



GARDEN SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Richard Marotta, Ph. D., Headmaster

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"Academic Excellence Since 1923"

Friday, October 10, 2014

Thoughts for the week

By Richard Marotta, Ph.D., Headmaster



There are many skills that form the basis of a successful educational and professional career. Perhaps none is more vital than that of problem solving. Whenever I attend an educational conference, inevitably someone begins discussing the 'art' of problem-solving and how important it has become to our students. Education is, after all, the act of problem-solving.

The emphasis on problem-solving stems from the daily, and sometimes long-term, challenges that we face in school. A student in a math class has to solve a problem through operations; in a science class, that same student has to solve a problem through experimentation; in an English class the challenge can be to solve the problem of a character's identity; in language, the problem can be to solve the problem of formulating responses to questions. This process is endless because it rests at the center of what learning involves and where education can lead us to in our daily lives.

When I think of problem solving, I remember how difficult it was for me to begin the process of working through an algebraic equation. However, I also think of the years I have spent as a teacher of writing, watching students hesitate with the beginning of an essay. We shared the same approach: we looked at the problem as a whole and we were intimidated because we confronted the whole rather than seeing the process of problem solving as a step-by-step procedure.

Today, when they are confronted by a problem, I tell students to take a step back and look at where you want to get with the solution and then take the problem apart piece by piece. So, whether the problem is a mathematical one, a literary one, or a social one, my advice is always the same. Go slow. Think about where you want to be at the end and then look at each step along the way.

Part of what inhibits the process of resolving a problem derives from our initial approach to that issue. The final sentence of the Garden School Mission Statement is, "Garden School fosters the self-worth necessary to succeed." My belief is that if we assume success rather than failure, we will then successfully resolve the problem and encourage and inspire others to do the same. If we begin with, 'this can't be done,' then most likely, it won't be done. However, if we assume success, then we unconsciously program ourselves and those around us with the idea that it is only a matter of time before we resolve the issue. The assumption of our own success can be one of the greatest factors contributing to our success as an individual, as a group, and as a school community.

The Annual Fund

Garden School's Annual Fund Drive will be beginning within the next week. I am happy to tell you that last year's Annual Fund raised over \$50,000. This year we hope to exceed that goal. Our Board of Trustees is leading the effort and has already pledged over \$10,000 in gifts to our school. Please be on the look-out for the solicitation that will be sent out soon.



DATES TO REMEMBER:

- **Monday, October 13 : School Closed for Columbus Day**
- **Wednesday, October 15 : PSATs for Grades 10 & 11**
- **Wednesday, October 15 – Friday, October 17 : Camp Herrlich Trip for Grades 5 & 6**
- **Thursday, October 16, 6 PM Library - College Meeting for Seniors and Parents**
- **Tuesday, October 21 : International Bake Sale**
- **Thursday, October 23 : Halloween Parties for Grades Pre-K to 6**
2-3:30 PM in the Gym - Nursery, Pre-K and K
4-6PM in the Gym - Grades 1 to 6
- **Thursday, October 23, 6PM Library 10th Grade Parents and Students "Understanding the Sophomore Year"**
- **Friday, October 24 : School Closed for Faculty Workshop Day**
- **Wednesday, October 29 : Senior Bake Sale**
- **Friday, November 7 : End of First Marking Period**
- **Thursday, November 13 : Report Cards Distributed**
- **Friday, November 14 : Report Cards Returned**
- **Wednesday, November 19 : Parent/Teacher Conferences**

IMPORTANT SAVE THE DATES!!

- **Garden School General Assembly: November 12, 2014 at 7:00pm in the Gym.**

Members of the Garden School Board of Trustees will discuss the state of the school. A more detailed explanation of this event will appear in next week's newsletter.

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

College Visitors Next Week:

Tuesday 10/14

9:30am Bard College (NY)
2pm Lafayette College (PA)

Wednesday 10/15

8:45am U of Massachusetts-Amherst (MA)
12pm Marist College (NY)
2pm CUNY (NY)

Thursday 10/16

9:20am Hartwick College (NY)
2pm Fairfield University (CT)



Still Time to Register for Next Week's Foundations Classes!

By: Kim Hayes (Foundations Coordinator)

Foundations will begin next week on Tuesday October 14, 2014!! There is still time to sign up for our exciting new programs that will keep our kids happy, engaged and learning, all the while having fun and meeting new friends.

We have returning favorites such as "Tae Kwon Do", "bowling" and "Contemporary Dance". In addition, new and exciting classes are here and we cannot wait for them to begin. Explore your artistic side with our "City Sculpting Art" class and discover the wonderful world of engineering through the new "Lego® Pre-engineering" class. One of our favorite groups, "Growing Chefs", returns but with a twist on the hit TV show, "Chopped" and Mr. Gomis and Ms. Stenos are here with all the soccer fun any kid would love. We have something for everyone!

There is still time to sign up. Take a look [at our brochure posted on the Garden School website](#) or pick one up at the office.

Nursery

By: Carmela Knopf (Nursery Teacher)

This week the Nursery had a great time learning about Christopher Columbus. We made Columbus hats and puppets. We also colored all three of his ships. In cooking class, we made cucumber boats. We used cucumbers, cheese and yogurt. They were delicious!



To reinforce our lesson we read, *In 1492* by Jean Marzollo and listened to songs about him on the Smart Board.



Physical Education for Pre-K and K

By: Flance Dervishi (Physical Education Director)

We started off the year with each student introducing themselves to each other, having them share their favorite activity/hobby and giving each student their own spot on the gym floor. We introduced them to big spaces, wall, stage, door, the bleacher line, the whistle, stretching and Yoga.

We start each class with a warm-up game like tag, jogging, jumping jacks, ABC and/or pushups. For the last 15-20 min of class, we make sure we stretch the kids. They are learning different motor skills and how to interact with each other.



In PE class, we rarely do the same activity twice a year. During the week of 9/15 the kids learned new motor skills such as balancing bean bags on different part of their bodies and walking in straight lines balancing the bean bag. That Friday, we played Mr. D's Dolphin game which the kids enjoyed very much.



The week of 9/22 which was a short week so we did spot jumping, practicing different ways to jump off and on a spot, we learned how to pass, stop, dribble, and shot a soccer ball.

The week of 9/29 we learned 3 different tag games, "*Tunnel Tag*", "*Mr./Miss Sun and Mr./Miss Freeze*" and "*Help Your Friends*". We also learned how to pass a basketball and had all the kids do it with each other. They did an awesome job! The kids used what they learned the previous weeks to balance themselves on a maze balance beam which was very challenging for them.



This week the kids dribbled around cones with a soccer ball and shot at a goal, they also learned how to toss a bean back into a hula hoop from a distance. Every Friday, to reward good work and behavior, they play a variety of games such as Save the Princess, Red Light Green light, Parachute, Man from Mars etc. We will have Halloween week soon. Pre K & K are an excellent group of kids who are picking up a lot of new skills and very enthusiastic about PE class!

Farm Trip for Grades Pre-K and K

By: Eileen Reyes (Pre-K Teacher)

The Pre-K and Kindergarten classes have been learning about the four seasons with a special focus on fall. Since the fall season has arrived, there have been walks around the school community and even taken walks around the neighborhood looking for signs of fall. The students have noticed the changing leaves falling off the trees and the squirrels gathering acorns. Lessons on the fall harvest have been taught with art projects and cooking activities involving apples and pumpkins.



As a follow up to these lessons, the Pre-K, K, ESL students, and many of their parents took a trip to Dr. Davies farm in Westchester NY. Their visit included: apple picking in their very large apple orchard with a spectacular view of the distant cliffs, a hay ride to a pumpkin patch overlooking the water, and a picnic lunch along with organized field games.

These hands on activities help to reinforce the past weeks lessons in a way that will have lasting memories for years to come. Friendships were made when the ESL students were partnered up with the Pre-K and K children creating the perfect situation for students to learn from other students. Books read: *Apples and Pumpkins* by Anne Rockwell, *Acorns Everywhere* by Kevin Sherry, and *A Day at the Pumpkin Patch* by Megan Faulkner & Adam Krawesky.





Music for Grades 1 - 3

By: Tom Heineman (Music Teacher)

Singing with greater accuracy with regard to pitch has been a recent focal point in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade music classes. To this end, students are learning Solfege (syllables that represent scale steps and intervallic relationships) and their accompanying Curwen hand signs. Students are also beginning to recognize how high or low pitches are in relation to one another through movement activities. I was impressed and pleasantly surprised with their overall ability to really use their ears!

Another aspect of music upon which we've been concentrating is different levels of dynamics. Students differentiate between loud, medium, and quiet sounds through movement activities, and 2nd grade students even demonstrated five different dynamic levels when playing classroom instruments. 2nd graders also have been paying closer attention to dynamics when singing folk songs such as 'Scarborough Fair.' 1st Grade students have taken on the challenge of crescendos and decrescendos (gradual changes in dynamics) when playing small percussion instruments and in songs such as 'For He's the Jolly Good Fellow' and 'Oh, Susanna.'

This week, 3rd graders began playing colored bells which each represent a different pitch. They will be learning simple songs on the bells, such as a Halloween-related tune they love and sang with solfege syllables, 'Five Little Pumpkins.' When students are each responsible for one bell in the performance of a song that requires many, it reinforces teamwork and positive social interactions. Additionally, the colors of the bells will correspond to colored spots that 3rd grade students will make use of in movement games and exercises, strengthening their growing awareness of high and low pitches and up and down melodic movement.

Science Center Trip for Grades 1 to 3

By: Jacquelyn Renner, Stephanie Parker and Nilla Ingravallo (Grades 1, 2 and 3 Teachers)

Learning about nature begins with observation and questioning. On a guided nature hike at The Center for Science Teaching and Learning within the Tanglewood Preserve, the First, Second and Third Graders explored a pond habitat by using their senses. The students were able to identify a White Pine tree through touching the needles bunched in groups of five and smelling the distinct pine fragrance. As the students pointed out animal homes they used their prior knowledge and observation skills to make predictions about the environment. They observed the negative effects of drainage pollution that runs into Tanglewood Creek. The students became more socially aware by seeing how actions can impact, both negatively and positively, our environment.

They continued their scientific exploration by hypothesizing about dinosaur fossils. The students worked cooperatively to determine the identity of each fossil. They correctly named the egg, herbivore tooth and carnivore tooth. After an explanation about how fossils are formed, the students made their own with plaster of Paris and seashells. They were excited to bring them home. The hands-on activities continued into the dinosaur dig site where the students used shovels and brushes to uncover dinosaur fossils. The three grades worked together observing, exploring and sharing.





Art for Grades 1 to 3

By: Tiina Prio (Art Teacher)

The First, Second and Third grade art students are having a great time learning and drawing "A Blue Dog". George Rodrigue, and his famous Loup-garou, is the focus of art class to the delight of everyone. The artists first learned about the Acadians, George Rodrigue's ancestors, and their long journey from France to Canada and finally arriving in Louisiana and the Bayou, proud to be a Cajun. They also were excited to hear the legend of the Loup-garou, and why Rodrigue started painting the famous Blue Dog.

I find that exploring the life and culture of an artist, besides their work will make the lesson a well-rounded one. [Education Space 360](#) states that, "a person with a well-rounded education understands that education is never "complete". There is always something more to learn, another book to read, another activity to be involved in, another debate to have. A well-rounded education prepares a student for a lifetime of learning by showing them that everything is connected. When we act upon our interest in one area, we can have our eyes opened to connections that we did not expect. "

The students made connections to many different parts of this lesson. For example, some children mentioned that they had been to Canada, where the Acadians lived for many years while others mentioned that they had a dog. Almost all acknowledged that they had heard of other legends such as The Loch Ness Monster, Big Foot and The Abominable Snowman. Understanding the why's of art, such as why an artist chooses to paint what he does, is just as important as whom, what, when and where.



Math for Grade 4

By: Lara Leggio (Math Teacher)

The Fourth Graders have had a great start to the school year! We began with a unit on place value, first revisiting concepts such as writing numbers in the thousands. However, we took these skills a step further by reading and writing numbers out to the billions place value!

More recently, we are working with addition and subtraction concepts. Though we were already familiar with some of these concepts, we have been working towards quick and accurate addition and subtraction skills.

Each day, we complete a Minute Math worksheet. Students are given one minute to complete as many addition and subtraction facts correctly as they can. This isn't a competition against each other. We set goals for ourselves to meet and ultimately improve upon. Many of the students have already surpassed their own goals, as we become quicker and more efficient with these math facts!



Math for Grade 5

By: Sonia Ambarson (Math Teacher)

The fifth graders continue to improve their computational skills, particularly focusing on multiplication with larger numbers and money.

They are using properties and special factors to recognize patterns with the powers of ten. They are using these skills and processes in order to estimate as a means of checking their results.

Finally, they are using these concepts to solve real-world problems with hidden information, for example, how much a trip to the math museum would cost.

Math for Grade 6

By: Lara Leggio (Math Teacher)

The sixth grade math class continues to impress me daily with their skills.

To begin the year, we revisited integers and explored operations with integers. Last year in 5th grade, the students completed daily Minute Math worksheets to remember our multiplication tables. However, this year they have been working on Minute Math worksheets with integers. The students are determined to become as quick and efficient with negative numbers as they are with positive numbers!

We closed our first unit with learning the order of operations, practicing skills we will be building on for the duration of the school year. More recently, we dove into algebra, as we are currently developing our skills with mathematical expressions. Just as we translate in French class, in math, we translate words into mathematical expressions. The students are excited at the prospect of solving algebraic equations with variables in the near future!

English for Grades 7 and 8

By: Nancy Massand (English Teacher)

The 7th grade is reading *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in English. Satire and suspense, comic relief, a killer on the loose and a bunch of kids who play the ultimate prank on their teacher; Mark Twain dishes out his sharp criticism with such a dose of wit that he has us all laughing along with him before we realize we're really laughing at ourselves. Students discuss themes like coming of age, freedom and young love in class, and engage in writing opportunities from five paragraph expository essays to creative letters taking the role of a favorite character. Although the demands of seventh grade are sometimes daunting, these intrepid literary adventurers are forging ahead with youthful enthusiasm and middle school mirth that would make Mark Twain smile. As one young writer observed in an essay, people haven't changed so much from then to now.

The eighth grade is studying South Africa in Area Studies and reading *Cry, the Beloved Country* in English. Examining the pre-apartheid era in fact and fiction is an eye-opener for many. Alan Paton's impassioned writing illuminates the history of this turbulent time, a history driven by visionaries like Biko and Mandela. This week the two classes combined to watch *The Power of One*, a graphic and moving film about of one young man who dreamed of uniting the





people of South Africa. A few students were moved to tears, and all of them were profoundly impacted by the message of the film. Sometimes, living right next to Elmhurst, the most diverse square mile in the world, we take for granted what we share. We were sobered by the fact that people have died so that we can live together in the same neighborhood and forge friendships with no bars in regard to color or creed.

Foreign Language for Grades 9 and 10

By: Agustin Melara (Foreign Language Department Chair)

Earlier week this week, students in Spanish II and Spanish III were busy preparing for the first major examination of the school year.

Ninth graders were assessed on their knowledge of the present tense, the present progressive, the preterite tense, direct/indirect object pronouns, affirmative/negative expressions, and vocabulary related to clothing. On the last section of the test, students had to write a short paragraph about some of the activities they did over the summer using the preterite tense.

The tenth grade was tested on their knowledge of vocabulary related to professions and movie genres, the conjugation of regular and irregular verbs in the present tense, adjective agreements, expressing preferences using the verb *GUSTAR* (to like), and the grammatical difference between *SER* and *ESTAR*. The last component of the test consisted of writing a well-organized paragraph about their after-school activities as well as the types of TV programs they like to watch at home.

Science for Grades 11 and 12

By: Lou Albano (Science Teacher)

In the wonderful of Physics, our upperclassmen have negotiated through topics that they have encountered as part of the science curriculum at Garden School.

We have revisited the usage of scientific notation in order to express critical values that are very large or very small. Students have reviewed terms that are normal language in science, such as theory, hypothesis, and law. We have investigated topics of motion and velocity. We are regularly discussing topics from the text and analyzing details associated with our investigations. Our labs have included building a “Tower of Paper” and counting the number of drops of water that a penny can hold.



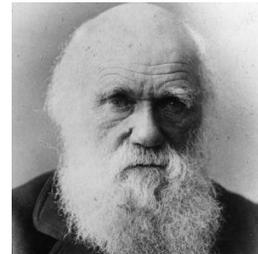
The intensity of the course has been a challenge for some, but Garden School students are resilient and can master topics that some college students have trouble mastering. As stated in the Garden School mission statement, **“Garden School fosters the self-worth necessary to succeed.”** All in all, students are working diligently, and at the same time enjoying the experience that come with the study of Physics.



AP Biology

By: Ms. Dapice (Science Teacher)

Students in AP Biology are currently studying evolution. The work of scientists such as Wallace, Malthus, Lamarck, and Darwin has been discussed as well as the long standing debate between theologians and evolutionary biologists. As a class, students performed an exercise to examine the Hardy-Weinberg theorem and learned how to calculate allele frequencies in populations using the Hardy-Weinberg equation.



The Hardy-Weinberg Theorem is applied to a non-evolving population that meets five stipulations: 1) The population is large, 2) the population is isolated, 3) there are no mutations, 4) mating is random, and 5) all genotypes are equal in reproductive success. The equilibrium describes the genetics of an ideal population that never exists in nature. By utilizing the Hardy-Weinberg equation and knowing what to expect from a non-evolving population, students have a baseline for comparing actual populations where the gene pools may in fact be changing.

The exercise done in class involved simulating a populations of hybrid organisms. During the course of the exercise, certain offspring were selected against. Students observe that in a small population, a small chance change caused a dramatic effect in allele frequencies after multiple generations.

Science for Grades 11 and 12

By: John Hale (Science Teacher)

The Forensic Science class has been hard at work. Last week they investigated a mock crime scene at Garden. The students used their knowledge of Crime Scene protocol to help find and evaluate the physical evidence left behind. They will then need to create a preliminary report about their findings and give their ideas about what should happen next in this scenario.

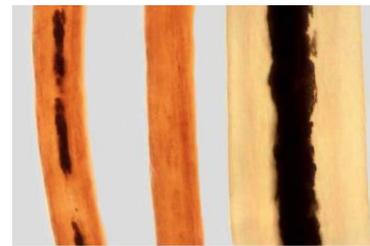


Figure 1. Light micrographs of three human hairs. The left medulla illustrates each hair with a typical fragmentary medulla. The middle hair is blond and has no medulla. The right corner hair is white with a continuous medulla.

Currently the students are investigating Hair and Fibers. Using microscopes they will look at the hairs cuticle, cortex, and medulla to figure out which animal species different hair comes from and they will learn how to categorize human hair into different races. Once the students finish their investigation of hair they will then work on identifying natural and synthetic fibers and how to use this forensic evidence in helping police and lawyers solve crimes.

Farm Trip for ELA Students

By: Stella Stenos (ELA Teacher)

What do picnics, apples, and pumpkins have in common? The Garden School trip to Davies Farm!

This trip is an annual one for Kindergarten and Pre-K. This year, the ELA students were graciously invited to the trip! The ELA students started their journey by first dropping by the Kindergarten and reading books about apples & pumpkins to them! Then, they trekked to the local supermarket, where they bought items for their lunches. Each student had a specific task at the market. When we got back to school-there was a lesson on the fine art of creating sandwiches!



Finally at the farm, ELA students were paired with Pre-K and Kindergarten students. Together, they took in a hay ride, visited a pumpkin patch, strolled through the apple orchards, and played a game of "Duck, Duck, Goose"! What a great way to celebrate the autumn season!!!



Meeting for Grades 8 and 9

By: Lisa Sohmer (Director of College Counseling)

Last Tuesday was the annual "How to Make the Most of High School" meeting for 8th and 9th Grade parents. This meeting was attended by a good number of parents and students and provided great information for families new to high school to reap maximum benefits.

Parents heard from high school faculty members, administration, and from Laura C., an alum from the class of 2014 currently a freshman at Hunter College and living in Manhattan.

The two key themes that were stressed were to take an active role in the life of the school through participating in school activities and clubs, the PTA for parents, etc. and also using the many forms of communication available such as ThinkWave, email, the advisory system and parent/teacher conferences to ensure a seamless partnership between home and school, and parent and teacher and student.



Work-from-Home Volunteers Request

By: Jim Gaines (Director of Outreach)

Greetings!

I am looking for about three Garden School parents who would love to be able to help out the school and volunteer but for whatever reason just cannot or set apart a large chunk of time and be on-site at school.

I have a couple of straightforward projects to be done that involve being at a computer, doing some research online and using Excel to collect information, contact information, etc. Nothing that requires a great deal of technical skill. Each project probably involves between 3-5 hours and you can take as long as 4-6 weeks to complete each one.

Can you help? If you are that person who has a desire to help, access to a computer and small chunks of time to piece together for these projects, please let me know at jgaines@gardenschool.org. or call the school and ask for me at extension 118. Many thanks!