

STUDENTS ELECT SRIVASTAVA (V) AS COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Plans to Widen the Role of Student Government

By CAITLIN BERGH (VI)

Nikhil Srivastava (V) won the student body presidential election on Feb. 23 to become the 2004-2005 student body president. Upon winning, Srivastava said he was "mostly thankful" and "just grateful that kids voted for me and gave me the chance to be president."

His job may not begin until fall, but Srivastava said his plans for next year start this year. He intends to spend the remainder of the year acquainting himself with procedural matters by communicating with current Student Body President Robert Zacharias and Student Government Adviser Ms. Penny Callas.

Srivastava said he hopes to improve school events next year. "I think Rob [Zacharias] did an excellent job in making Homecoming and Winterfest original and exciting," Srivastava said, "but I would have liked to see more people attend these events." He added that this year's Winterfest was the best school event he ever attended.

Still, Srivastava said, "the desire to involve oneself in the affairs of the school has got to come from within each student."

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New Division Directors Prepare to Lead

Mr. Jon Leef Is Named Upper School Director

By MARTA POPIOLEK (V)

Mr. Jon Leef was announced on Feb. 17 as the new Upper School director and assistant headmaster. He will take over Mr. Rohdie's position next year.

Mr. Leef is currently the assistant upper school principal at the Rye Country Day School (RCDS) in Rye, N.Y. He is also the 11th grade dean, an assistant college counselor and head coach of varsity football.

Mr. Leef teaches pre-calculus and has taught every math course up to AP Calculus. He previously served as RCDS' dean of students and softball coach. Before coming to RCDS in 1995, he was head of the math department at the Hackley School in Tarrytown, N.Y.

He received a B.A. from Bucknell University and an M.A. from the Teachers College at Columbia University, both in math.

Mr. Leef grew up in Westchester, N.Y. and said Pingry's location and reputation attracted him here. "This is a school that, in the context of my career, almost seemed like coming home to a familiar place," Mr. Leef said. "It will be a terrific opportunity for my family and me." Mr. Leef said that teaching is the most hopeful, optimistic profession there is.

Robert Zacharias (VI), chair of the Upper School student division director search committee, said Mr. Leef is very much like Mr. Rohdie. "It seemed like Mr. Leef would stick by his decisions," Zacharias said.

Paul Wieman, upper school principal at RCDS, said Mr. Leef is a terrific person with a great sense of humor. "He's an excellent teacher, a phenomenal coach and the kids like him," Mr. Wieman said. "He is a real leader, and I don't make decisions without him." Mr. Wieman added that Pingry is a lucky school to have Mr. Leef next year.

RCDS students had kind words to say about Mr. Leef. Senior Doug Behrman said Mr. Leef was his best high school teacher and coach. "He has left an indelible mark on my life," Behrman said. "My advice to any student is to just listen to what he has to say."

Senior Nick Carcaterra called Mr. Leef "one of the best all-around people I've ever met. I can't imagine what high school would have been like without him."

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Upper School Director

Name: Jon Leef
School: Rye Country Day School, Rye, N.Y.
Position: Assistant Upper School Principal
Education: B.A., Bucknell University
 M.A., Teachers College at Columbia University
Subjects Taught: Math
Sports Coached: Football, Softball
Experience: Dean of Students, RCDS; Math Department Chair, Hackley School



Middle School Director

Name: Philip Cox
School: Greenhill School, Addison, Texas
Position: Assistant Director of Middle School
Education: B.A., Bucknell University
 M.A., University of Virginia
Subjects Taught: English
Sports Coached: Soccer, Lacrosse
Experience: Director of Admissions, Greenhill School; Associate Director of Development, Greenhill School; Teacher, Montclair Kimberley

See story on page 5.

Affirmative Action Used in Admissions

By DANIELLE PERETORE (V) and CHANTAL BERMAN (IV)

The admission department uses race as one of several considerations in determining admission to Pingry, Admission Director Ms. Sara Boisvert says.

Minority applicants have an added benefit similar to that of alumni children, student siblings and applicants with athletic or artistic talent. Ms. Boisvert says the goal of the school's affirmative action program is to diversify the student body.

Still, race is not one of the primary factors in the admission process. The overall objective of the department, Ms. Boisvert says, is to "bring in the best class we can get, made up of students who will most contribute to the community."

The idea of a diverse student is complex and multi-faceted, Ms. Boisvert says. It includes such considerations as ethnicity, gender, past schooling and economic status.

Race comes into play only with the finalized pool of the most competitive applicants. "The admission department looks at race as only a part of the overall applicant," Ms. Boisvert says, "but a part that can enrich the community and therefore can add value to a student's application."

Last year, Pingry's overall acceptance rate was 31 percent of applicants, whereas the minority acceptance rate was 25 percent. Of the Caucasians that were accepted, 81 percent enrolled, whereas 71 percent of accepted minorities enrolled. Ms. Boisvert notes that these statistics are only for the past year and that it is hard to say why fewer minorities enroll.

"I think it is a respectable percentage, but it is something we are always working on," she says.

In the past decade, minority enrollment has remained stable at slightly under 20 percent. Asian enrollment has decreased significantly, though, and African-American, Hispanic, Middle Eastern and multiracial enrollments have increased. This is on par with the national average for independent school minority enrollment — 20 percent — as calculated by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).

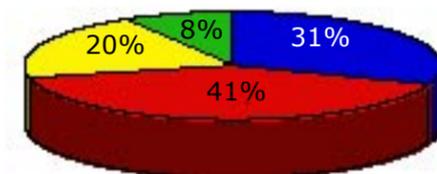
NAIS calculates that the average student body is 5.5 percent African-American, 2.7 percent Hispanic, 7.4 percent Asian, 0.2 percent Native American, 2.9 percent multiracial and 1.3 percent Middle Eastern. At Pingry, four percent are African-American, eight percent are Asian, two percent are Hispanic, five percent are multiracial and .5 percent are Middle Eastern.

The admission process is need blind, meaning that acceptance has nothing to do with financial status. During the admission process, an applicant can decide to apply for aid.

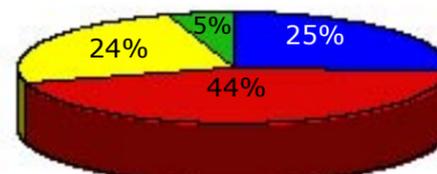
The process includes a questionnaire requiring applicants to describe their

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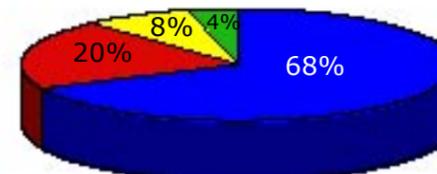
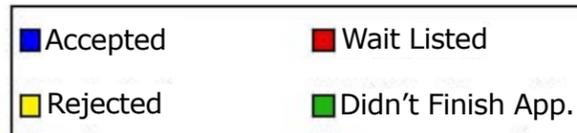
Admissions Statistics for 2003-2004 School Year



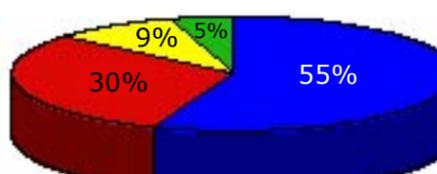
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ALUMNI CHILDREN



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Suruchi Ahuja (V) performed an Indian dance at the March 5 Multi-Cultural Assembly. See page 6.

Affirmative Action Face-Off

Caroline Savello (V) and Robert Zacharias (VI) provide opposing viewpoints on the controversial issue of affirmative action. P. 2

More Diversity Is Promised

Mr. Neiswender said he will never be pleased with the school's diversity and that Ms. Boisvert is marketing the school to underrepresented groups. P. 4

Mr. Hanly Returns to Speak

Former Headmaster John Hanly, who left in 2000, returned as a speaker in his own lecture series. Mr. Hanly discussed ethics and moral decisions. P. 5

How Snow Days Are Called

Mr. Neiswender and Mr. Virzi wake up at 4:30 a.m. when snow is predicted to decide whether to open, close or delay school. P. 7

Mr. Tramontana in Hall of Fame

Baseball Coach Manny Tramontana was chosen out of 7,722 coaches to be inducted this April into the N.J. State Coaches' Hall of Fame. P. 8

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Editorial: Welcoming New Perspectives

The percentage of students receiving financial aid at Pingry is 7.6 percent, only about half the national average for independent schools. Though Pingry has some affirmative action by race, the school does not have comparable action for the socioeconomically disadvantaged. In seeking to create a diverse student body, the school would help itself by providing aid to more students from less privileged backgrounds.

Of course, this is easy to say. Students pay very high tuition as it is, and finding more money in the school's budget to increase financial aid opportunities is not appealing. But the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) has reported its member schools offering some financial aid to an average of 15.8 percent of students. Many of these schools have lower tuitions than Pingry. Furthermore, some colleges have as much as half their student body receiving financial aid.

Affirmative action is a controversial topic, and Pingry's ethnic diversity has been at the national average. Financially, though, our student body lacks variety. Teachers, some students, even newspaper op-eds complain that we are spoiled. How do we avoid fostering a culture that takes monetary privileges for granted when a mere 7.6 percent of students receive any kind of financial help?

Diversity has become something of a buzzword of late. Top colleges boast about their percentage of students from various ethnic backgrounds. School brochures try to emphasize the idea of a multicultural atmosphere that stimulates learning. Sure, Pingry wants a diverse group of students and teachers. But that means more than having certain percentages of students of different races. It means eliminating all barriers that exist for any deserving student to attend our school.

It means providing the financial aid necessary for our school to educate more underprivileged young adults. If we can offer spots to students from less privileged backgrounds, we welcome new and varied perspectives into our community. We breathe life into the atmosphere in which we are now too comfortable.

The problem of achieving real diversity is a complex one, but the goal is worth the trouble.

The opinions expressed here reflect the views of members of the editorial board.

Editorial: Losses for Student Freedom

In two losses for student freedom, the administration banned card playing and cracked down on students' personal websites this month.

The card playing ban, which has been in effect since the beginning of the year, is meant to prevent students from betting. Betting is certainly dangerous, and the school is right to want to stop it. But taking away every student's right to play cards is an overreaction. The school should find a less intrusive way to restrain betting.

The crackdown on students' online journals, or blogs, is worse. In a speech to the Upper School on Feb. 24, Mr. Rohdie said students could not use personal websites to defame Pingry or to say things like "Mr. Rohdie is a big fat bastard." Mr. Rohdie said disciplinary action would be taken if the writer's name was on the website.

Students who joined an unofficial Pingry blog ring said administrators searched their blogs for curses and called parents if any were found. Afterward, Middle School students said they were told they could not update blogs from school.

The blog crackdown seems to be aimed at improving the school's reputation, but at the cost of students' individual rights. The administration has a duty to protect the school's reputation, but its policy curtails student freedom too much. It may anger students to the point that it harms the school's reputation.

The Record has learned that two Middle School students were punished because of content in their blogs. Mr. Rohdie said one used a racial slur to describe a teacher.

As abhorrent as the insults were, the administration was wrong to punish the students for an out-of-school website. Pingry should have only reported the students to the blog hosting company.

Defamatory and obscene comments are against most blogs' terms of use, and the companies take action against offenders. Beyond that, it is not the school's responsibility to enforce those rules.

According to the American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker organization, several courts have ruled that public schools may not punish students for personal, off-campus websites as long as they do not "materially and substantially" disrupt class or other school activities.

Being a private school, Pingry can essentially do whatever it wants. Still, it should not take lightly that its actions might be unconstitutional if Pingry were a public school.

Whatever the administration does, it needs a set policy on students' rights and punishments for out-of-school actions. Currently, none exists. Instead, Mr. Rohdie frequently quotes former Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, who said, "I cannot define pornography, but I know it when I see it."

Vague guidelines do not give students a clear understanding of what is and is not permissible behavior. Punishments are prone to too much subjective interpretation and could be applied selectively.

Pingry should follow the lead of most schools and universities by setting specific guidelines for punishable behavior.

The opinions expressed here reflect the views of members of the editorial board.

Don't Censor the Sex Poll

It seems there are often two conflicting directions that the school can choose to take. One involves what is best for students; the other involves what is most comfortable for parents.

The first leads to a more educated student body, one that can make informed decisions that have major impacts on their lives. The second leads to a less stressful life for the administration; the school's benefactors are happy, and thus there are no phone calls, no letters, no angry conversations. Everything is left as is.

But are the two paths really in conflict with each other? Shouldn't the parents want what is best for their children?

The Pingry Record's last poll attempted to deal with the highly sensitive issue of sexual intercourse. The end result was essentially a public way of spreading gossip. Very little was advanced due to the heavy censorship imposed by the administration.

We found out that the sex rate

Amit Kumar (VI)
SCHOOL OPINION

at Pingry was well below the national average, that about half of seniors had sex and that no eighth graders had sex — well, of the 40 percent of students who responded to the poll. But so what? What did any of this really mean?

What is important to look at is not what is in The Record, but rather what isn't in The Record. Having looked at the original poll that the staff wanted to send out, I know there was a lot more that could have been learned before the administration stepped in — things like the links between people's views on sex and their political party, how long people at Pingry believe they should wait until having sexual intercourse, whether the student body knows where to get a condom, whether the student body thinks condoms should be available at school and whether the student body believes in comprehensive or abstinence-

only sexual education.

While there were some questions that could have been eliminated, the original poll's effects would have been much better and much more useful than the modified poll's.

What bothered me most about the administration's decision were its feelings on the Middle School taking the survey. The administration argued that it wasn't comfortable asking seventh and eighth graders personal questions about sexuality, that this wasn't appropriate.

This seems to be in direct conflict with what Pingry practices; the school teaches comprehensive sex education in form II health. Nationally, people are having sex at younger and younger ages. I have heard that the administration didn't even intend for the Middle School to take the survey that ended up going to the entire student body.

To me, this is absurd. Suppose we had found out that a significant portion of the seventh grade class had been engaging in sexual intercourse. Had this been the case, perhaps Pingry would have needed to rethink when it teaches sexual education. Had the original poll come out saying that many did not know where to purchase a condom, perhaps Pingry would have needed to put more emphasis on teaching this.

What is the worst that could have happened if the original poll went out? Inevitably there would have been some phone calls from parents who didn't want their children answering questions about sex. Inevitably there would have been some teachers who did not want "smut" being published in the school newspaper. Inevitably there would have been some students who refused to respond to the poll. But what if it had actually made a difference, even if this difference had just been in one person's life?

How many people would prefer avoiding controversy to preventing a child, student, peer or friend from contracting a sexually transmitted infection or becoming pregnant before he or she was ready to deal with that situation?

Thus, I commend The Record staff for its efforts and denigrate the administration for its "move to keep the community in darkness," as the editorial board of The Record wrote.

There are times when I feel that some censorship is appropriate, but there are also times when I feel that avoiding a topic just because it is taboo and causes discomfort is wrong. This is one of those times.

An optional poll to raise awareness can only lead to good things. We need to know what is really going on before we can move on and make informed decisions about anything.

The school must learn that there are times when controversy can force people to stop and think, actually pushing a community forward.

It is high time the school stopped standing still and allowed us to start taking a step forward, for a step forward is always a step in the right direction.

The Record welcomes all letters to the editor. Anonymous submissions cannot be printed. Submissions may be edited due to length constraints. Send all correspondence to pingryrecord@yahoo.com.

Rugrats Teach Life Lessons

When I was about five years old, I remember sitting with my little sister in front of our 13-inch TV set, staring at the moving cartoon figures of the Rugrats as they careened through the desert, up to the North Pole, and even took on Reptar the Dinosaur in Japan, all from hairless Tommy Pickles' fenced-in backyard.

And then I remember my mother coming in and turning off the TV, reprimanding us for watching "the idiot box." Little did she know that once she left the room, we ran out to the backyard to hide out in our treehouse, concocting revenge plans against the boy next door. Each successive plan seemed more and more un-

cannily similar to those of Angelica Pickles, and when they failed we took comfort knowing Angelica's had too. The next day, when we were teased at school, we reminded ourselves of Tommy's moving rhetoric to the playground bully. Suddenly, the defensive words just seemed to flow.

We used Rugrats as our adventure impetus, our imagination boost and our safety net.

One day, after a "Behind-the-Scenes" Nickelodeon episode, we realized that Tommy was simply a paper-and-crayon creation and that Angelica's voice was created by a 30-year-old woman. The safety net fell to pieces.

Maybe for us, the escape disintegrated prematurely. But I wonder if the escape provided by the Rugrats inevitably slips into obscurity, even for those who most strongly insist upon holding on to their baby blanket.

My sister and I grew up with the Rugrats, watching them crawl and speak baby language unintelligible to adults. Yet even the babies who didn't age a day in an entire decade are "All Growned Up" now, dealing with crushes

and social pressures. They no longer hide out in tree houses, fly spaceships or defend themselves against playground bullies. And now, fully fluent in adult language, their world is no longer a haven safe from the evils of the outside world.

Yet, for my youngest sister, the world of the Rugrats in middle school is all she has ever really known. She laughs and tells me about Chuckie's latest girl debacle and Angelica's latest advice column gossip.

When the show is over, my sister doesn't run out to the swing set. She picks up the latest lip gloss my mother won't let her wear and tells me how cute Angelica's outfit was.

She acts at nine like I did at 12. Maybe it's because she has two older sisters influencing her likes, dislikes and what she thinks is cool. But I do wonder if the gloriousness of childhood is slipping away from children faster than before.

At nine, I certainly couldn't have told you what a terrorist was. Yet when I asked my sister the other day what her biggest fear is, she replied, "Terrorism. And the economy." Precocious child? Perhaps.

But her next conversation topic put me at ease: "Guess what I just saw on 'Rugrats: All Growned Up'? Dil tries to burp the states' names and his voice gets stuck, and when he tries to talk it comes out as burps."

Maybe she is holding on to the baby blanket at all costs, even though society is constantly trying to rip it out of her tiny hands.

Hopefully, the desire to be a kid — that love of dodgeball games, tea parties, dancing even when everyone can see and burping cartoon characters — will continue to prevail over all.

Danielle Peretore (V)
CULTURAL OPINION

Hopefully, the desire to be a kid will prevail over all.

Affirmative Action Solves Inequalities Colorblindness: the Only Way to Equality

The primary goal of affirmative action is to level the playing field for every participant. Through affirmative action, countless more minority students and businesspeople have found that their talents have allowed them to rise in ways that were never possible in the past.

Imagine a world in which everyone is born with the same opportunities. This, of course, is the world that affirmative action opponents believe actually exists. Every person succeeds or fails based on his or her own merit, native talent and drive to achieve.

In this world, if a white boy and black girl, both of whom are identical except for their race and gender, dream of becoming doctors, both have the same chance to achieve their goal. It wouldn't make sense for the white boy to become a doctor and for the black girl to fail because, after all, their only differences are skin color and sex, which have no effect on achieving success, right? Wrong.

It doesn't take amazing powers of observation to look at the leadership of corporate America, business America, legal America and academic America and notice that there are a lot of white men who hold leadership positions.

So many, in fact, that they far outweigh their proportion in

Robert Zacharias (VI)
POINT

the population at large. Why is it that minorities are underrepresented and whites are overrepresented? And how can this problem be fixed, if it is indeed a problem at all?

Think of the founding of this country. It was executed almost exclusively by white men. At the time of the founding, there were de jure and de facto barriers to minorities entering leadership positions in any field. Slavery was legal in southern states. Women were not citizens in the same sense that men were. There was rampant racism and sexism all across the country.

It took a war within our own borders to legalize slavery and the new social thinking of a war outside our borders — namely, World War I — to legalize voting for women. And yet, though enormous legal strides have been made since 1776, even greater social hurdles remain entrenched in our culture from that date in that bygone age.

It is not enough to say that we have rewritten our old racist and sexist laws so that there is equality of opportunity for all. Laws do not govern all of man's action. Social stigmas remain to this day that make it particularly easy for whites to achieve and particularly hard for anybody

else.

Affirmative action, by specifically giving preference to anybody that isn't white, works to counteract these age-old social conditions.

Affirmative action doesn't aim to put undeserving people in positions merely because of their race, though it is exactly that type of prejudicial judgment that has resulted in the current monolithic scheme of leaders.

Rather, affirmative action makes it so that being a minority doesn't hurt one's candidacy for any position. By adding extra desirability to minorities, affirmative action aims to increase diversity. It is merely undoing the natural prejudice towards whites that currently exists.

Just take a look around. The 2000 census said that about 12 percent of Americans are African-American and another 12 percent are Hispanic or Latino, lest we forget that 51 percent are female. Isn't it time that the different positions of this country reflect the actual population?

Everybody wants a world in which affirmative action would be totally unnecessary. Everybody wants all people to have the same chances of success from birth.

But until that day is reached, we must work diligently towards it with all feasible and righteous means that we can.

This issue of The Record examines the school's cultural, ethnic, racial and socioeconomic "diversity" through facts and numbers. But defining diversity in these terms is flawed. This inaccurate definition reflects a cultural trend.

Diversity is actually a tolerance of different ideologies, viewpoints and beliefs. In defining diversity by race, it has come to stand less for tolerance and more for forced integration. The notion that diversity of race or ethnicity is needed leads to racism that is perpetuated by affirmative action and quota systems.

Most would define racism as a belief that one's race is inherently superior to another's. In reality, racism occurs when people's views, beliefs and nature come to be defined by their race.

A faculty newsletter at MIT purports that affirmative action will give students and faculty "enrichment from the differences in viewpoint of minorities." How can this view — which so casually defines individual beliefs by one's race — not be called racism?

Affirmative action works on the same premise, both for minorities and legacies. The overwhelming majority of affirmative action cases do not

Caroline Savello (V)
COUNTERPOINT

involve students who are at all "under-qualified" for their position. Still, it is a disservice to racial progress and to individuals themselves to base a decision on the color of one's skin.

I cannot entirely denounce affirmative action. The practice has undoubtedly admitted many intelligent students into universities and produced some of the greatest leaders in

It is wrong to base an admissions decision on a physical characteristic.

the country.

But it is wrong in principle to base an admissions decision on a physical characteristic that has nothing to do with character, intelligence or beliefs.

Supporting affirmative action reverts back to the days of Social Darwinism or the Middle Ages, when it was common to consider certain individuals to be "better fit" or "under God's special protection" because of certain physical traits.

Progressive, rational thought should see the parallel and decide that the solution is colorblindness, a system that would

allow students to be judged, viewed and admitted as individuals, not as members of any collective. Admissions officers should research how students have distinguished themselves within their schools, academically, athletically, musically and otherwise.

Of course, a significant portion of minority students come from poor backgrounds. To compensate, admissions offices should consider candidates in the context of their school: How did their grades compare to their peers'? Their SAT scores? Do teacher recommendations speak highly of the candidate? How does the candidate stand out as an intelligent and capable individual? This process can recognize bright students without stripping away individualism by basing a decision on race.

Individualism and meritocracy are two of the most valued traditions in western civilization and the history of this country. The belief in an individual's identity as a function of his or her own values and beliefs — such as integrity, responsibility, intelligence and principles — have never been and will never be a function of race.

The issue must be the individual, not the ethnicity.

Oscar Worthy, Indeed

Like so many other epic fantasies, the Lord of the Rings trilogy is replete with medieval values and noble characters, concepts so deeply entombed in the human mind that, when brought vividly to life, they seem little more than an archaic backdrop to a fairytale.

These tales have the power to make us nostalgic for times of simplicity and honorable intentions, the times when a strong heart and a spear were all that were needed to honor oneself and one's country, when the king was brave, true and fearsome and when it was certain that, in the end, good would always triumph over evil.

Viggo Mortenson's rallying cry before the final battle scene, set to heroic music and interplayed with images of Sam carrying Frodo up the rocky slopes of Mt. Doom, is a heartening invitation for his warriors to brave all hell and danger to defend their honor and homeland.

It is also a display of confidence in the values of his men, confidence that nowadays would be questionable idealism. The question, then, is this: what has happened to chivalry, to selfless leaders and to the noble, unending quest against evil?

As I gripped my armrests for the entire 200-minute duration of "Return of the King," it occurred to me that, for all the complexities presented in character and plot, the ideologies are remarkably straightforward: you are either with us or against us, and we fight to the death. Simplicity and duty. No sacrifice is too great.

But can those values work in our world when real-life wars are far more complex?

It is ridiculous to compare fighting an army of orcs with orchestrating a search for the ever-elusive WMD. The complications that characterize modern warfare make the

Chantal Berman (IV)
CULTURAL OPINION

siege of Minas Tirith seem almost idyllic.

When we arrive at a situation with no clear right and wrong, and even less of a consensus on how to deal with the purported wrongs, we are left with a problem that even purity of heart and strength of shield can't fix. We indisputably owe loyalty to our nation and its leaders, but how far will blind loyalty bring you when leaders are just as confused as the average citizen? So much for the noble art of waging war.

Perhaps what intrigues us most about chivalric values — and what catapults the Lord of the Rings trilogy to legendary box office status — is that they are hardly applicable to

the modern sociopolitical schematic.

But even if the world of the rings offers little help in understanding modern conflicts, upon exiting the theater we hopefully have acquired at least some sense of the humanity that existed in times before ours. Something about these traditional values continues to draw us in and leave us moved.

After all, there may come a day when honor disappears completely, deceit runs rampant and the common people all but forget what it means to be human. But that is not this day.

In this case, we have neither a world leader nor a war hero nor a great writer, but instead director Peter Jackson to thank. And that is Oscar worthy indeed.

We Must Reduce Waste

One day last year, I walked by the training room and noticed that the trashcan outside was filled to the top with plastic cups. It made me ponder the immense amount of trash that we as a community produce. I realized it's very easy for people to be impulsive and forget to think about what they throw out.

For example, someone may come to school in the morning and pass by the water cooler. They casually take a plastic cup, fill it with water, drink to their heart's content and then toss the cup into the trashcan. The process occurs again after morning meeting, after lunch, before athletics and then after athletics. At this point, five cups have already been wasted. It's no wonder Mr. Lalley's garbage can is filled to the brim.

Right now, there are no

Marissa Drell (VI)
SCHOOL OPINION

recycling bins in the school for plastic bottles (like the Gatorade ones everyone drinks from) or cardboard. Furthermore, there are few recycling bins outside the cafeteria, and the ones that are there are frequently unused. Outside the building, there seem to be recycling bins, but they are unlabeled.

According to The New York Times and thegreenguide.com, "the waste volume for all plastics, including polystyrene, is growing very rapidly, from close to nothing in 1960 to about 25 million tons per year in 2000." When plastics are thrown out, they get dumped in a landfill, and it can take hundreds of years for them to disintegrate. According to the

EPA's annual report in 1999, only 9.7 percent of all plastics were recycled.

While I give the school credit for having some recycling bins for soda cans and glass bottles, it needs to do a better job of placing more recycling bins around the campus — not just for paper — and promoting the use of environmentally-conscious cups, perhaps plastic ones. The water cooler outside the training room should have a recycling bin next to it.

However, solving the recycling problem can't all be up to the school. Students need to be more conscious of recycling as well. There is no point in having recycling if people ignore the bins and throw everything in the trash.

Styrofoam cups are another problem because they create a significant amount of waste that adds to bulging landfills. Styrofoam is not biodegradable, and it can take over 400 years to disintegrate.

Since Styrofoam cannot be recycled at all, it is inherently wasteful and should be discontinued from our lunchroom. In 1999, according to thegreenguide.com, 890,000 tons of Styrofoam — 178 billion pounds — were thrown away.

Furthermore, Styrofoam is made of harmful chemicals that can leak into food and drinks. Studies have shown that styrene, part of a chemical used to make Styrofoam, can act like estrogen inside the body, disrupting normal hormone functions and harming reproduction.

Most schools and universities have comprehensive recycling programs throughout their campuses for all kinds of waste. Hopefully, Pingry and its students will step up to the plate so that all those water breaks outside Mr. Lalley's office can stop going to waste.



M. Tyson (VI)

Admission Department Diversifies the School

Continued From Page 1

income, expenditures, debts and mortgages, among other things.

The form is then sent to the School and Student Service for Financial Aid in Princeton. For a small fee, the agency determines the ability of the family to pay for schooling and makes a suggestion regarding the amount of financial aid the student should receive. Pingry's financial aid committee, comprised of administrators, may accept or alter the agency's suggestions.

Ms. Boisvert says it is important to have the committee. "There are a lot of individual situations that come up, and it is important to make sure you are making fair, consistent and equitable decisions for all families," she says.

In the past 14 years, financial aid has risen more than fivefold, with \$198,560 awarded to 37 students in 1989-1990 versus \$1,178,705 awarded to 77 students this year (16 are part of the NJ SEEDS program). This year, 7.6 percent of the student body is on financial aid, compared to the NAIS national average of 15.8 percent. Pingry's average financial aid grant is \$15,308, whereas the national average is \$8,952.

Though some financial aid applicants do not qualify, Ms. Boisvert says this only happens if the applicant does not need aid. "The need for financial aid has just not been there," she says. "It's not that we are running out of money and have to turn people away who need aid."

Currently, the school lets prospective applicants know about its diversity initiatives by publishing minority statistics in brochures and inviting minority students to visit the school. Ms. Boisvert says the school advertises in newspa-

pers and family magazines in about six local counties each fall.

The admission department also attends school fairs at Far Hills Country Day, Far Brook, Link Community School and St. Philip's Academy. Admission officers visit Peck, Robert Treat Academy and the Newark Boys Chorus School and attend informational meetings for organizations like Goldman Sachs and Jack & Jill. Ms. Boisvert says the department has also been instrumental in running independent school fairs in South Orange and Montclair.

"We can struggle a bit in terms of attracting minority students because of our location," Ms. Boisvert says. "The communities that are closest to us are just beginning to diversify." She adds that the school still needs more minority candidates in its pool.

The admission office plans to expand its outreach programs in the future by appealing to families of different ethnicities through school events and open houses. Ms. Boisvert says diversity is increasing overall, though acceptances for particular minority groups may fluctuate on a yearly basis.

In addition to minorities, preference in the admission process is also given to student siblings, 55 percent of whom were accepted last year. Sixty-eight percent of alumni children were accepted as well.

General acceptance rates have dropped significantly in the past decade as admission has become more competitive. In the 1991-1992 school year, 369 applications were received and 73 percent were accepted, compared to 692 applications and only 31 percent accepted this year. Of the accepted students, more are enrolling as well — 79 percent this year compared to 64 percent in 1991-1992.

Peer Schools Attempt Diversity

By DAVID SPETT (VI)

Not all local independent schools have affirmative action policies to diversify their student bodies.

Princeton Day School (PDS) seeks diversity "across a range of qualities," and therefore does not quantify diversity by race, ethnicity or religion, Headmaster Dr. Judy Fox says.

Instead, the school's admission office says it seeks students who will contribute to the school "in a variety of areas, including the arts, athletics, leadership and service."

Dr. Fox says PDS advertises to the community at local and regional financial aid fairs. It also asks community leaders to help educate people about the school. Like Pingry, it accepts students from NJ SEEDS.

"We also believe in continuity and connecting with our history through enduring relationships with current and past members of the PDS community," Dr. Fox says. Seventeen percent of PDS

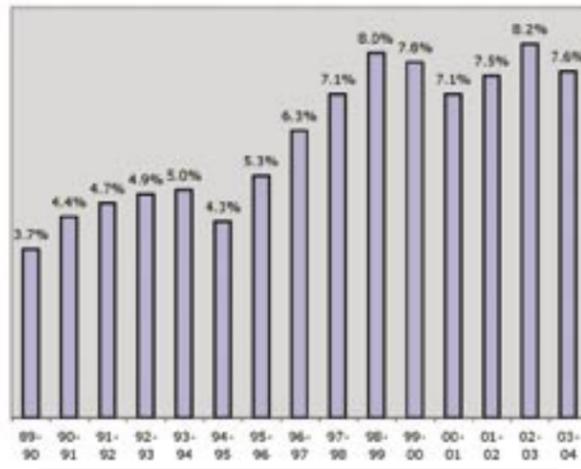
students receive financial aid, Dr. Fox says, for a total of \$1,744,650 in grants. The average grant size is \$11,631, and the school practices a need-blind admission policy. "Students' families receive direct aid grants that range in size, based on demonstrated need," Dr. Fox says.

PDS is a pre-kindergarten through 12th grade school and has 892 students. Its high school tuition is \$21,500. "Our commitment to diversity is perpetual," Dr. Fox says.

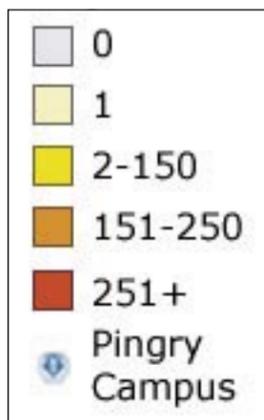
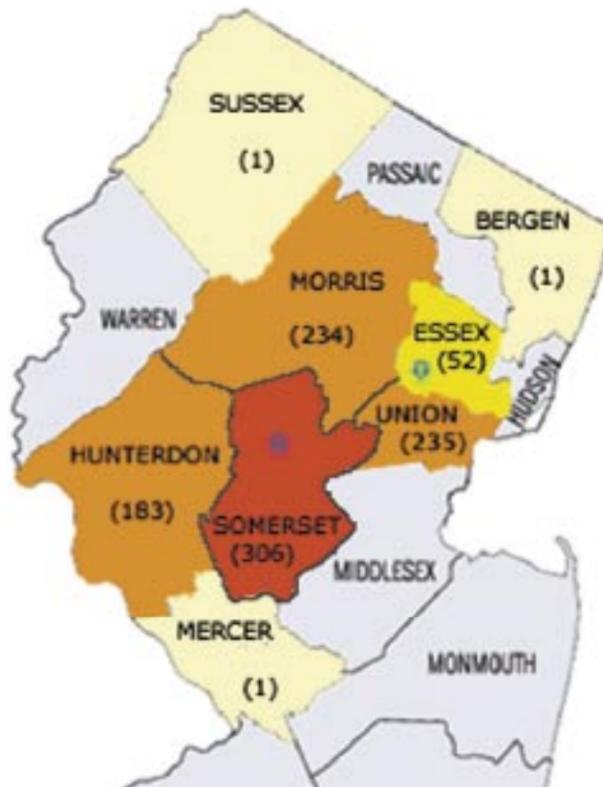
Montclair Kimberley Academy (MKA) in Montclair "focuses on what we hold in common as well as what is held differently," Headmaster Dr. Peter Greer says. He did not comment on whether the school employs an affirmative action policy.

The school's website says MKA seeks to reflect the local area's socioeconomic, racial, ethnic and religious diversity. "MKA has the potential to have a diverse school community," Dr. Greer says. The school is a pre-kin-

Students on Financial Aid



Student Distribution by County



SEEDS Brings Opportunities and Aid to Underprivileged Students

By CATHERINE CHONG (III)

NJ SEEDS helps high achieving students from low income, inner-city families attend elite private schools. According to Mrs. Marnie McKoy, assistant director of admission and SEEDS site dean last summer, the school enrolls more SEEDS students than any other school in the state.

SEEDS stands for "Scholars, Educators, Excellence, Dedication, Success." Every year, SEEDS students apply to Pingry as freshmen. Four are accepted and given full scholarships plus \$2,000 for expenditures like transportation and trips.

SEEDS is made up of two programs. The Core Program is for students applying in 7th grade, and the Young Scholars Program is for students applying in 4th grade.

Currently, Pingry accepts students from the Core Program, which tutors students for 14 months and prepares them to enter independent schools in 9th grade. Next year, the school will accept students from the Young Scholars Program, which tutors for 24 months and reads students for 7th grade.

Applying to SEEDS is similar to applying to Pingry.

To be defined as economically disadvantaged, families' incomes must be below a certain level. For example, a family of four must make no more than \$43,000.

SEEDS receives names from guidance counselors, and about 900 students apply. After teacher recommendations, testing and essays, the program accepts 200 students.

Teaching sites include SEEDS' headquarters in Newark, Pingry, Princeton Day School, Dwight-Englewood and Montclair Kimberley Academy. The program

has 28 volunteer teachers.

Pingry has been involved with NJ SEEDS from its beginning, Mrs. McKoy said. The program was founded in 1990 by independent school administrators, educational experts and business leaders. Among them was former Headmaster John Hanly. Currently, Headmaster John Neiswender serves as a trustee for the program.

"These people want to give an opportunity to bright kids and give them a chance to reach their potential," said Andy Hoge, senior placement officer at SEEDS.

arship. Starting next year, Mr. Neiswender said SEEDS students will be able to start Pingry in seventh grade instead of in ninth, as they have in the past.

To improve cultural and ethnic diversity, Mr. Neiswender said, Assistant Director of Admission Mrs. Marnie McKoy has organized Black History Month activities and receptions for African-American families. Students have also put on diversity workshops to educate other students on the subject.

Also in the past three years, 25 percent of hired faculty have been people of color, Mr. Neiswender said, whereas in the three years prior to that only three percent were of color. Mr. Neiswender said this is positive evidence that the school's actions are having an effect.

The headmaster added that white students from different backgrounds provide diversity of thought, which is essential in classroom discussions and for a good education. He said the school will always be working to increase diversity until the community represents people from all backgrounds.

The LRP is a plan for the school that was approved in October 2001 to last until 2011. Diversity is one of the LRP's six components. The others are the Middle School, faculty salaries, technology, the curriculum and the Honor Code.

Forty-two students graduated from the program in 1994, the first class to finish the Core Program. This year, 114 students will graduate.

As with other financial aid recipients, the school does not disclose who its SEEDS students are. "It's fine if they elect to share this with other students," Mrs. McKoy said, "but it's not the school's place to share it."

SEEDS alumna Nikki Festa (III) said that Pingry students are different from those at her old school. "The amount of work and the people here take time to get used to," Festa explained, "but I definitely like it a lot more than my old school."

Another alumna, Jennifer Au (III), said the SEEDS program was not challenging but still a lot of fun. "It [the classes] took away all my Saturdays, but I think they were worth it," she said.

Au applied to Pingry because she thought it would be a good opportunity to experience a better school. "I was really honored to be accepted because I know a lot of people got rejected," she said. "I like Pingry a lot more than my old school."

Au said she feels like a regular student here and that she is proud to be a SEEDS student.



ETHNIC CLUBS BRING CULTURAL VALUES TO THE COMMUNITY

By CAITLIN BERGH (VI)

The school largely expresses its diversity through ethnic clubs. Presidents of the Asian Culture Club (ACC), Pingry Indian Association and African-American Club said their goals are to share an appreciation of their cultures with the school.

Christine Hsu (VI), president of the ACC, said the club achieves this goal by selling Asian food in the cafeteria on dumpling days. The proceeds from dumpling days go to charity.

"Dumpling days make the community realize that Asian Americans have their own different culture, even though they are still American," Hsu said.

Sumeet Shah (VI), co-president of the Pingry Indian Association, said his club achieves its goal with Indian Food Day, Indian Movie Night and the Multi-Cultural Fashion Show. Shah said his club also holds "club meetings and small teachings."

These activities, he said, "impact the community by teaching it about Indian culture. Our club meetings go over history, dress and religion. Our club spreads the many values of India to a very diverse student body."

When asked if ethnic clubs are a form of segregation, both club presidents said no. Hsu said the ACC is open to non-Asians as well. "In fact, a great number of our club members are not Asian," she said, adding that many are good friends outside of the club.

Shah agreed, saying, "Ethnic clubs usually invite people of all races to join in order to spread the knowledge of the ethnicity's culture."

He said non-Indian members are essential to his club. "People from different cultures comment on different values and explain their own values," he said.

Through hosting activities that have become school traditions, these club presidents said their clubs are some of the most direct forms of cultural diversity at school.



Courtesy of Mr. Jon Leef

Mr. Leef coaches varsity football at Rye Country Day.

Leef to Replace Rohdie

Continued From Page 1

Though Mr. Leef said he is sad to be leaving RCDS, he is enthusiastic about his new job. "I am most looking forward to getting to know the people," he said. "This will be an important and very fun first step when I get to Pingry."

When asked if he has any

Mr. Hanly Discusses Ethical Dilemmas for Lecture Series

By CATHERINE CHONG (III)

Former Headmaster John Hanly returned to school on Feb. 20 to speak on the complexity of moral and ethical dilemmas. He was the official lecturer in the John Hanly Lecture Series, which was inaugurated after he retired in 2000.

Mr. Hanly said his message was twofold. First, he wanted students to realize the complexity of ethical choices. "There's danger in using slogans like 'do the right thing,'" Mr. Hanly said. "Everybody wants to do the right thing. It's just a question of how. Slogans don't teach anything."

Second, Mr. Hanly stressed that ethical choices must cause the least harm to everyone involved. He said ethical decisions are made on a daily basis, whether people notice them or not. "Everyone has to make choices," he said. "Not making a decision is a decision in itself."

Mr. Hanly also brought up specific ethical dilemmas. For example, was former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani wrong to turn down \$10 million given by a Saudi Arabian prince to the World Trade Center Fund? Did one of the most altruistic priests in the diocese deserve to be fired if he molested teenagers?

Mr. Hanly said he has been very busy since retiring from Pingry in 2000 largely because of his Parkinson's disease. Mr. Hanly primarily works at the U.N., organizing teachers who want to teach in developing countries. He also volunteers for the charity Save the Children as a special assistant to its president. He frequently travels to London to visit his elderly father.

Mr. Hanly said he believes strongly in character education because it helps students reflect on their ethical behavior. He said his speech "must have been a repetition of what the character committee says."

Mrs. Lydia Geacintov, director of studies, who organizes the John Hanly Lecture Series, reflected on Mr. Hanly's time as headmaster. "He would tell wonderful stories every Monday," Mrs. Geacintov said. "This lecture series was made to honor him because he promoted ethical

ideas for the school, Mr. Leef said it is too premature to say. "The main thing I want to do is have a positive influence," he said. "This is not a one-year deal, and I plan on being at Pingry for a while."

Mr. Leef said that when he spent a day on campus, everyone he met was "really enthusiastic. I just look forward to being able to work here."



N. Lee (IV)

Mr. Hanly speaks at the Friday assembly as part of the John Hanly Lecture Series.

behavior."

Three years ago, Dr. Dan Brock spoke about eugenics and cloning on behalf of the lecture series. In 2002, Tim Roche of Time magazine spoke on ethical issues in the media. Marcelo Suárez-Orozco came last year to talk about demographic and cultural changes in the world.

Mr. Hanly said it was "very flattering and kind" that Headmaster Neiswender invited him to be the fourth speaker in his own lecture series. Mr. Hanly said he felt very comfortable to come back and that everyone was welcoming and friendly. "The atmosphere here is almost the same," he said, "and the way

the students dress and behave is similar."

Students liked the assembly and were impressed by Mr. Hanly's public-speaking ability. Austin Conti (III) said Mr. Hanly was a good speaker with a valuable message. "He was funny while getting his message across," Conti said.

Adam Goldstein (IV) found the speech too general and "didn't think it was pertinent to any current issue."

Andrew Weinstock (I), who was in third grade when Mr. Hanly left, did not know Mr. Hanly but remembered his speeches. Weinstock said they "are still great."

Philip Cox Is Eager to Head Middle School

By HADLEY JOHNSON (III)

Mr. Philip Cox was announced on Feb. 17 as the new Middle School director and assistant headmaster. He will take over Dr. Macrae's position next year.

Mr. Cox has been in education for over 10 years and is currently the assistant head of Middle School at the Greenhill School in Dallas, Texas. He describes his work as "busy, sometimes hectic and always rewarding."

At Greenhill, Mr. Cox helped change the school's approach to discipline. "We changed it from punitive approach to one that focuses on a learning experience," Mr. Cox said, adding that he began recognizing individual students for positive actions they do each day.

Mr. Cox teaches English and coaches lacrosse and soccer. Previously, he served as Greenhill's director of admissions and, before that, as associate director of development. He also taught for one year at Montclair Kimberley Academy in Montclair.

He received a B.A. in arts and history from Bucknell University and an M.A. in East Asian studies from the University of Virginia with a concentration in Chinese history.

A native of Connecticut, Mr. Cox said he has found Texas a fascinating place to live. "Every dusk, you can see a gorgeous orange sun setting in the west," he said. "The spectrum of color here is awesome."

Mr. Cox said Pingry's "reputation for excellence" made him apply for the job here. "Anyone would be interested in becoming part of Pingry," he said. "I am honored that the school has chosen me."

Mr. Cox said he first became drawn to the idea of teaching during his sophomore year of college at Bucknell. At that point, he was more interested in teaching at the college level. But his perspective changed after a discussion with his adviser, who told him he could have more of an impact on the lives of younger students.

While Mr. Cox does not completely subscribe to this theory, he said he has found middle school the most gratifying place to work. "I cannot imagine more rewarding work in education," he said.

According to Headmaster John Neiswender, Mr. Cox has numerous strengths and was the "strong consensus choice" of the student and faculty search committees. "He works at an outstanding school and truly understands the middle school-age child," Mr. Neiswender said. "He will be a wonderful addition to the community."

Mr. Cox's former headmaster at Greenhill, Peter Briggs, said Mr. Cox is one of the top five educators he has worked with in 45 years. "He has always exceeded my expectations," Mr. Briggs said.

Mr. Cox said he remains a New Englander at heart. He loves baseball and is a steadfast supporter of the Red Sox. Moving to a part of the country that rallies behind the Yankees will be a change, Mr. Cox said, "but I'll still have fun even though I'll be in Yankees country."

Mr. Cox reads The Record online and said it is clear that "students are thoughtful and interested in taking part in Pingry life."

When he visited the school, Mr. Cox said he was impressed. "Students and faculty appear enthusiastic and intellectually challenging," he said, describing the faculty and students as "open, approachable and very sharp."

At Pingry, Mr. Cox said he hopes to coach. He describes coaching as "a great way to work with students while contributing to the school community."

As Middle School director, Mr. Cox wants "to guide the Middle School and create a safe, fun and rewarding experience for students and faculty."

"But at the end of the day, I'll be just one person in a school that has been around for over 140 years," Mr. Cox said. "I'm here to play my part in the long, exciting history of Pingry."



Courtesy of the Communications Department

Guy Merin (VI)'s photo, "Boxes," won an award and was featured in the Arts Wing.

Students Win Photo Awards

By DANIELLE PERETORE (V)

Four students won awards in the school's Invitational Photography Show in early February. The winners were Sam Corke (VI), Sarah Filipinski (V), Julie Johnson (V) and Guy Merin (VI).

The art gallery of the Hostetter Arts Center housed the student photography until Feb. 12. The showcase also included artwork from neighboring schools like Summit High School and Princeton Day School, each of which submitted about 50 photos to the contest.

Berendina Buist, a

professional photographer and curator from Holland, judged the photographs and said she found it difficult to set a finite number of winners because of the "influx of talent."

The artwork included self-portraits, photos from students' homes and combinations of film and digital photography.

Honorable mentions were given to Tatiana Javier (IV), Nelson Lee (IV), Scott Magid (V), Jessica Meyer (V) and John Stamatis (V).

Art Department Chair Mr. Miles Boyd said this was one of the best art shows the

school has ever held. "Pingry did very well, but we're not in it for the awards," he said. "We're in it for the exposure."

Mr. Boyd said the show brings photos with a lot of different viewpoints and ideas to Pingry.

"Our students get exposed to what students at other schools are doing, which is very important," Mr. Boyd said.

To maintain diversity and widen the variety of photos, Mr. Boyd tries to balance the art show with 50 percent private and 50 percent public schools.

English Classes Learn Meditating, Aikido

By REBECCA SPEISER (VI)

English teacher Mr. Dean Sluyter took his Literature of Enlightenment classes to the Aikido Schools of New Jersey in Roselle Park on Feb. 25.

For the third year in a row, students spent the day meditating, doing yoga and practicing aikido, a nonviolent Japanese martial art that emphasizes movement. According to AikidoFAQ.com, practitioners of aikido use their opponent's energy to gain control.

Mr. Sluyter said he has been practicing aikido since 1979. His instructor is Rick Stickles, the chief instructor at the aikido school. Mr. Sluyter runs a public meditation session on Saturday mornings at the school, and he is Stickles' meditation instructor.

Mr. Sluyter said the Literature of Enlightenment class is about exploring awareness and existence.

"We examine many different traditions, both eastern and western, that approach the concept of identity," Mr. Sluyter said. "We explore what you are from different angles."

The field trip helped reinforce values taught in class, Mr. Sluyter said. The class uses lab work like meditation to learn about awareness and existence, and the trip contained different activities to enforce the study.

Mr. Sluyter said that although aikido is a martial



Courtesy of Mr. Dean Sluyter

A teacher demonstrates the martial art of aikido while Mr. Sluyter's class watches.

art, it is very meditative. "By employing aikido as well as yoga, we are able to use the body and mind to explore our own existence," he said.

Literature of Enlightenment student Katie Lawrence (VI) said the course is interesting because it makes students question the way they live their lives and helps them understand what life is really about.

"We learn to appreciate every moment instead of just speeding through life," Law-

rence said. "It's a totally different kind of English course. It's not just about the plots of books, but more about what characters are thinking and how they respond in certain situations."

The second semester English class' texts range from "The Heart Sutra" to Plato's "The Symposium" to Paul Revere's "Zen Flesh, Zen Bones."

Reading material also includes Mr. Sluyter's own book, "The Zen Command-

ments."

Lawrence said she likes being able to ask the actual author questions about his own book, like what his writing means and why he believes what he does.

Lawrence enjoyed the aikido field trip overall, saying it "made all the topics we discuss in class even more pertinent and interesting."

College Counseling Office Holds Arts, Athletics Nights

By CAROLINE SVELLO (V) and JULIE JOHNSON (V)

The College Counseling staff sponsored the first college athletic and arts information nights this year on February 23 and 24. According to Director of College Counseling Mr. Robert MacLellan, about 170 students and parents attended.

Lafayette College's director of athletics and Hamilton College's senior associate dean of admissions spoke at the athletic night. Pingry's director of athletics, Ms. Jo Ann De Martini, history teacher Mr. Mike Webster and alumni Mr. Anthony Bowes '96 and Mr. David Fahey '99 also spoke.

The speakers gave advice to students interested in playing college-level sports or seeking recruitment opportunities. They stressed the need for students to market themselves both athletically and academically.

Ms. De Martini said student-athletes should have the highest grades possible, especially if they want to play on a Division 3 level team. "They need the grades to get into the level of school they are seeking and have the athletic ability that the coach is seeking," she said.

The speakers also focused on the specifics of recruitment, including the

importance of contacting specific schools and sending game tapes and résumés to coaches. The speakers said students must be realistic in their college search and must be wary of any promises made by coaches until they have been made in writing.

Ms. De Martini said most athletes are recruited or continue playing sports at the Division 3 level, though there are a few athletes who are recruited by Division 1 schools each year.

The arts night was led by Mr. MacLellan, Art Department Head Mr. Miles Boyd, Women's Glee Club Director Mrs. Jennifer Runge and Drama Department Head Mr. Al Romano. The speakers first addressed the whole group, and afterward the meeting broke into the three smaller divisions for visual arts, music and drama.

"The purpose of the night was for the art faculty to speak to parents of children who plan on sending with their application a representation of their work in the arts," Mrs. Runge said.

The music department encourages students with an interest in music, but not necessarily an interest in a music degree, to send with the college application a CD or tape showing the student's musical ability. "We advise that they keep their selections contrast-

ing, short and current," Mrs. Runge said.

Though many musicians may not want to pursue a music major, Mrs. Runge said pursuing music in college as a hobby is worthwhile. "Many students just love to sing or play an instrument and can continue that at a smaller college or university," she said.

By sending a tape to the admissions office, it shows a college that "this is what I love to do and hope to do at your college," she added.

Students applying to smaller schools typically have the advantage when sending an application supplement, where there are small ensembles or choir groups but not many music majors.

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Juniors and Sophomores Take Class Trips to Mass. and Va.

By NADINE REITMAN (IV)

The sophomores and juniors took class trips to Williamsburg, Va. and Boston, Mass. from Saturday, Feb. 28 to Monday, March 1.

Leaving school Saturday morning, the sophomore trip was led by College Counseling Director Mr. Robert MacLellan and stopped in Baltimore, Md. and Norfolk, Va. before reaching Williamsburg late Saturday night.

In Baltimore, students had free time in the Inner Harbor for lunch and shopping. Dinner that evening was on a cruise with live entertainment and dancing.

On Sunday, the group visited the restored area of colonial Williamsburg, the Jamestown Settlement and the Yorktown Victory Center. After dinner at a seafood restaurant, students took a lantern tour of colonial Williamsburg.

On the return home, the trip stopped in Annapolis, Md., where students visited the historic district, state house and city dock on a guided tour.

Upper School Director Mr. Rohdie said the sophomores had fun, relaxed, bonded with classmates and learned about history.

On Saturday, the juniors visited the Boston Aquarium, watched an IMAX show, ate at the Hard Rock Café and saw the improvisational comedy "Shear Madness."

The Boston trip also gave juniors knowledge of Boston as a college city. Free time in Harvard Square allowed them to explore Cambridge.

Other activities for juniors

New Assembly Shows The School's Cultures

By DANIELLE PERETORE (V) and JEREMY TEICHER (IV)

The second annual Multi-Cultural Assembly took place on March 5 during assembly period. Run by Upper School Dean Mrs. Joan Hearst and Surchi Ahuja (V), the assembly represented different students' cultures through song, dance and fashion.

Last year's assembly consisted of five dances and two musical performances, but this year it had dance performances and a multi-cultural fashion show. Geoff Cox (VI) served as emcee for the performances, and Obi Eboh (V) and Christine Hsu (VI) hosted the fashion show.

The purpose of the assembly, Mrs. Hearst said, was "to celebrate the different cultures at Pingry and to give students the opportunity to represent their cultures through different mediums."

Ahuja said the school is culturally diverse and "very culturally aware." She said the goal of the assembly is not only to expose the student body to other cultures, "but also to showcase the talent and diversity we might overlook in our day-to-day lives or might not have much contact with."

Allie Seebald (V), who performed as an Irish dancer, agreed. She said the assembly is meant to serve as an outlet for cultural expression. "It's an opportunity for students to experience the customs of other cultures," she

said, "but what really makes it special is that those cultures are being represented by members of the community." She hoped the assembly would inspire students to take an active interest in their own heritage.

Ahuja said many of the performers, like Julie Ann Aueron (V), Jess Meyer (V) and Seebald, have been performing for years. "They are all phenomenally talented, and having them all performing on stage might inspire others to do the same," she said.

Seebald said becoming engaged in her cultural history gives her an amazing feeling. "It makes you feel proud, affirming who you are," she said. Seebald remembers dancing for her Irish relatives, who she said were "so happy to see their traditions passed to the next generation."

Students enjoyed the assembly. "It teaches the community about the cultures we see and talk to every day at school," Nikki Green (VI) said. "It helps us understand one another better."

Steven Horowitz (VI) said he was impressed by the "big slew of different cultures," and Lauren Phillips (VI) called the assembly "one of the best of the year."

Ahuja hopes the assembly will become tradition. "It's definitely fun to put on, and I think the student body enjoys it," she said.

were a guided tour of Boston, a visit to the JFK Library Museum and a show by Blue Man Group. Upper School Dean Mrs. Joan Hearst, who led the trip, said attending shows like Blue Man Group and "Shear Madness" encourage class bonding and laughter.

Mrs. Hearst said she always enjoys going on the junior class' weekend trip. She said it provides "time for kids to mix with other kids they don't normally hang out with" and allows students and teachers to see each other differently than they do at school.

According to Mrs. Hearst and Mr. MacLellan, trip attendance this year was about average, with 58 and 59

students — slightly less than half of each grade — going to Boston and Williamsburg respectively.

The trips fell on the same weekend as both the fencing and ski team state competitions. August DuPont (IV) said he chose not to go because "I already had a commitment to the fencing team."

Students' reactions to the trips were generally positive. Caraline Sogliuzzo (V) said her trip to Boston was awesome. "It was pretty much all bonding and hanging out," she said.

Juliette Jordan (IV) said the trip to Williamsburg was interesting and that the people were nice. Still, she found the tours repetitive.



Courtesy of M. Popiolek (V)

Marta Popiolek (V) and Nina Mikkilineni (V) pose in the gift shop of the New England Aquarium.

Minogue and Switchfoot Are Good Choices

By ALEX SPAPE (III)

Kylie Minogue "Body Language"

Australian singer Kylie Minogue was known until 2002 as the one-hit-wonder "locomotion girl." With the success of 2002's "Can't Get You Out Of My Head," Minogue was soon relabeled the "la la la girl."

So if you still can't get her out of your head, you're in luck. Her most recent album, "Body Language," is filled with fresh dance beats and entertaining lyrics.

The first single, "Slow," is just hitting airwaves and has already reached #1 overseas in the UK and Australia. The recurring bass line and obscure vocals make "Slow" hypnotic and seductive. Though the lyrics are about as deep as "Green Eggs and Ham," lines like "Skip a beat and move with my body" are catchy.

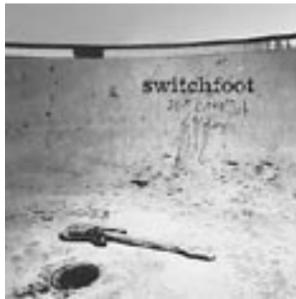
Easily the best track on the album is "Sweet Music." For the first minute the steady beat stands out, setting the stage for the vibrant chorus. The song is about making music, among other things: "So put your vibes on my beat and we'll lay it down like that /



Slap the high hat in, put the fairlight on the track."

In contrast to this standout track, other songs disrupt the flow and don't fit on the album. "Obsession" comes across as a thoughtless jumble of lost beats and clichéd lyrics. "After Dark" tries too hard to be smart and sassy.

Yet since "Body Language" has more standouts than flops, it's hard not to love. With modern urban influences mixed with 80's electro beats, the album can easily be categorized as one-of-a-kind.



Switchfoot "The Beautiful Letdown"

Switchfoot made their first commercial appearance in the soundtrack to the 2001 Mandy Moore flick, "A Walk to Remember." The success of the movie and soundtrack sparked some interest in the band, even though they had been around for quite a while

as a Christian rock band.

Now with the first single from their new album, "Meant to Live," beginning to get played on alternative and top 40 radio stations, Switchfoot looks strong to enter the scene as a big act soon.

"The Beautiful Letdown" was released in February 2003. Debuting at number 85, it has surprisingly remained in the top 200 since. A phenomenal album, it is mainly alternative rock but displays its own uniqueness.

Complex background effects can be heard in "More Than Fine," which comes complete with accordion parts and the occasional giggling of children in the back-

ground. Down-to-earth lyrics like "I'm not giving up, giving up / I'm not selling out" also make "More Than Fine" stand out.

In the lively "Redemption," insecurity issues are expressed through lyrics like: "I've got my hands at redemption's side / Whose scars are bigger than these doubts of mine." The strong drums and catchy guitar line also help make this song significant in the album.

The theme of this album is hard to summarize in one word because so many different issues are discussed: insecurity, world issues, love and more. Yet it is this diversity that makes "The Beautiful Letdown" a must-have.



D. Spett (VI)

Snowy conditions like these often prompt Mr. Neiswender to call a snow day, delayed opening or early closing.

Neiswender and Staff Decide on Snow Days

By REBECCA SPEISER (VI)

Students may want more days off from school, but deciding to call a snow day is a job that must be done thoroughly and with great consideration, Headmaster John Neiswender said.

On potentially snowy or icy days, Mr. Neiswender and Mr. Mike Virzi, the director of facilities, wake up at 4:30 a.m. to discuss if school should be open, delayed or closed. They listen to weather reports, check road conditions, and look out for precipitation.

Depending on current conditions and the predicted forecast for the rest of the day, Mr. Neiswender makes a decision.

The headmaster sometimes calls Chief Financial Officer John Pratt for an additional opinion. If it begins snowing during the day, Mr. Pratt and the three division directors help Mr. Neiswender decide if an early closing is appropriate.

In determining snow days and early closings, the headmaster said students' safety is his primary concern. "I'd rather lose one day of classes than risk the safety of student drivers," he said.

Mr. Neiswender called this winter a bear and said it has been the most difficult one to predict since he came to Pingry in 2000. Though he said he made all the right calls last year, "this winter we were not as good. But our weather forecasters had a very difficult winter as well, and we are only as good as the information we receive."

This year, several student drivers had accidents driving to and from school on snowy days. On Friday, Dec. 5, school was closed at 11:30 a.m. and a four-car pileup of Pingry drivers occurred shortly thereafter on Martinsville Rd. No one was injured.

On Friday, Feb. 6, a two-hour delayed opening was held. Amit Kumar (VI) said he was driving toward school on I-287 when his Jeep Grand Cherokee hit an ice patch, spun out of control and was hit by another driver. Despite damage to his car, Kumar was uninjured, though the other driver was taken to the hospital.

Last year, Jeremy Jordan (VI) said he was speeding on

Martinsville Rd. on Sunday, Feb. 16 — not a school day — when his car spun out of control and hit a tree. Jordan passed out and was taken to Morristown Memorial Hospital, where he was diagnosed with a major concussion and given seven stitches and four staples. He said his car was totaled.

Kumar expressed concern with the way the school decides snow days. He suggested that Pingry consider what other local schools, such as Delbarton, do on snowy days. He said Delbarton was closed on the day of his accident.

"I also think Pingry pays too much attention to the local area and doesn't consider that some students drive from far away," Kumar said. "On the day of my accident, the roads were dangerous and school should not have been held." Kumar lives in Morris Plains.

Mr. Neiswender said that if any parent or student believes the conditions in their area are unsafe, they can stay home without penalty from the school.

GSA Club Defends Homosexual Marriage

By JACKIE MARCUS (VI)

The country may be sharply divided on the issue of gay marriage, but Noah Mamis (VI), president of Pingry's Gay Straight Alliance (GSA), says there is no reason for the commotion. The Young Conservative Patriots club disagrees.

On Nov. 18, the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled in favor of extending marriage to gay and lesbian couples. Since then, gay marriage ceremonies have taken place in San Francisco and will begin on May 17 in Massachusetts.

Still, a New York Times/CBS News poll revealed that most Americans — 71 percent — oppose gay marriage. Another 55 percent favor a Constitutional amendment to ban it.

On Feb. 24, President Bush announced support for an amendment, calling mar-

riage "the most fundamental institution of civilization" and saying it would weaken society to give that right to gay couples.

"Marriage is a sacred institution between a man and a woman," Bush said in announcing support for the amendment. "If activist judges insist on redefining marriage, the only alternative will be the Constitutional [amendment]. We must do what is legally necessary to defend the sanctity of marriage."

According to The New York Times, religious-right groups had been pressuring the president to encourage the amendment.

Mamis says the GSA disagrees with the president and that the club's goal is to promote tolerance, acceptance and openness to diversity.

He says an amendment to the Constitution would be ridiculous, challenging

anyone to come up with "a legitimate reason to ban gay marriage that isn't rooted in the Bible."

As a whole, the GSA believes that gay marriage opponents are concerned about the "sanctity of marriage," which implies that marriage is a religious matter. The problem, Mamis says, is that if religion is intertwined with marriage laws, the Constitution's wall of separation between church and state is destroyed.

Mamis came out a year and a half ago and says he is pleasantly surprised by the "lack of vexation" he experiences for being openly gay in the community.

"I was called a [expletive] by an eighth grader last year, but on the whole I haven't gotten much grief," he says. Mamis says GSA meetings focus on discussion and debate, though "it's sometimes hard to debate since we all mostly agree with each other."

hopes Student Government will be allowed to function "without constant supervision" so it can thrive.

When asked what he thinks of past presidents, Srivastava said he admires different parts of each. "I liked [2002-2003 President] Aaron Sussman's humor and his way of getting to know a lot of students," Srivastava said, "and I like Robert's way of working with individuals in the system to meet his goals. I don't remember [2000-2001 President] Chaz Barsamian that much, but I liked his breakfast buffet."

Srivastava distinguished himself from past presidents

as "a member and motivator, not just a supervisor, for organizations and events like SAC, pep rallies and dances."

Outside Student Government, Srivastava said he is a busy student just like everyone else. "I have no life outside of Pingry," he said. "In fact, I rarely leave the building."

Srivastava is co-editor of Vital Signs, plays saxophone in the orchestra, participates in Model U.N. and "proudly" co-founded the Ping Pong and the Math Competitions Clubs. Srivastava also plays on the fencing, tennis and ping pong teams ("Yes," he said, "ping pong is a sport.")

Srivastava's favorite ice cream flavor is Ben and Jerry's Chunky Monkey. He described himself as proactive, entertaining and amenable.

When asked why he thinks he won, Srivastava said, "While some voters may have been enticed by my flippant, dare I say outlandish, humor, I know the majority of students were able to separate the funny from the serious."

Srivastava hopes that students notice his use of humor to highlight, not replace, his ideas. "I hope it was my ideas that ultimately convinced them to vote for me," he said.

As president, Srivastava wants the school to become more dependent on Student Government. "By getting the small things done, interacting with students and playing a greater role in everyone's daily life, I hope Student Government will build respect and gain recognition for its achievements," he said.

Srivastava hopes to be remembered most of all as a president who achieved his goals.



M. Drell (VI)

The student body president-elect shops in the "book-shack" he says he helped create.

Srivastava Plans for 2004 – 2005

Continued From Page 1

Other priorities for the president-elect include a "complete takeover" of Friday assemblies by Student Government and SAC. Srivastava said Student Government should host special speakers, performances and presentations, and SAC should fill in free assemblies with movies and skits.

He added that free assemblies should also become forums to inform students of upcoming school events and said he would like to take a more active role in communicating with the community about Student Government's ideas.

Srivastava said accomplishing his goals will require efficient Student Government meetings and thoughtful debates as well as mobilizing the student body with humor.

He said his greatest challenge next year may be working with Mr. Jon Leef, the new upper school director. Srivastava said that over a few years, he and current Upper School Director Adam Rohdie have developed a strong relationship.

"It will take time and effort to foster the same relationship with the new head," Srivastava said, adding that he

Mr. Tramontana to Be in Coaches' Hall of Fame

by Jennifer Soo Hoo (IV)
RECORD STAFF WRITER

Varsity Baseball Coach Manny Tramontana will be inducted on April 4 into the New Jersey State Coaches' Hall of Fame for an "outstanding career as a high school baseball coach."

Mr. Tramontana has coached baseball at Pingry since 1965, and he has been head coach since 1976. His career record is 342 wins, 189 losses and 1 tie. He has not had a losing season in over 25 years. "To have consistently developed teams that are so highly competitive is a reflection of the kind of coach he is," Athletic Director Ms. Jo Ann De Martini said.

Mr. Tramontana's career highlights include three state championships and three Colonial Hills Conference Championships (in 2000, 2001 and 2002). The team only joined the Colonial Hills conference in 1996.

Last year, Mr. Tramontana led the baseball team to the Somerset County finals for the first time. In 2003, the Newark Star-Ledger named him Somerset County Coach of the Year and the Bridgewater Courier-News named him All-Area Coach of the Year.

To be inducted into the New



Mr. Tramontana checks baseball scores in his office.

D. Spett (VI)

Jersey State Coaches' Hall of Fame, Ms. De Martini said, a coach must lead a varsity team for at least 10 years, display an excellent degree of coaching skills, demonstrate high levels of sportsmanship and make a contribution to the sport.

Mr. Tramontana's peers selected him out of a possible 7,722 varsity coaches for the Hall of Fame. He said the honor made him "surprised but thrilled."

To be a good coach, Mr. Tramontana said, "you need

the ability to get people and players to follow you and to keep control in a pressure situation."

He said his most memorable moment of coaching was in 1994, when the baseball team won the state tournament under captain Ted Corvino. Mr. Corvino has since returned as Mr. Tramontana's assistant coach.

Mr. Corvino said Mr. Tramontana is a good coach because "he has his own adaptive style, and there's nobody you can compare him to. He

also hates losing." Mr. Corvino added that Mr. Tramontana balances toughness and humor and that the best part of his coaching is that he can do what every other coach cannot: "to make baseball memorable, enjoyable and successful at the same time."

Mr. Tramontana stays with baseball in the off-season, attending coaching clinics every year and sharing knowledge with players. Team member Park Smith (IV) said Mr. Tramontana "is a great coach who always has some way to make you a better player."

Mr. Tramontana also coaches junior varsity boys soccer. He has been coaching it since 1965 and is Head Coach Miller Bugliari '52's "longest-living assistant."

Lawrence Wins NJAIS' Women in Sports Award

by Melissa Loewinger (III)
RECORD STAFF WRITER

Katie Lawrence (VI) was recognized on Feb. 8 as the school's representative to NJSIAA's National Girls & Women in Sports Day. Each school in the state recognized one female athlete.

"Pingry chose Katie because of her athletic and academic achievement, community service and spirit," Athletic Director Ms. Jo Ann De Martini said.

The National Association for Girls and Women in Sport honored Lawrence at a luncheon at Seton Hall University, where she received a certificate noting her outstanding achievements as a female student athlete. Lawrence said she was "very flattered" to receive the NJSIAA award.

Lawrence has earned three varsity letters in lacrosse, one in cross country and three in swimming. She served as captain of the girls swim team this year. She is also involved in sports outside of school and plans to bike cross-country this summer from Savannah, Ga. to Los Angeles, Calif.

Besides excelling in athletics, Lawrence is also a scholar and has several academic awards to her name. She is an Edward Bloustein Scholar and a member of the Cum Laude Society, and she has been on the Honor Roll every semester to date.

Lawrence also participates in community service. She has volunteered at Children's Specialized Hospital, gone on Bridges trips and tutored for SCEEP, a program that aids children from inner cities. She also tutors children at her church.

Last year's National Girls & Women in Sports Day winner was Micki Rupon '03, who Ms. De Martini said was "an outstanding field hockey and softball player and a great contributor to life at Pingry."

Likewise, Ms. De Martini said Lawrence is a wonderful individual who has always represented the school and what it honors. "She is a valuable athlete and a wonderful contributor to the overall life and spirit of Pingry," Ms. De Martini said. Though Lawrence is modest, she agreed that she is enthusiastic and spirited.

Lawrence will be attending Princeton University next year and hopes to play lacrosse for the Tigers. She said she has been motivated by her brother, David '02, a fellow lacrosse player who is currently a sophomore at Princeton.

To other young, aspiring athletes, Katie Lawrence said, "Find a sport you love, and work hard. Don't be afraid to take chances."

Athlete Profile

Jamil McClintock (VI): Track and Field

by Andrew Werner (VI)
RECORD STAFF WRITER

Boys track Coach Chris Shilts called Jamil McClintock (VI) "one of the best runners I've ever coached." Competing in track and field since he was eight, McClintock is in his fourth year running for Pingry.

In his marquee event, the 100-meter high hurdles, McClintock placed seventh in the state at last year's Meet of Champions. His time of 14.1 seconds put him into a class reserved for the upper echelon of high school runners.

According to Coach Shilts, McClintock's success did not come by accident. "Jamil has an 'above and beyond the call of duty' kind of work ethic,"

Mr. Shilts said. "He puts in a lot of time [practicing]. He gives a genuine dedication to the sport."

In addition to regular workouts at school, McClintock hones his skills and works on his conditioning year round. "Coach Shilts gave me a few hurdles," he said. "I have them at my house and I take them to a track and use them for drills." This winter, McClintock competed in indoor track events with teammates Trevor Godfrey-Dardik (VI) and Kevin Cheung (VI).

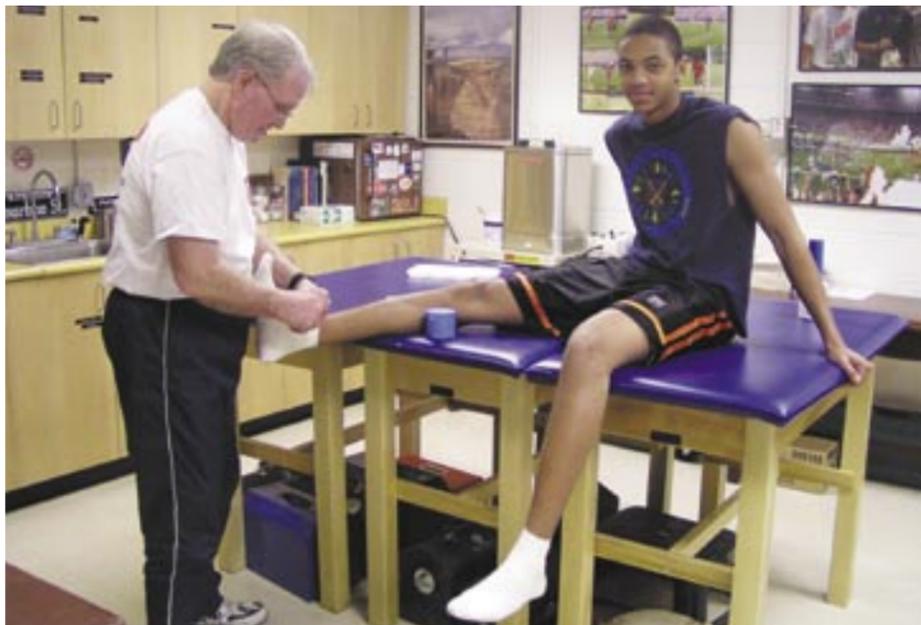
Coach Shilts said McClintock is gifted with natural athletic prowess and remarkable versatility. In the 2003 league championship, McClintock ran the long jump for the first time and won the competition. He

also competes in the high jump, the 400-meter hurdles, relays and occasionally the 100-meter sprint.

McClintock's outlook for 2004 is positive. "We're going to win everything," he said. Coach Shilts agrees. "I've learned not to set the bar low," he said. "Jamil's times are always ahead of what I thought."

McClintock is being recruited by a number of Division 1 track programs, and he is currently undecided about where to go. His top choices include Brown, UCLA, Georgia Tech and Clemson.

When asked about McClintock's potential as a collegiate runner, Shilts said, "Jamil can be an Ivy League champ. Yes, I think he's just getting started."



Jamil McClintock (VI) gets his ankle taped by Mr. Lalley.

D. Spett (VI)

Final Winter Records

BOYS BASKETBALL



9 - 12

BOYS ICE HOCKEY



6 - 14 - 4

SQUASH



9 - 5

GIRLS BASKETBALL



9 - 14

GIRLS ICE HOCKEY



6 - 7

BOYS SWIMMING



6 - 4 - 1

BOYS FENCING



4 - 8

BOYS SKIING



9 - 9

GIRLS SWIMMING



7 - 4 - 1

GIRLS FENCING



2 - 6

GIRLS SKIING



0 - 12

WRESTLING



2 - 12