocals and rhythm guitar riled up the crowd. Ned Adriance (IV) commented, "The trio's sensational combination of percussion, guitar, and vocal wizardry successfully got the students swaying to the beat of the oldies." Rebecca Behrman (V) and Elisabeth Youngdahl (VI) also added solo acoustic

liked Kevin's video because it was funny, but still had an important message behind it," said Georgia Cook (IV).

Following the assembly, members of the community set out to take part in various community service projects. Students in 6th through 10th grades traveled to the Food Bank of New Jersey to stuff envelopes and organize items. 11th graders focused their

3, and Drama 4 traveled to ECLC and Matheny School to entertain young men and women with disabilities.

Although the individual tasks of these projects may have varied, the overall goal remained the same.

As Jack DiMassimo (V) explained, "We were able to extend a helping hand to the greater community while also having fun."

Thanksgiving Can Drive Helps The Hungry

By MELISSA LOEWINGER (VI)

Every year for the past 30 years, Spanish teacher Mr. Victor Nazario has organized a can drive in which students are encouraged to bring in three cans. This year marks the 38th annual canned-foods drive, a school-run endeavor that is not, contrary to popular belief, a private project of Mr.

Nazario's. He said, "It's the school's drive. I just make the announcements."

The cans are presented to Mrs. Rosa Floyd, who serves as the main director of the can drive and who has been helping the impoverished for years.

"Rosa Floyd is an incredible woman, who believes in giving instead of asking for herself. The last few years

she's been ill, yet she never asks for anything. When you do things with Mrs. Floyd her attitude toward giving becomes contagious. You can't help but get in there and help her out," said Mr. Nazario.

After the drive is over, Mrs. Floyd brings the cans to a church, where families from the Elizabeth, Irvington and the Newark area can

retrieve a basket of cans.

When asked why the recommended number is three cans, Mr. Nazario said, "I feel that three is a small enough number that it is manageable for kids and yet a large enough number to feed so many families. If I was to ask for five, I wouldn't get as much as I get asking for three."

Despite Mr. Nazario's continuous appeals for "just three cans," the school still does not have 100% participation.

"Some people think this three can bit is not meant for them. Luckily, the generosity of kids who give more than asked, without expecting anything, overpowers those who feel that three cans is not cool," Mr. Nazario reasoned.

Last year the school received enough cans to feed 150 families.

"The number of families we are able to feed increases each year. Every year I hope that we'll be able to feed one more family. When you see how much you have and how little others have, you wish you had a truckload of can-filled boxes," Mr. Nazario said, "I personally want to thank all of those who gave, and for all of the people who did not give, I would like for them to think of giving sometime in their life. Giving is cool."

Gary Komarin Displays Colorful Work in Art Gallery

By NED ADRIANCE (IV)

"I don't like to be boxed in—there's no need to categorize art, or anything for that matter," said Gary Komarin as he watched students, faculty, and parents admire his art on display in the Hostetter Art Center Gallery. Mr. Komarin, who is the father of Wyatt Komarin (V), will have his artwork on display until January 10th.

Mr. Komarin was born in New York City in 1951. He attended Albany State University and received a BA in English Literature and Art. He then graduated from Boston University Graduate School of Fine Arts with a Master of Fine Arts in painting and a Graduate Teaching Fellowship, and addition-

ally attended the New York Studio School.

The art, according to Mr. Komarin, is intended to be a combination between still life, landscape, and abstract art, but as he put it, "it's really impossible to describe it with a specific term or categorization." Color and layering play an important role in the design of Mr. Komarin's work, and he "manages to find the beauty in the most mundane things—like a wig or a cake," said Ian Martin-Katz (IV).

Mr. Peter Delman, an art teacher, elaborated on Mr. Komarin's style, explaining that "there is an element of playfulness to all of his work—and one can sense the tension between a certain effortless spontaneity and layers of painting."

This aforementioned

playfulness is vital to Mr. Komarin's artwork, as all of his pieces are "completely intuitively based—there's no set program. I really allow the painting to speak to me, and I'll jot down a series of marks that come to mind," said Mr. Komarin, pointing to a particularly abstract piece.

"He's certainly an abstract artist, but there are several representational elements and variety in his work, which makes it nearly impossible to classify him or his artwork at all," Mr. Delman asserted, speaking with a tone of reverence towards Mr. Komarin.

Mr. Komarin's desires for his artwork are mainly centered on his personal self-expression, not to have a specific impact on those who view his displays. Still,

Mr. Komarin added, "I want to pull people into the art and...well, I want to make money."

The artist's work has been successfully on display in various galleries and museums across the world, and Mr. Delman, on behalf of the entire community, said "we really appreciate that he has decided to come to our school and give us a wonderful variety of his drawings and paintings to present to everyone—thus far he's really sent a lot of his work."



M. Skiba (V)

Artist Gary Komarin poses in front of one of his pieces.

SPECIAL REPORT: Letter Creates Controversy

By JOSH FREEDMAN (VI)

An anonymous letter, questioning and denouncing the level of diversity in the school and the admissions process, has created a stir among faculty, students, and families during the past month.

The letter was originally sent to Headmaster Nat Conard, Head of the Lower School Ted Corvino Sr., Chair of the Board of Trustees Victoria Brooks, and Head of the PSPA Tzu-Lin Toner in late September; due to the writer's anonymity, however, the letter was disregarded and no action was taken.

Mr. Conard explained, "We didn't want to legitimize that kind of approach by reacting publicly until we had to."

On November 6th, the same letter with an attached cover letter was sent to various members of the school community, including PSPA members and their families. At this point, the administration decided that the issue needed to be addressed. Mr. Conard emailed parents about the letter and held an all-school meeting to explain the situation to students.

In his speech and email, Mr. Conard acknowledged the presence of the letter and provided a response to many possible discrepancies between the content and the form in which the letter appeared.

"I wanted to respond to the choice of medium pretty decisively and without legitimizing the vehicle," Mr. Conard said. "I also wanted to correct some of the misconceptions, and it had to happen quickly."

Mr. Conard first addressed the anonymity of the letter, calling it cowardly and urging those who have opinions to not be afraid to share them and stand up for them. With an anonymous letter, he said, "We can't respond to the author. We can't have meaningful conversation. If it had been signed, we could have just picked up the phone and asked, 'Why did you send us this?'"

Mr. Conard then spoke about the contents of the letter. While he never specifically quoted anything in the letter,

he described the extent of the falsities in it and talked about its overall message.

Calling it a "vehicle of hate," Mr. Conard compared

one to look around and see the faculty's pro-diversity view. This reflected, according to Mr. Conard, the most important role of the meeting and

the school," he said.

The letter prompted an immediate reaction from some students who felt it was important to show that the entire community strongly supported diversity. Students created large posters, hung on the cafeteria walls, with spaces for students to sign their names if they supported diversity and to write comments about the importance of diversity in the community.

Not everyone, however, felt that Mr. Conard had handled the situation in the best possible way. Ross Millard (VI) commented, "Mr. Conard emphasized the importance of discussion in the aftermath of the presence of the letter. Unfortunately, the announcement mentioned no specifics and was very foggy and vague regarding any details – it is impossible to have a discussion when nobody is on the same level of understanding about the situation."

On the following Monday, Mr. Conard held an open meeting for parents at the Short Hills campus to discuss the letter. A large number of parents attended; all of the seats were filled and many attendees had to stand. The meeting was mostly an open forum for discussion about any topic regarding the letter or diversity at the school.

Mr. Conard felt the meeting was a success. "It was very helpful," he explained, "as people got to hear and understand why the letter would have felt threatening to some."

The letter had both negative and positive effects, Mr. Conard noted. On the negative side, the letter brought a sense of uneasiness and fear to members of the community. "Families who felt uneasy and personally threatened by the fact that the letter was written don't know how widespread the sentiment is," he said. On the positive side, Mr. Conard said, "The letter served as a rallying point for people to step forward and say that we believe in diversity. It also prompted more open discussion about the issue and the value of diversity and how we can achieve it."

"It was always clear that diversity was a school-wide goal that predates my arrival," continued Mr. Conard. "I think it is tremendously important for a lot of reasons. Not least because the reality is that the world that you guys are going to run is a diverse world. If you don't understand how to work with people who are different than you, you won't be successful."

The issue of diversity in the student body and in the

admissions process has been explored before. Last year, the Record conducted a poll and gathered statistics about diversity in the school community. The poll revealed that 88 percent of students and 95 percent of faculty felt diversity of tastes and opinions was "somewhat" or "very" important, and that 74 percent of students and the same 95 percent of faculty felt socioeconomic diversity was "somewhat" or "very" important.

"Diversity at Pingry is so multi-dimensional; it all boils down to diversity of perspective," said Mr. Conard. "The diversity that we seek cannot be measured by skin color or family income distribution alone."

The presence of the letter in the community brought the issue of diversity back to the forefront of school discussion and seemed to, from the overall reaction of the school, reinforce the goal of an increase in the diversity of the student body.

Mr. Conard explained the importance of diversity, saying, "There is an intangible goal of having a student body and faculty where in there is a sufficient variety of backgrounds represented so that you can have the best possible thinking and learning experience."



M. Skiba (V)

Mr. Conard explained the situation at a special assembly.

the letter to hate crimes such as burning down churches. Even though some students considered this reference to be hyperbolic, Mr. Conard later defended his choice of metaphor, saying, "Throughout history, intolerance movements have often cloaked themselves in pseudo-intellectual trappings, relying on apathy and anonymity to gain traction. Hate speech and hate crimes are often done anonymously. Why does the KKK wear hoods? It conceals their identity. The content of the letter was raising issues related to discrimination and was doing it in an unattributable fashion. It was not too big a step and it was also meant partly to shock. We sometimes have a tendency to be apathetic or passive to minor injustices, which could desensitize us to major injustices such as Darfur or the Holocaust."

At the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. Conard asked any of the faculty who supported diversity at school to stand up. After every member of the faculty immediately rose, Mr. Conard asked every-

one to show the student body that the school did not condone this letter.

"I felt it was tremendously important that all members of the community who might have felt targeted by the letter ended up feeling supported by



Lower School students watch the 2005 Winter Festival.

Courtesy of The Development Office

Word in the Hall: What Did You Think of Mr. Conard's Response?



NICK GILLIGAN (III)

"It was intense."



DAN LEVIN (IV)

"He helped control the issue by putting down the negative ideas raised by the letter."



HEATHER BENJAMIN (VI)

"He could've been more informative about the contents of the letter before projecting opinions about it."



ANNABELL SUH (VI)

"It was really good."



LUCY MARCHESE (VI)

"It was hard to deal with, but I think he handled it as well as anyone could."

The Community Speaks Out

Writing Style

By ISAAC DAVIS (VI)

While I was greatly relieved by both the student body's and Mr. Conard's response to the recent anonymous "diversity" letter incident, I am disturbed by the initial response of many students and parents of: "well, this is well-written, so it certainly has some valid points." It is this that I want to specifically address, because this is exactly how small-minded bigots attempt to gain credibility: by masking blatant prejudice with clever and "correct" language. It is only by realizing that, although this letter may not use explicitly hateful language, it is still, as Mr. Conard so aptly put it, a "vehicle of hate."

Consider the following, rather graphic, example: someone offers you a paper bag full of excrement. Now, let's say that, instead of a paper bag, it was a leather Coach bag full of excrement. Would you consider the latter a friendlier gesture than the former? Would the difference between a paper bag and a Coach bag distract you from the inherent grossness of the contents? No. Either way, it's still a bag of excrement.

Now, let us put this metaphor in terms of recent events: if someone spray-paints onto a wall an offensive racial slur indicating that minority students aren't welcome at Pingry, should we consider this any more or less offensive than if someone sends around an anonymous but "well-written" letter with basically the same message? Does committing a message to letterhead validate it in a way that writing it in graffiti doesn't? No. Either way, it's still the same basic message.

Think about this: Hitler begins "Mein Kampf" with what many people considered "valid" points about economy and society. Once he has gotten his reader's attention with clever writing and observations about the "disturbing trends" in his world, he explains that everything is the fault of a Jewish conspiracy. The anonymous letter follows a similar pattern. Its first goal is to draw in the reader's attention and trust by pointing out problems in the Pingry community. The reader thinks perhaps the writer is describing the recent concerns about cheating. Then, once the author has the readers nodding their heads, the blame is placed on the school's admission policy to draw in minorities.

If nothing else, we should gain from a Pingry education the ability to distinguish the message from the medium. As such, it is our own responsibility to recognize that, whether it is presented in an anonymous letter, in graffiti on a wall, or in any other form of communication, a message of hatred is still a message of hatred, and it is not validated by its medium.

Anonymity

By LISA THOMAS (VI)

When I was younger, I used to spend hours practicing my signature. No scrap of paper could escape my mark. I could be talking on the phone or watching television. It didn't really matter what I was doing; I just wanted a chance to make my signature perfect. I wanted it to look adult-like, to look professional, so that people would recognize it and begin to understand the sort of person I was.

In today's world, we are constantly being asked to sign things, whether it's as simple as signing for a package or as big as signing a contract for a new car. Our signature is the way we tell the world that we have agreed to do something or that something holds enough importance in our life that we are willing to sign our name to it, willing to put a piece of ourselves on it. This is hugely important because when your name is on something, you are now held accountable. You can't sign a document and walk away from it; you are responsible for what it says and for the ramifications of the document.

The importance of a signature has been seen countless times throughout history. For example, our forefathers took an enormous risk signing their names to the Declaration of Independence, but they did it anyway because the message of the document meant something to them. They risked their lives by signing their names to that piece of paper. When you don't sign your name on a document you're presenting, its contents lose value.

If you are unwilling to sign your name to ideas and feelings that you claim to have, then I cannot respond to them or respect them. The writer of an anonymous letter does not want to create dialogue but instead discord. The things said in that letter were hurtful, but I would have been more willing to listen to them and try to understand where they were coming from if I knew who was saying them. I don't care what people have to say as long as they have the courage to say yes, I believe this, yes, I will sign my name to this.

Some people might say that feelings and opinions like the ones expressed in the letter administrators and parents received cannot be shared openly because the writer would automatically be deemed a racist.

But if you really believe something, if you really want to change something, then that is a risk you have to be willing to take. To not sign your name is cowardly. The next time you pick up your pen to sign a document, whether it is a test, a contract, or a letter, please remember that you are not simply writing your name, you are saying that you are responsible for whatever that document says and that you are willing to deal with the consequences.

By MATT LAUD (VI)

The Reaction

By DAN DAVIDSON (VI)

When I read the now-infamous letter the day before the assembly that addressed it, I was shocked by its many glaring inconsistencies and fairly apparent racial insensitivity. What the authors called disturbing trends were backed up with virtually no evidence, and some of the statements were simply outrageous. Why then, with my distaste for the contents of the letter stirring in my mind, did I find myself arguing with people who shared my sentiments after the Headmaster's speech?

The reaction to the letter was flawed in its uninhibited and unnecessary attack on viewpoints that are likely held only by a small minority of community members. Saying that writing this letter is not very far removed from committing hate crimes like arson is quite a stretch. While the former can certainly lead to the latter, I find it hard to seriously believe that next week the authors of the letter will go on a spree of church burnings. This comparison was the defining moment of the assembly, which instead of reassuring and informing students, left them mostly in the dark as to the details of the situation and made it appear as if a grave crisis was unfolding before our very eyes.

If, as I've heard suggested, the letter was penned by a few angry parents, why was such a furious response necessary? Why do we need the entire faculty to stand up in support of diversity? Since it is almost inconceivable that a faculty member would remain sitting, even if he or she was a closet racist, this gesture was meaningless and an insult to the Student Body's ability to evaluate the moral fiber of our teachers on our own.

Even if more than a few people are responsible for the letter, responding to them with hatred accomplishes little, and in the long run will have a detrimental effect on the school. The animosity shown towards the authors of the letter was so vast that if it becomes a trend in matters in which a large majority at school is united against a fringe viewpoint, the minority will have its right to free speech stifled, even in cases where the ideas at stake are far less inflammatory than racism.

Just as the letter has been perceived by some as a fear tactic, the assembly was an attempt to intimidate those who wrote or were in agreement with aspects of the letter. Laws making hate speech illegal have been struck down by the Supreme Court because, unless it clearly incites violence, hate speech is just as legitimate a form of expression as any under the Constitution. The principle of free speech in America works best when ideas are attacked with the presentation of other ideas, not with assaults on the people who have the ideas.

Unfortunately, this is not what occurred. Instead of recognizing that a percentage of the population, however small, has concerns that should be addressed, the authors of the letter were wantonly attacked and automatically labeled racists. Instead of proving to the community that diversity is important and necessary, the issue was sidestepped. The possible, albeit inferred, racism of the authors does not give us a right to refuse to address an issue important to the school. Now, instead of fostering communication between supporters and opponents of increased diversity, the possibility of open forum has been destroyed. Who would dare speak his or her mind now that it has been demonstrated that anyone who opposes greater diversity will be quickly deemed a racist?

In the end, the proper thing to do would have been to educate the Student Body about the facts surrounding the letter and the state of diversity at Pingry. We are all intelligent people and could easily see through the stupidity of most of what was written. Instead of giving a vote of confidence to the Pingry community, the school's response is an alarming signal. Racial tension will not disappear because of the hateful counterattack; it will continue to escalate if the school continues to act in a confrontational manner, or will be forcefully subdued along with many other issues we have a right to address.

The Response

By DR. DIANA ARTIS

In the days immediately following the appearance of "the letter," I shifted into a critical and analytical mode as I joined forces with several faculty and staff to process and respond. I did not afford myself much of an opportunity to explore my emotions. Now that much of the dust has settled, however, I am grateful for the opportunity to explore and share my feelings as a woman of color, as a member of the staff, and as a parent within the community.

I was initially angered and saddened by the words expressed in the letter, but ultimately I am struck by the irony. In my varied roles within our school, I have come to appreciate and feel certain about our school's commitment to diversity initiatives, and I work to communicate those commitments to our current and prospective families. The author(s) of the letter have significantly helped my efforts by eliciting a response within the Pingry community that unequivocally highlights our school's commitment to diversity.

Our headmaster's immediate and explicit response to the letter, coupled with the outrage of our faculty, staff, parents, and students, speaks volumes about the Pingry community. The letter, whose motivation was anything but empowerment, has done just that. The divisive, harmful tone has served to empower many members of Pingry to speak forcefully in support of diversity. As a result, current families and prospective families are not left with sadness or anger, but rather a sense of security about diversity at Pingry. It would be difficult to question our school's commitment to diversity in light of these responses. I am sure the author(s) did not envision a positive impact on the diversity initiatives of our school.

As a woman of color and as a parent, I could allow myself to worry and wonder about the author of the letter. Specifically, I could wonder about the author's proximity to my children and the impact on my children's experiences. Instead, I am empowered by the community's response. I remain certain and take comfort in knowing that my children are members of a community where the power base is not afraid to take a stand for equality and justice. I cannot really ask for more in a world where the emotions of "the letter" do exist, so I choose not to dwell on the fears that such a letter could invoke. Rather, I choose to remain invigorated, energized, and motivated by those who join me in a stand against the feelings expressed in the letter. I remain committed to the goals of diversity. I remain committed to the Pingry community.

Pingry Values

By MS. VICTORIA BROOKS

Almost 20 years ago, my husband and I chose to send our children to Pingry for the same reasons that parents today are enrolling their children here: to be a part of a community that embraces its core values of honor, mutual respect, diversity and inclusion. We didn't just want a school that would "help our kids get into a good college," but one where they would be intellectually challenged to become lifelong learners. In 2001, during the last strategic planning process, the Board revised the wording of the School's mission; it now truly reflects the essence of Pingry, as well as my own personal passion as a parent and trustee of the School:

"The mission of The Pingry School is to foster in students a lifelong commitment to intellectual exploration, individual growth, and social responsibility by inspiring and supporting them to strive for academic and personal excellence within an ethical framework that places the highest value on honor and respect for others."

At that time we also updated our statement of philosophy that incorporates Pingry's core values: respect for students, a desire to strive for excellence in everything we do, a strong emphasis on ethical education and respect for others, a belief in multiculturalism, and a sincere desire to be an inclusive community.

Mission and values are the bedrock of Pingry; they are the reason people join our community. Because they are what we hold most dear, all of us, every day, have a commitment to bring them alive in our daily dealings with each other. No one says that being a member of our values-based community is easy, and indeed on some days it may seem as though we are far from achieving the School's mission.

Nothing distresses me more, however, than when I hear of someone in our community not treating others with respect or integrity, be it a student, parent, faculty, alumni or trustee. While we may indeed have different opinions about how we achieve our mission and the timetable that we decide upon, it both outrages and deeply saddens me when I hear about members of our community who don't truly believe in the school's core values.

While the Board is the ultimate steward of our values and our Headmaster is our chosen leader to be a role model, teach and lead the school, at the end of the day, Pingry is only as strong as our "weakest link." All members of Pingry must be believers or the community suffers because of their individual actions.

My hope and the goal I am committed to achieving twenty years from now, even though Pingry may look and feel different as it focuses on being an educational school in a global interconnected world, is for parents to want to send their children here for the same reasons that our family did many years ago: to join a values-based community that embraces honor, mutual respect, diversity and inclusion.

Chinese Artist Hsu Dan Displays Paintings School Safety Issues Prompt Preparedness

By HENRIETTA HAKES (IV)

Hsu Dan combines East and West, old and new, in a unique, original style; his distinctive paintings were on view in the Art Gallery from October 23 to November 28.

The artist has contributed to the school's arts program before by hosting an exhibition at the C.B. Newton Library and performing demonstrations for Mr. Paton's art history classes. Mr. Hsu comes from a tradition of artists and is accomplished in his own right, as his work has been displayed at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing and the Jiangsu Art Museum.

Growing up in the picturesque city of Hangzhou in China, Mr. Hsu showed an interest and talent in art at an early age. He held his first exhibition at age thirteen, meaning that he has worked for more than half a century as a professional artist. Upon graduation from the Art Institute of China, Mr. Hsu decided to attend Tong Ji University in Shanghai. He majored in architecture and garden design, not exclusively focusing on art for economic reasons. After receiving his degree, Mr. Hsu taught for thirty years at Southeast University in Nanjing and during the 1980s immigrated to the United States.

"Teaching is necessary to pass on culture. It's an art itself," says Mr. Hsu, who

is still involved in teaching today. He has two studios, "Hsu Dan Art Institute" and "Green Screen Studio Gallery," where he displays his work and instructs pupils in his distinctive techniques. "When teaching you build up. Start simply with things like flowers and calligraphy. Then, when you have mastered those things, use all the skills you learned to paint landscapes," Mr. Hsu smiled as his daughter translated the very abbreviated process of creating a classical Chinese painting, then added, "Remember to take your time and practice."

Mr. Hsu's art is a blend of classical and modern techniques, using both eastern and western elements. He invokes the traditional use of Chinese characters and mountain vistas, while also incorporating bright colors and city scenes. "They're equal," Mr. Hsu stated in regard to his preference of techniques, "They can't be compared."

When asked what he decides to paint and what technique to use, he replied, "I paint what I see." Having traveled extensively throughout China, America, and Europe, Mr. Hsu has any number of

subjects to paint from; he clarified, however, "I paint what I see and what I feel." As he shrugged his shoulders, he added, "I see something and then know I want to paint it, and I know how."

Over the course of his career, Mr. Hsu has always retained an optimistic enthusiasm for his work. "My ancestors were painters, and I carry and pass on the art that is part of our culture," he said. Mr. Hsu carried on the legacy of his ancestors with his art exhibit in the school gallery that transcended culture and time.



Hsu Dan uses traditional painting methods.

A. Hui (V)

Continued From Page 1

form of audio communication can be relied upon during a lockdown, the drill ends when an administrator comes to the room to dismiss everyone, quite unlike the way that fire drills are ended.

Some students feel that lockdown drills are unnecessary, as it is very unlikely that a real lockdown would occur.

"Honestly, I find the harangues about exact procedure excruciating," said Adrienne Spiegel (V).

Mr. Conard added, "One of the things that keeps people in the community safe is knowing one another and identifying strangers. It is important to report suspicious behavior and unusual visitors to an adult."

The third and final way to keep the school safe is by monitoring the entrances into the building. The school has three obvious entrances (the front door, the athletic entrance, and the arts entrance), but there are other entry points that go unnoticed: the side entrance in the middle school wing, the cafeteria entrance, the entrance by the Safe Room, and the entrance in the science wing, to name a few.

"The entryways are not as secure as they should be. The people at the front desk are really there monitoring electrical systems and so on. They are there to

help in the event of a fire, electrical power outage, or plumbing crisis. To say their job is to secure the building from people outside is a misrepresentation. We also know that the sprawling nature of the building makes securing entrances increasingly difficult," said Mr. Leef.

Head of Maintenance Mr. Mike Virzi confirms that someone is responsible for building security by the front door at all times from 4:30 pm until 8 am. The first shift is worked by someone from Pingry's facilities department, who sits approximately until midnight; the next shift, which lasts until 8 am, is worked by someone from the security firm with which the school has a contract.

The job specifically involves sitting at the desk by the door and making rounds, logging in at certain points on schedule. At no point during the rounds does the security officer go outside of the building.

Mr. Conard also confirms that all doors, except for the front door, lock at 8:30 am on school days, and someone is on duty 24 hours per day on weekends.

"The goal is to limit access points to the building. We are looking into having more safety features installed to monitor the other doors in the future. For now, we are looking for cooperation from the students and faculty to keep everyone safe," he said.

Ceremony Marks Opening of New Smith Middle School

By CATHERINE CHONG (VI)

November 14th and 15th marked the two-day celebration of the opening of the new Carol & Park B. Smith '50 Middle School. The opening began with a sneak-peek on November 14, with fifth graders and sixth graders joining current Middle School students on a tour. The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and Dedication occurred at 4:15 the next day, with Mr. Conard and Mrs. Brooks making their opening remarks to a large, excited crowd.

Later, Mr. Park B. Smith '50, for whom the building is named, gave a lengthier speech. He explained how his five-year tenure at Pingry and his experiences at the College of the Holy Cross and the United States Marine Corps have inspired him to live a life based on three tenets: excellence, service, and honor. In donating to the project, Mr. Smith hoped to further those three values.

The speeches were then followed by an open tour, in which students, faculty, and parents could walk around the building, watch performances, and examine the various exhibits. In one of the classrooms, Drama 8 students put on a two-minute play written by Upper School drama students Maureen Brady (V), Scott Eckenthal (V), and Mike Martinson (V).

"The food at the ceremony was great!" joked Hadley Johnson (VI). "But

in all seriousness, the building looks gorgeous, and the science facilities are very impressive."

Behind the scenes, much work has gone into planning the new Middle School. Construction began on July 25, 2005. It took approximately 14 months to build the Middle School and move in the furniture.

To prepare for the Middle School move-in, the Upper School Space Utilization Committee, headed by Upper School Head Jon Leef and Upper School Physics teacher Mr. Bill Bourne, was formed to put empty rooms to use. During winter break, the present Middle School office will be demolished to make more room in the cafeteria. "Even with an addition of a new grade, we don't anticipate space problems in the cafeteria if the Upper School students don't eat during Middle School lunch," said Mr. Phil Cox, Middle School Director.

While physical changes have been immense, curriculum changes will vary depending on the department. Some courses will undergo no changes while others will experience a complete overhaul. The math and sciences will not undergo organizational modifications. The English, History, and Foreign Languages, on the other hand, will be altered rather drastically.

"Right now," Mr. Cox explained, "the sixth grade course of study includes colonial American History, and concludes with the Civil War.

Form I is based on the study of culture. Form II examines the American Journey from the Depression through the modern time. There is not the kind of continuity that should exist from 6th through 8th. What we want to do is create bridges across the grades, focusing on one concept per year. We want to tie everything together. American history would be

the center, but we'd also bring in history from other parts of the world."

In the same pursuit of a global perspective, he elaborated, the foreign language department is looking to add Chinese to the curriculum somewhere down the road. As of now, students from first grade to sixth grade learn Spanish and starting in seventh grade, stu-

dents are allowed to choose between three languages: Spanish, French, and German. The current proposal is to offer Spanish, French, and German beginning in sixth grade. "We want to adjust to the changing times," Mr. Cox said. "The study of Chinese—and of Chinese culture—are important for students in the world they are inheriting. We have to

figure out how Chinese will fit into Pingry. It is not a question of whether we will offer the language. It is a question of how—and how soon."

Finding the "Pingry fit" has been the school's greatest concern in building the new Middle School. And with a successful ceremony, history is well on its way to being made.



Mr. Park B. Smith '50 cuts the ribbon at the opening of the new middle school.

M. Skiba (V)

Seniors Strut Their Stuff on the Runway

By HALLIE BIANCO (V)

On November 2nd, 36 Pingry seniors strutted their stuff on the runway at the Pingry School Parents Association (PSPA) "Rock Around the Clock" benefit luncheon and fashion show.

The benefit took place at the Birchwood Manor in Whippany, New Jersey.

PSPA member Mrs. Julie Spellman, who helped organize the benefit, said that the PSPA started planning the event last March, but everything "really came together in the last two months."

The fashion show, which lasted for about half an hour and was attended by Mrs. Hearst and Mr. Conard, featured the seniors wearing clothing donated by Lord & Taylor, After Hours Formal Wear, and Gito, a Millburn boutique. Schultz Furriers also donated various accessories, including wraps.

Seniors arrived at the Birchwood Manor early on the morning of the benefit and had their hair and make-

up done professionally.

"I would say for me it was a fabulous experience because of the wonderful people I got to work with. Everyone had an upbeat attitude, and it was such a fun day. Everybody who helped made it a success," Mrs. Spellman said.

Earlier this year, senior students eagerly signed up to model in the fashion show.

"I did it because I am considering being an actor in the years to come," said Sam Waterbury (VI), "and one thing that actors often do when they're out of work, which they usually are, is model."

"I'd heard over the years that the fashion show was a lot of fun, and I wanted to try it out for myself," said Cori Hundt (VI).

Mrs. Spellman said, "There was a lot of teamwork. We got to work with great people. The talent pool was absolutely amazing. Everyone contributed their great talents to make it a success."

In Memoriam: Katheryn "Kat" Werner

By EVAN ROSENMAN (V)

The life of Kat Werner was lived without borders and without fear, and so in each day of the 6,150 she spent on this earth, the world became a little brighter. And as she brightened the world, so too did Kat become closer to God, until on October 2, 2006 there was no more distance to traverse. That was the day that a car crash took her away from us—physically, at least.

Yet, spirited as she was, Kat would not have us dwell on our loss. So instead I shall dwell on her life, the beautiful life that it was an absolute privilege to be a part of. I think my friend Charlotte Conway (V) said it best: "The day after I found out about her death I was walking in the halls, and some people who knew that I was friends with her told me how sorry they were, and I just wanted to say how sorry I was for them, that they didn't get to know her too."

Kat's life does not lend itself easily to description; she was the type of person who was characterized so much by the things she did, by her way of being in the world, that it is nearly impossible to refer to her with a single noun. I think she would have wanted it this way. Nouns classify. They remove some of the inherent individuality in the human soul.

And so Kat was all verbs, and more than a handful can be attributed to her—thinking, praying, writing, hugging, laughing. Yet by far the most important was loving, an action which, to Kat, was not an action at all but rather a state of

being. Living and loving were synonymous to her, and as she lived boundlessly and effervescently, so too did she love.

Perhaps this is why she left such an indelible impression on all who knew her. Though Kat left Pingry in 2003, she never strayed far from the thoughts of her friends. Kat was so full of energy and life that you couldn't help but love her; as her homeroom teacher Mrs.

tact dwindled in the final months of her life. She will always be the girl who made me dance at my Bar Mitzvah, the girl who convinced me to see "Mean Girls," the girl who would always know when I was unhappy and would offer a bone-crushing hug. But more than that, I will always feel her influence in my own heart, and I will cherish my own personal Kat Werner as the truest part of

our one big fight, because only the best of friends can scream at each other one day and laugh about it the next.

And although there will be no more memories of Kat, there will always be opportunities to get to know her. If you perform a random, even silly, act of kindness, you are getting in touch with your own Kat Werner. If you take a moment out of your day to stop and focus on what is truly important, you are meeting with her and saying hello. And if you laugh simply for the sake of being young and new and vivacious, then she is laughing with you.

I like to think that I have had a glimpse as to where she would go in leaving life. That vision, my single favorite memory of her, took place on Mother's Day 2003, as Midori Wada (V), Kat, and I bungee jumped from 180 feet in the air. Too-cool kid that she was, Kat laughed at my increasing vertigo as the cable raised us up, until she too began to get frightened. Yet when Midori finally pulled the cord to send us sailing through the air, all of Kat's fear flowed away.

I like to think of Kat now as I saw her in that moment: flying over all, looking down not only with limitless compassion, but also with a beaming smile of exhilaration and delight.

Goodbye Kat. We'll love and miss you always.

Kat Werner attended Pingry for three years as a member of the class of 2008. In 2003, after completing Form I, she moved with her family to New York.



Courtesy of Katwerner.org

Everett put it, "Kat was a breath of fresh air and, occasionally, a gust of wind."

Her friend Rebecca Behrman (V) remembers, "She could make friends with anybody, and I always envied that." Zach Carr (V) adds, "She was just such a cool person."

Kat could enter your heart in the span of a single conversation, and when she did, a piece of you became Kat Werner, became somehow more buoyant. This is why I will always consider Kat a best friend—a once-and-forever best friend—even though our con-

myself.

I am so sorry for those of you who never got to love, or even meet, Kat. There are so many amazing times that many people shared with her. I will always remember our chalk wars, our insult fights with Zach, and the way we'd send each other "subliminal messages" in class by speaking as low and fast as possible. Every experience I shared with her was improved by her presence, whether it was a school dance or a Coldplay concert, or one of the dozens of movies we saw together. I will even cherish the memory of



Courtesy of C. Hundt (VI)

Seniors participated in the PSPA fashion show.

Chess Phenom Ju Teaches Young Players

By SAM MACKOFF (IV)

As the #1 ranked chess player in New Jersey and #2 ranked in the nation for kids 16 years old and younger, chess has been a major part of sophomore Evan Ju's life since he was young. Ju has been playing chess competitively in tournaments all around the world

since he was 5 years old.

When Ju was five, he saw his babysitter playing chess on a computer and was fascinated by it. "I was interested in the way the pieces moved," he said. The next day, his parents bought him his first chess set and taught him how to play. As a child, Ju was so enthusiastic about the game that he was able to beat his father only one month after learning to play. Following that, his parents started entering him in tournaments to play competitively.

Becoming the chess player that he is today took dedication and commitment to the game. Ju has been taking lessons since he was 6 years old. He has also spent many hours studying strategies by reading books and learning them from coaches. "I think I have a good sense of logic," explained Ju, regarding his natural talent at chess.

On October 16, during a day off from school, Ju spent time at an elementary school in Roxbury working with the students. He was invited by the school to come and talk to the students in the 4th grade chess club. He accepted the invitation because he thought it would be a great experience for him to teach young kids who are interested in chess.

He spent the first part of his time talking to the students about his background in chess and how he got started playing. The kids then began to ask him questions about strategies and more about his background. After that, several chessboards were set up and Ju proceeded to play every student in the club. During each game, he provided them with pointers on how to improve.

"My time at the Roxbury School was a great experience for me. The atmosphere just had an exciting feel and the kids reminded me so much of when I was young,"

commented Ju on his overall experience. He enjoyed getting to work with kids who were so enthusiastic and interested in learning more. The kids at the school were so grateful for Ju's visit that one of them sent him a letter thanking him for coming.

His enjoyment of the game has been part of the reason that he has been able to become so successful. "I enjoy the thrill of competition, and I enjoy getting to play a game which I can use my

logic for," noted Ju. He has also gotten to travel to places such as France, Crete, Greece, and many different parts of the U.S. to play in tournaments.

Chess has been a very positive influence on Ju's life since he was 5, and he hopes to continue being actively involved for years to come. He has enjoyed traveling and getting an opportunity to play the game he loves. Ju explained, "I've had many great experiences and met many new people."

Author of "The Wal-Mart Effect" Speaks to School at Finance Cafe

By MELISSA LOEWINGER (VI)

Charles Fishman, the author of "The Wal-Mart Effect," discussed his theories about the superstore chain on November 17 at the Finance Cafe. Mr. Fishman devoted the first hour of his speech to explaining how Wal-Mart is transforming the American economy and affecting the world at large. An hour-long question-and-answer session followed.

Mr. Fishman usually charges an honorarium of \$10,000, but he agreed to speak at Pingry for less. Before his presentation, Mr. Fishman attended a luncheon in the faculty lounge where he spoke to AP Economics students and several teachers about the frequency with which they go to Wal-Mart. He went around the room asking the students to state their names and the last time they were in a Wal-Mart.

One senior could not recall ever being in a Wal-Mart. Only two people in the lounge, John Scudato (VI) and Mrs. Evelyn Kastl, said that they shop at Wal-Mart often. Mr. Fishman was shocked at this low statistic and moved onto inquire about the students' potential career paths,

saying, "I like talking about jobs better than Wal-Mart."

After the luncheon, the party relocated to the Hauser auditorium for the presentation. Mr. Fishman, a journalist, first became interested in Wal-Mart due to an assignment from his boss. He said, "I didn't decide to write a book about Wal-Mart. It started with a magazine article for a dumb assignment from my boss. He told me to talk to people who were forced to move from big cities like New York to a tiny little town, because of Wal-Mart. I'm a journalist. I write about how people get their work done."

When asked whether he believed Wal-Mart benefited more people than it hurt through its competition, he responded, "Wal-Mart benefits far more people than it hurts. It holds the inflation rate down, which is great."

Ryan Sellinger (VI) asked Mr. Fishman whether he was for or against Wal-Mart. Mr. Fishman responded, "I'm for understanding Wal-Mart. I don't think asking whether Wal-Mart is good or bad is a constructive question. You should ask, what benefits does Wal-Mart have?"

In the last part of the question

and answer session, Mr. Fishman said, "Wal-Mart is not the problem with America. Why do Democrats attack Wal-Mart? Democrats shop at Wal-Mart. Barack Obama (the Senator from Illinois) needs to focus on more urgent issues. He thinks he's supporting Blue Collar ideals, but he's not. What about the millions of people buying there?"

Upper School Economics teacher Leslie Wolfson said, "What I took out of his presentation most is how he felt that Wal-Mart does good things like keep the inflation rate low and make many goods available to lower income citizens but how he also recognized that Wal-Mart does some very bad things like treating their workers poorly and not supplying health insurance. What I liked best about Mr. Fishman is how he said that it's our job as citizens to encourage Wal-Mart in the good things they do and discourage them in the bad."

After the presentation, Mr. Fishman signed copies of "The Wal-Mart Effect" and answered additional questions. Ms. Wolfson said, "I would like to get Mr. Fishman back for a Friday assembly for the entire community to hear."



A. Hui (V)

Evan Ju (IV) contemplates his next move.

"Armageddon's Children" Is Real Thriller

By BRIAN GREEN (III)

Imagine that you live in a world without electricity, a world in which the number of human beings has gone down from over six billion to mere thousands. Imagine that in this world, safety has gone the way of the horse and buggy. Imagine that at any moment, any time, there is a strong possibility that you will die. Imagine a world gone horribly wrong.

Enter the world of "Armageddon's Children," a novel by Terry Brooks, in which the world has gone out of control, due to plagues, warfare, and environmental degradation. Marauders hunt in the few inhabited areas left, and humanity is on the brink of extinction. Humanity's future now lies solely in the hands of three individuals, a man haunted

by his past, a woman unsuited for combat, and a boy who is just beginning to realize his destiny. Together, they must find a way to save humanity before the final nukes are launched.

The novel, like all of Terry Brooks' novels, is mainly

fantasy. Spells and magic are abundant in the world. Demons and holy warriors run loose while most of the world doesn't realize they even exist.

Brooks, however, is able to bring together magic and realism. Yes, there are magical creatures that roam another dimension, but there are also night-vision goggles, flechette weapons, and solar-powered cars, some of which are even used today. In the end, though, it is the characters that bring the story alive.

The characters are almost as engaging as the high-intensity plot. Each character is unique,

with different viewpoints about the world, strengths, weaknesses, and personalities. All are well-rounded people, from the grim-faced, tired Indian who warns of the final end of the world to the main villain's second-in-command, who dreams of usurping his boss's position.

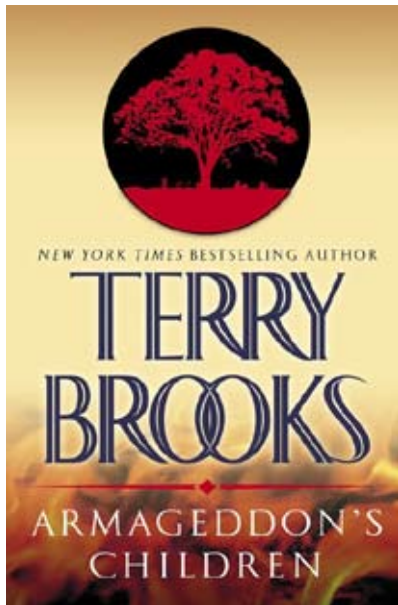
The only problem with the writing is that occasionally, between chapters, Brooks leaps into another person's writing style without an introduction or transition. But there is so much going on that such subtleties, at first glance, are easily overlooked.

Within the story there are so many symbols, so many parallels to modern times. These symbols and parallels are not coincidences, and Brooks has attested to this, saying that he wrote the novel to address "issues of this world as we're dealing

with now." Throughout the novel, he comments on the degradation of the environment, the futility of war, and even the avian flu. All of these disasters build up to the world in which the novel takes place. But in the story there still is a chance to reverse

these calamities. It is the same chance we have today, Brooks is saying, to prevent the future portrayed in the book from ever happening.

In the novel, the ones behind the problem are the demons, but Terry Brooks writes, "The real enemies are the once-men, humans subverted not by radiation and chemicals, but by false promises and lies." So even though the story is fictitious, it reveals a profound and startling truth about humans. The demons in the book, the cause of the problems that lead to the hellish setting of the book, are, in reality, ourselves. 9.5/10.



Courtesy of Amazon.com

Beck Shows Yet Another Face in New CD

By CONNOR SHEEHAN (IV)

Beck has always been a staple in the "indie" music scene, and his ever-evolving persona always gives fans a reason to love him.

Whether he is the funky, moderately psychedelic singer/songwriter, or the rhythmic, sampling, avant-garde artist who's too "out there" for his own good, or lastly, the rare, but still exceptional, depressed, love-torn chanter most visible on his 2002 break-up album, "Sea Change," he always manages to create unique and eclectic music.

Generally, up until Beck's 2005 hit, "Guero," these personalities had been isolated album-to-album. After Sea Change, however, he got back to doing what he did best: being very, very strange, and doing it

very, very well, with the help of Neil Godrich, the album's producer.

On his latest effort, "The Information," Beck opens with "Elevator Music," a track full of his signature style. "Elevator" appeals to most people's ideas of what Beck's music sounds like. He continues to

play into the stereotypical singer/songwriter persona, but then proceeds to hit you with the click-hop, eerie track, "Cellphone's Dead," with a part-live, part-electronic instrumentation, and a seemingly constant flow of non-sensical rhymes. It is exactly the kind of thing you've come to expect on a Beck



Courtesy of Amazon.com

Eastwood Directs "Flags of Our Fathers"

By SAM BARON (III)

Through a dramatic, thought-provoking, and gut-wrenching series of events, "Flags of Our Fathers" delivers a powerful message of America's past. The story of an iconic image of American history, the raising of the American flag on the Japanese island of Iwo Jima, is told in vivid and brutal detail taken directly from interviews with World War Two veterans.

Directed by Clint Eastwood, the movie is based on the book "Flags of Our Fathers: Heroes of Iwo Jima," by James Bradley. The story follows three members of the Easy Company in the United States Marine Corps: John "Doc" Bradley, Rene Gagnon, and Ira Hayes. Although the story revolves around these men, it tells the truth about the flag-raising on Iwo Jima.

"Flags of Our Fathers" is careful in reminding us that those who raised the flag in the famous image were, in fact, not the first to raise the flag. This flag was actually the second flag to be raised because Colonel Chandler Johnson, played by Robert Patrick, ordered the original flag down to be preserved. The real tragedies in the movie occur after the battle.

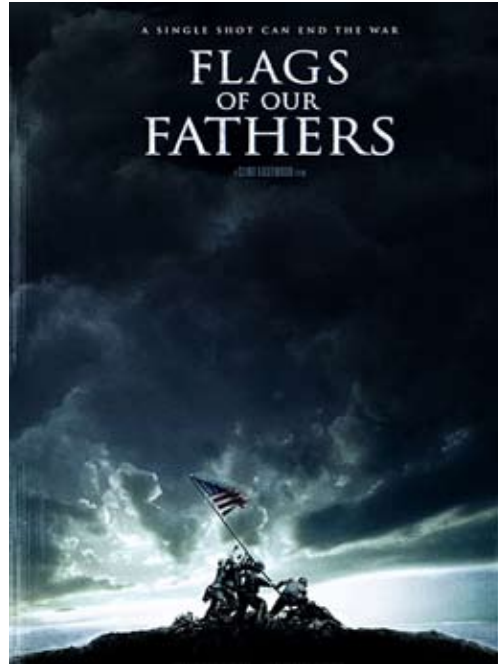
The men who raised that flag are taken around the country in an effort to raise money for war bonds. They are marketed as the "Heroes of Iwo Jima." In all of their speeches, however,

the men keep saying that they are not heroes, and that the men who died on Iwo Jima and the men who were still fighting are the true heroes.

To the viewer, the blood and gore of the film truly highlight the cruelty of war. Within the opening moments of the film, men are seen strewn about the beaches of Iwo Jima with brutal

of war.

Ryan Phillippe (as John "Doc" Bradley) and Jesse Bradford (as Rene Gagnon) give convincing performances of characters truly hardened by the war. As these men are dragged about the country in countless efforts to endorse war bonds, the actors' talents shine through.



Courtesy of IMDB.com

lacerations and wounds.

To further emphasize the horrors of Iwo Jima, the movie was filmed with a very dull and grayish filter that almost gives one the feeling of experiencing nausea with the atrocities

however, the performance that perhaps makes "Flags of Our Fathers" a worthwhile film is that of Adam Beach, who portrays Ira Hayes, a Native American who experiences prejudice even as a war hero. The alcoholic, care-free Hayes is an anti-hero who brings tears to the viewers' eyes. His ravishing performance tells of a heart-breaking journey of a man who simply cannot fit into society because of his race.

Adam Beach beautifully executes his role and is strikingly realistic. For instance, Hayes,

his character, is forcibly removed from a bar because he is a Native American, even though he is wearing full Marine garb and is already a famous name in town. Hayes, who is by now depressed and angered by what he saw on Iwo Jima, falls into a downward spiral, leading to his premature death.

The plot, at times, may confuse the audience. Constant flashbacks of the soldiers makes the film engaging but because of the many characters, it is difficult to keep track of all the soldiers. It is possible, however, that Clint Eastwood purposely did this to imply that in war, all soldiers' identities meld into one. He further emphasizes this when a soldier, who fought on Iwo Jima, says that they were not only fighting for their country but also for their own lives and their own companions.

The movie is appropriately rated R for graphic war violence, carnage and language. This rating, however, should not be used to judge the quality of the picture.

"Flags of Our Fathers" is a genuine film that reflects the lives of three young men, not much older than high school students. After seeing the movie, I was able to reflect upon what my grandfather may have seen in World War Two. I strongly recommend seeing this movie, not just for the entertainment but for the message that it imprints on all of its viewers.

NBC's "Heroes" Proves to be Herculean

By JENNIFER SOONG (III)

Superheroes destined to save the world. Sounds tacky, doesn't it? But the new drama, Heroes, which is airing this season on NBC, puts a whole new twist on the typical "X-Men" plot that we're all used to hearing.

The show tells the story of eight extraordinary men and women who wake up one day to find they possess supernatural abilities: a high school cheerleader (Claire) who is unable to die; a romantic young man (Peter) who is capable of mimicry; his politician brother (Nathan) who can fly; a Las Vegas showgirl (Niki) who has an evil alter-ego; her criminal husband (D.L) who can go

through walls; a drug addict artist (Isaac) who can paint the future; a policeman (Matt) who can read minds; and a Japanese office worker (Hiro) who can stop time and teleport.

In each episode, creator and writer Tim Kring (of NBC's Crossing Jordan) continues to unravel the plot by bringing all of his characters together in subtle ways.

Kring cleverly re-uses a symbol that resembles a DNA strand throughout the episodes to bring the characters together. In past episodes, it has shown up in the swimming pool of a crime scene Matt was working at, on a drawing done by Peter, as a tattoo on Niki's alternate persona, and on Claire's geometry book.

Tim Kring also uses Isaac's ability to paint the future as a way of linking all the characters. In the second episode,

the nuclear explosion Isaac has painted, or how characters like Niki and Peter will learn to control their powers, or how



Courtesy of NBC.com

Masi Oka as Hiro Nakamura has the power to halt time.

"Don't Look Back," Hiro gets hold of a comic book of his own past and future drawn by Isaac. Following the order of the comic book, Hiro then freezes time and goes to the future where he reveals a prophecy to Peter: "Save the cheerleader, save the world."

As with any good plot, many secrets have been revealed, but many still remain hidden. Questions like how the characters will save NYC from

Claire will learn of her father's true identity are all waiting to be answered. It is said that in the upcoming episodes, new characters will start to develop powers, such as Niki's young son, Micah.

Heroes has won acclaim from TV critics and viewers. Its diverse characters and plot leave the viewer on the edge of his or her seat from beginning to end, and it is definitely worth watching.

Alternative Rock Band "Split Fifty" Produces Great Music

By MORGAN FOSTER (III)

While they may not be as famous as The Beatles, Nirvana, or The Foo Fighters, the members of Split Fifty, an alternative rock band from Tannersville, Pennsylvania, definitely have the musicality to compare with the best of their inspirations.

Their first album, "We Live Forever," has a raw sound, a sense of harshness about it with dismissive and questioning lyrics such as "Sometimes I want to know where did the innocence go/everyone is depressed and the whole damn world's a mess" from the song "She Smells like Headaches and Alcohol," and "The money is in your place/your hand is down their pants/in the name of God you slay. What you build will fall down" from "Our

Father of Lies."

The instrumentation is dark, focusing mainly on the bass and drums.

While the ruggedness of "We Live Forever" definitely worked for the band, they believe that the different styles displayed in newer songs were an organic transition. Guitarist Josh Bodwell noted, "It was a completely natural growth. We'll always be making music that makes us happy and makes us feel creative. I think we'll always be reinventing ourselves." And reinvent themselves is exactly what they did.

Drummer Mike Lucchetti explained, "There are so many genres of music, such as swing, that are forgotten about by modern generations. We want to try and incorporate them into our music as much as possible."

As well as changes in the music, the lyrics have trans-

formed quite a bit as well. Instead of pushing a whiny, anti-government theme, their new record, according to lead vocalist Zach "Fifty" Hosier, is "similar to a musical, in which the lyrics are written around a story."

As well as having an incredible studio album, their live performances are also excellent. At a November show at the Hamilton Street Café, they attracted a crowd of less than thirty yet still played with enough energy to rock an arena. From Mike's flamboyant drumming to the odd poses struck by Zach, Ted, and Keith, Split Fifty has charisma and knows how to entertain an audience while playing music.

Split Fifty is a band worth listening to, whether you purchase their album or simply listen to their music on MySpace or PureVolume.

By NICK RICE (III)

"The Winter's Tale" amazed audiences three nights in a row. Parents, students, and teachers alike gathered in the Macrae Theater to see the result of months of hard work: the fall drama production. Shakespeare wrote the original "The Winter's Tale" in 1610. The school's version was directed by Mr. Al Romano and played by 31 students.

The audience was greeted by Father Time, played by Alex Snape (VI), who pushes the play into full swing.

The play opens with a party in Sicilia thrown by King Leontes (Ted Moller —VI), for his good friend Polixenes, King of Bohemia (Jake Kreeger —VI). Tension begins to grow when Leontes notices Polixenes' seemingly romantic interactions with Leontes' wife, Hermione, played by Annie Hanson (VI). Leontes' emotions get the best of him as he builds up a sense of jealousy

and pure hatred for Polixenes and Hermione, falsely accusing them both of treason and adultery.

Hermione is sent to prison,

Zacharias (VI).

Without knowing that his father is listening, Florizell reveals his plans to marry the Shepherd's



Courtesy of J. Devine (V)

Annie Hanson (VI) lectures her son, the young prince.

where she gives birth to a baby girl, Perdita. At Hermione's trial, the Oracle reads that Hermione is innocent, but a stubborn Leontes proceeds to defy the Oracle, immediately resulting in the death of his young son, Mamillius, portrayed by Mark Shtrakhman (3). Hermione faints in grief, but is reported dead of a heart attack. Leontes, who wrongly believes the newborn babe to be the child of Polixenes, has the baby abandoned on the coast of Bohemia. A shepherd, Scott Eckenthal (V), and his dim witted son, Louis Riccardi (V), find the baby and raise her, not knowing that she is the daughter of Leontes. The humorous pair appears throughout the play, providing comic relief.

After intermission, sixteen years have passed, all of which Leontes spent mourning the loss of his wife and son by kneeling by the graves and weeping during every minute of his free time. Polixenes and Camillo, Lord of Sicilia, played by Sam Adriance (VI), attend a sheep shearing festival in disguise to monitor the activity of Polixenes's son, Florizell, portrayed by Ricky

adopted daughter, Perdita, played by Sarah Paton (IV). Polixenes, unaware that Perdita is actually the daughter of Leontes, forbids the marriage because she is not from a royal family. The play progresses, ending with a surprise and a reuniting of families once divided.

"The Winter's Tale" was a great success due to all the hard work that was put in by the cast and crew. This was the first Shakespearian performance for many of the actors.

"It combined so many things that Shakespeare tried to achieve in his career into one play: tragedy, comedy, loss, and love," Eckenthal said.

The audience agreed that they pulled it off. Erin Toner (VI) commented, "The acting was amazing. They created an interpretation of Shakespeare that was understandable for modern viewers." The students also had a great stage to work on and fantastic costumes to wear.

In the end, great acting, a beautiful set, and a dramatic storyline with constant comic relief made "The Winter's Tale" a huge success.

Holiday Styles Brighten Up the Winter

By HANNAH GOLDSTEIN (IV)

There's nothing like some holiday cheer to add a whole new dimension to a winter wardrobe. As the old adage goes, "It's not what you wear, but how you wear it." This is the mantra for fashion mavens worldwide. However, everyone wants a few new clothes now and then. So what to put on the wish list this year?

Color-wise, stick to the basic black, white and gray. Then, for an unexpected punch, add a splash of red. Red is everywhere this season. After all, what other color matches Santa caps oh-so-perfectly? This winter is about glamour, and no color does glamour like red.

The fabrics of choice this winter are equally glamorous. Think old-Hollywood style: cozy (faux!) fur trim, luxurious cashmere, and gorgeous lace. Take a cue from traditional British high fashion as well with couture fair-isle sweaters and tartan. Whoever said tartan

was just for bagpipe players?

A sign of a true fashionista is the ability to wear pants well. Pants are usually relatively neutral, so interesting tops often play them up. To a certain extent, however, the pants have to emphasize the tops as well. Stovepipe jeans are still basking in the limelight after their recent debut, and they work best this season balanced with larger tops, such as billowy tunics or baby dolls. For those who flinch at the words "skinny jeans," take comfort in a groundbreaking new trend: oversized pants. Balanced with a fitted blazer or a crisp tee, these pants are both comfortable and stylish—and they create a most fabulous silhouette.

As the weather gets colder, fashion magazines are advising against wearing miniskirts barelegged. Not only is a micro-mini without tights impractical, but it is tacky as well—save it for the Jersey Shore party next summer. This winter, update the closet with a more cold weather-oriented

skirt. Still too attached to leave the miniskirt behind? Revamp the look with embellished and chic minis in varying colors—but only if layered with neutral tights or patterned, knit leggings (just make sure to keep the "miniskirts" no shorter than four inches above the knee).

Now more than ever, people seem to have something to say. Where better to put it than straight on a tee for the entire world to see? Unfortunately, this trend has to be saved for the last Friday of every month. In the meantime, thermals are a warm and cozy way to stay on top of the trends. For an extra layer, add a knitted v-neck sweater or a funky patterned cardigan.

When it comes to accessories, glamour is central yet again. Classic is key: leather bags and belts, black stiletto pumps, and even long gloves have made cameos in recent runway shows. Of course, it never hurts to add some sparkle to an ensemble. Diamonds are a girl's best friends—and cubic

zirconium is a thrifty girl's best friend—so pop in some studs and never feel lonely again. And who says fingernails can't be accessories? Chanel nail polishes in black and red are flying off the shelves—stock up on a few as stocking stuffers for the season.

Before stepping out the door à la Audrey Hepburn, toss on a chunky knit scarf or hat to keep warm. Top the outfit off with an insulated pea coat and show the weather who's in charge. Or, for a funkier touch, don a white, fur-trimmed quilted jacket and match the snow in style.

One final note to remember is that fashionable clothes do not have to be from traditionally high fashion stores. Stores from Old Navy to Marc Jacobs are stocking up on clothes, accessories, and outerwear for the upcoming winter season, so there's no need to blow all the Christmas money on one garment. This winter, shop well, stay stylish, and have a fantastic holiday season!



From top left: Urban Outfitters Hearts Legwarmers, Chanel Rose Nail Polish, Abercrombie&Fitch Joanna Knit, Anthropologie Isle of Skye Trousers, American Eagle Vest, American Eagle Snowflake Pattern Scarf, Anthropologie Glee Overcoat, Weitzman Tall Riding Boots

California Pizza Kitchen Not Worth It

By SCOTT ECKENTHAL (V)

Short Hills Mall-goers will be intrigued by California Pizza Kitchen's interesting atmosphere: a fresh Santa Monica style lounge accented by urban stainless steel and yellow walls cleverly adorned with pizza-box art. An open kitchen and a brick oven bring a pizzeria feel to the space, and the large staff is surprisingly personable. When a menu opens, however, a new (and expensive) wind blows.

The entire menu is quite pricey: the average appetizer costs \$7.79. The Singapore Shrimp Rolls (\$7.79) and Sesame Ginger Chicken Dumplings (\$6.49) were both served quickly, perhaps because there was actually little food on the plate.

Salads have similar price tags. The Waldorf Chicken Salad (\$7.49) is described on the menu as an "NYC favorite." This was another letdown, however; it was unexceptional, considering the price.

With soups, we found a winner. They were costly (4.99-5.99), but with the price came an unexpectedly large portion and a choice between three soups.

Finally, we arrive at the pizza, which CPK flaunts with great pride without reason. The menu boasts about the Thai Chicken Pizza, saying, "This is the original." It's a funky combo of cheese, peanuts, and vegetables. It's interesting, but for a personal pizza at \$11.99, the chef is simply trying too hard. Instead, I tried a classic. How could someone mess up The Fresh Tomato, Basil, & Garlic Pizza (\$9.79)? By making the cheese too grainy and undercooking it, of course.

The desserts continued the expensive theme. The new Chocolate Banana Royale Cake was a combination of moist chocolate cake and imitation banana sauce, and was \$6.29 without ice cream. If you'd like ice cream, you have to add \$1.50 to any of the other typical, yet high-priced, desserts.

CPK has joined the ranks of hip restaurants that feel they can sell mediocre food at a high price due to their "chic" atmosphere. If you're at the mall, try Legal Sea Foods or Joe's American Bar & Grill. If you're into a more relaxed environment, Johnny Rockets is always fun. However, if your heart is set on pizza, you'll be much more satisfied with your local pizzeria.

Girls' Soccer Wins Championship

By CORI HUNDT (VI)

It was another successful year for the girls' soccer team. After a long, intense season, the team finished with a record of 21 wins, 2 losses, and 1 tie. Captains Katherine Sheeleigh (VI), Michelle Aueron (VI) and Liz Lan (VI) led the team along with coach Andrew Egginton, who was nominated for Courier News Coach of the Year and the New Jersey Girls' Soccer Coaches Association North 2 Coach of the Year Award. Over the course of the season, the team scored 85 goals (an average of 3.5 goals per game) during the season and recorded 16 shutout games.

The season started off well with a very productive preseason. The girls worked on their skills during team practices and took a four-day team bonding and training trip to Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts. Highlights of the trip included jet skiing, parasailing and an 18-mile bike ride. The team's bonding continued throughout the season; Sarah Strackhouse (V) said, "One of my

favorite memories of the season will be of the pasta parties we had the nights before the games."

The team's hard work paid off when, at the end of the season, they were crowned Colonial Hills Conference Champions, Somerset County Finalists and New Jersey State Champions for the third year in a row. To win the state championship, the team beat its southern New Jersey rival, Red Bank Catholic, 2-1 in double overtime. The previous year, the two teams shared the championship after drawing 0-0 in the finals.

Pingry was down 1-0 at the end of the first half, and Red Bank Catholic's lead seemed eerily similar to Montgomery's in the county finals. Therefore, the team came back in the second half with a fierce tenacity to score as soon as possible. Kim Kroll (V) tied up the score with a goal to send the game into overtime. After a scoreless first overtime, the game became a sudden death match. However, before the second overtime ran out, Lan scored the

winning goal for the team, and Pingry girls' soccer claimed the state championship once again.

Teamwork was a large part of their success, but many of the players were also recognized for their individual success. Sheeleigh and Kroll were named Courier News All-Area Players. Sheeleigh was also named Player of the Year in the Colonial Hills Conference and was inducted to the 2006 All-America team, a prestigious honor bestowed on only 78 high school girls throughout the country. Strackhouse, Kroll, Aueron, Caroline Albanese (IV) and Casey Rupon (V) were named to the All Colonial Hills First Team. Adrienne Spiegel (V) and Alyssa Zupun (IV) were named to the All Colonial Hills Conference Second Team, and Lan and Nicole Gayda (VI) were awarded honorable mentions.

Overall, the girls' soccer team had a successful championship-winning season because of hard work and the determination to win. Sheeleigh summed up the victory: "Winning the state finals [2-1] against Red Bank Catholic in double overtime was the one of the best moments of the season."



B. Morrison '64

Katherine Sheeleigh (VI) assisted the game-winning goal.

Football Beats N.A. in "Friday Night Lights"

By SAM FISHER (III)

One of the final Pingry football games, which was against Newark Academy, was known as "Friday Night Lights." The game brought out the best school spirit that the football team has seen all season.

The team beat Newark Academy 16-8 in the cold and pouring rain for its second straight win. The night began on a solemn note, when Pingry announced its retirement of the number 63 jersey, in honor of John Babbitt. Pingry presented the Babbitt family with the jersey in front of the packed stands in the specially lit football field.

Quarterback Tyler Parsels (V) kickstarted Pingry's offense at the start of the game, engineering a touchdown drive capped off by his 27-yard run to put Pingry up 8-0.

After strong defensive holds

led by seniors Russell Simpson and Ross Millard, Parsels threw a 52-yard touchdown pass to Chris Cummins (VI) to make the score 16-0.

Newark Academy proceeded to score a touchdown, making the score 6-0, and then later a safety, to make the score 16-8.

When it looked as if Newark Academy might complete an improbable fourth quarter comeback with a touchdown drive with very little time left, the defense sealed the victory with an interception with just under a minute remaining on the clock.

Led by seniors John Scrudato, Gabe Fernando, Ross Millard, Chris Cummins, and Russell Simpson, it was a great moment for the boys in what was the last football home game that they will ever play for Pingry.

The team followed the win under the lights with another win to close out the season.

Boys' Soccer Takes Eighth Seed to Title

By ANDREW SARTORIUS (IV)

On November 15th, 2006, the boys' varsity soccer team won the Non-Public A state title, defeating Christian Brothers Academy 1-0 at the College of New Jersey. Over the past month, the team had mystified its critics by continuing to beat higher-ranked opposition in the NJSIAA state tournament. Led by goalkeeper Grant Schonberg (V), defender Richard Bradley (VI), sweeper Austin Lan (VI), midfielder Kim Kimber (VI) and striker Jeff Zimering (VI), the team performed well over the course of the season despite many injuries, including a season ending leg injury to senior midfielder and assistant captain Nick Devers in the second round of the Somerset County Tournament.

Finishing the regular season with eleven wins, two ties and two losses, and with a share of the Somerset County Tournament title, the team was ranked eighth out of a field of ten teams in the North A group of the NJSIAA state tournament. Big Blue took

on ninth seeded Paramus Catholic in their first round game. After grabbing an early lead with a goal by Zimering, the team held on until the 75th minute, when, against the flow of play, Paramus scored on a 35-yard strike. The game ended in the second overtime when Eric Hynes (V) scored off a cross from David Miller (V).

In the next game, the team took on Seton Hall Prep, ranked 3rd in the Star Ledger Top 20 Poll and seeded number one in the tournament. "This was our hardest game," said Lan, who, along with Zimering, captained the team. "They had only one loss and had beaten us last year to end our season." The game began with Seton Hall dominating time of possession and chances on goal. In the 10th minute, however, Zimering curled in a free kick from twenty yards out to grab the lead. Shelled by numerous Seton Hall scoring attempts, Schonberg stepped up in goal, making many saves, including one to deny a Seton Hall striker from point-blank range.

The biggest game of Pingry's

unpredictable road to success came on November 8th against the Delbarton Green Wave. Perennial rivals, Delbarton had ended Big Blue's season two years ago with a 2-1 win. Despite giving up an early first-half goal, the team equalized late in the first half on a header by Zimering. In the second half, Hynes scored in the 60th minute off of a cutting pass from freshman midfielder Scott Keogh.

With two upsets under its belt, the team headed into the sectional final against second-seeded Don Bosco Prep. The first half was scoreless, with both sides struggling to adjust to the turf. Early in the second half, Don Bosco opened the scoring after the ball bounced around near the goal. With five minutes left in regulation, Big Blue struck back when Kimber scored off of a bouncing ball. The game went through two more scoreless overtime periods, followed by a penalty shootout. Zimering, Bradley, and Kimber converted their kicks, and Schonberg saved two of the opponents' to give the team the victory.

The state championship game, against the winner of the South sectional group, Christian Brothers Academy in Lincroft, pitted two eighth seeded teams against each other as CBA had battled to the finals in a similar fashion. The schools had met twice in the last ten years, both times in the state championship game. "It's a huge rivalry because it's always for a championship," said Lan.

Both teams struggled on the fast-paced turf, but sophomore midfielder Matt Fechter capitalized on an opening in the middle of the field to score the only goal of the game. With strong defense, the team quashed CBA in the second half, allowing only one scoring chance. When the final whistle sounded, Pingry had won its fourth state championship, and its first in five years.

"It was great to end my career on a high note when we had to end the previous three years with losses," Lan said, "and we have a bigger chance next year than we did this year. We had three freshmen starting this year and they'll only get more experienced."

Kerr, Reef, Moore Headline Dominant Girls' Tennis Season

By PIERCE FOWLER (III) and ANDREW SARTORIUS (IV)

The girls' tennis team, led by senior captains Sandra Hough and Robin Moore, had a successful campaign this year. Consisting of singles players Hough, Moore, and Chelsea Garber (IV), and doubles teams, Aly Kerr (V) and Jackie Reef (IV), and Jordan Homer (VI) and Natalie Battista (III), the team finished with a regular season record of 19-4. They were ranked 14th in the Star Ledger Top 20 Poll and ranked 3rd in Somerset County behind champions Bernards and runners-up Hillsborough. In the Colonial Hills Conference, they were co-champions with Hillsborough.

In the state tournament, the team was in the North A group and given the number one seed out of a field of eight teams. The team performed well, defeating Academy of the Holy Angels 5-0 in the first round, and fourth-seeded Immaculata 4-1 in the semi-finals. In the finals, the team fought hard,

but lost 3-2 to Immaculate Heart Academy.

Moore had great individual success this season, winning the Colonial Hills Conference Player of the Year award. She was also named to the All-Somerset County Second Team for singles. Garber was also recognized; she was named to the All-Somerset County Third Team for singles.

The most successful duo on the team was the partnership of Kerr and Reef, which won the NJISAA State Doubles Tournament and was named to the All-State and All-Somerset County First Team for doubles. Kerr, described as "dominant at the net" by the Star Ledger, worked with Reef to compile a record of 22-2.

Reef thought that the hardest game was not the finals, but rather the semi-finals against Immaculata.

"In the semis, we lost the first set after Aly was hit in the head with a ball by the other team," she explained. "After recovering from the semis, I think we went into the finals more relaxed. We

play better when we are relaxed, so going into the finals we were just ready to have a good time and give it our all."

Kerr thought that the pair's style of play helped them to be successful; she explained, "Jackie would drive it deep and stay back until I was able to hit a volley winner at the net." Kerr thinks that the partnership will be broken up and the two will probably not play together next year because the team is "losing four seniors, meaning one of us will probably have to play singles." Jackie, however, is optimistic the pair will stick together: "I hope that we get to play together next year and we can do well again. I guess we just have to see what happens with the lineup. Everything depends on what is best for the team."

Reef believes that the team had a positive season overall; she said, "We finished with a great record and had a great time playing together." To repeat next year, the team will "need to just keep supporting each other and working hard."



B. Morrison '64