

# Garden School News

March 21, 2008

Volume 7 Issue 10

## Headmaster's Column

### *Thoughts about Studying*

As we started the Spring break, I began thinking about what to do over the next ten days and what will our students be doing as well. In a discussion with some students earlier in the day, the topic of studying came up.

At first this doesn't seem to be such a difficult subject to explore, but, then, as we talked in more depth, we all began to realize that studying has more than one layer, and that it is, in fact, more complex than one would have first thought. What is studying? How does one 'do' studying?

Among the many aspects of studying is to review material that was gone over in a class to make certain that one remembers those materials. We can also want to be certain that we understand the material. Another side of this is that in studying, what we are also doing is examining an aspect of a piece of knowledge. We often say that we will 'study' an issue before making a decision. This form of study clearly differs from memorizing; it involves trying to understand the idea, the concept, and sometimes, the implications of the idea.

From my point of view, the most effective type of study involves a blend of knowing and understanding. In order to understand a text or a problem, we first have to know what the details of the problem are; once we have that knowledge, then we can move to a level of understanding and then interpretation. Studying—do it!

## Student Workshop

Counselors from the Freedom Institute, a not-for-profit Manhattan based corporation, visited our sixth through twelfth graders this week. The Institute offers educational and counseling services for children and families. Garden School participates through the Institute's Independent School Program.

During three days of workshops our students engaged in discussions, readings, role-plays and scenarios to increase self awareness and sharpen coping skills. Peer dynamics, social pressures, and the normal stresses students experience each day were explored. Discussions of the harmful effects of substance abuse, including drug and alcohol addictions, led to the brainstorming of ways to seek adult guidance and the practicing of refusal skills.

Students were able to share their ideas, experiences and feelings with their fellow classmates. Sometimes, these

## Dates to Remember

*March 31st  
School Reopens*

*April 2nd  
Bake Sale to support  
Jackson Heights  
Poetry Festival*

*April 9th  
3Q Rept. Cards Distributed*

*April 14th  
Faculty Workshop Day  
School Closed*

*April 18th  
Lower Division Spring  
Fling*

## Upper Division "What We're Reading"

This semester the 7th grade read *A Separate Peace* by *John Knowles*, a WWII coming-of-age story about friendship against a backdrop of war. One of the issues they explored was the nature of war on a personal level, as the two friends in the novel were often "at war" due to the misguided perceptions of one of the boys. Another topic that sparked spirited discussion was friendship, and the way young people treat each other. Though the relationships in the story were not model friendships, students drew many modern parallels about the honesty (or lack of it) in their own friendships.

The 8th grade has just finished reading a narrative translation of *The Odyssey* by *Homer*. The challenging text was supplemented by readers' guides and class discussions. The *Odyssey* has something for everyone: monsters, adventure, gore, love and intrigue. To augment the text, students investigated addi-

*Cont. Page 2*

## Lower Division Highlights

### *Music & Art*

In Art, the First, Second, and Third graders are studying many intriguing artists. The First graders are learning about the French painter Fernand Léger and his use of body proportions as cylindrical modeling of robots. The class designed their own pictures by using ink resist. By using ceramic paint, the Second graders recently finished their Ceramic African Masks in tribute to Black History Month. Upon their return from break, the Third graders will be learning about the German Abstract artist Franz Mark. The class will draw pictures and the environment they live in as influenced by Mark's use of primary colors and depiction of animals and natural surroundings.

In Music, first, second and third graders learned Kodaly's technique of singing. In addition, the second and third graders are learning about classical music and its history by studying the composer Bach and listening to his music.

### *Colorful Days*

Our youngest students have all been dressing in the same color lately. This is because they have been studying the colors of the rainbow. Many art projects have centered around the color theme, as well as various science projects. Rainbows, prisms, light, color, mixtures, and optics became topics of class discussion and discovery.

*Cont. Page 2*

## Lower Division Highlights Cont..

The colorful theme was very evident on Monday, the “wearing of the green” for St. Patrick’s Day. We all celebrated with the PK and K march through the hallways!



What a coincidence..... “Green Day” fell on March 17th!!

## Student Workshops Continued..

opportunities are often overlooked or cast aside during the hustle and bustle of the school day. Hopefully, these conversations will continue among the students and teachers. Parents, too, can use some of these topics to engage in meaningful exchanges about pressures and stresses affecting their children.

In the near future, discussion groups with younger students will be offered through Kenwood Psychological Services. These will focus on being a “good friend”, dealing with the emotions of having new students join a class, positively using leadership skills, recognizing bullying tendencies in oneself and others, and avoiding cliquish mentalities.



## Upper Division "What We're Reading" Cont..

tional topics in Greek mythology and prepared presentations for the class.

Both the 7th and 8th grades are currently reading *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare. As they read the play aloud, they participate in drama workshops led by one of our own parents, Josette Murray, to learn the rudiments of staging and the importance of movement in understanding the play. In a recent session, they staged a storm in the cafeteria that brought down the house, clashing cymbals, whooshing winds, torrents of rain, a bellowing boatswain and sailors screaming farewell to their loved ones as they perished in the waves. On April 11, both classes will travel to Queens Theater in the Park to see a professional production of the play. After all, as Ms. Murray says, “You’re not supposed to just READ it!” Interested families who would also like to see this wonderful play may purchase individual tickets that weekend at the Theater’s website.



## Book Talk - Mr. Vogel Recommends

*Gray’s Anatomy* is 150 years old! Many remember using this classic text in high school and college anatomy, biology, and art classes. Certainly those in the medical field repeatedly reference the book.

*The Anatomist: A True Story of Gray’s Anatomy*, by Bill Hayes, captures the spirit, enthusiasm and inquisitiveness of Henry Gray. Through Gray’s letters and diary entries, the reader gains insight into the relationship between Gray and his associate H. V. (Henry Vandyke) Carter and finds a new appreciation for their anatomical illustrations.

Bill Hayes writes of his own year-long study of anatomy, repeating many of Gray’s dissections. While many have not dissected human cadavers, this book will place you at the table, viewing muscle, bones, and diseased organs. For our own students, this book can serve as an inspiration for enrolling in the anatomy elective class or for carefully performing dissections in science labs.

