

The Fieldston News

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Fall Drama: *Mr. Burns, A Post-Electric Play*



PHOTO BY JACOB CADER

Vedika Gopal (VI), Eva Neuwirth (VI), Sari Kamp (V), Greg Pizzurro (IV), playing characters from "The Simpsons"

BY LIVIA BOKOR

Walking into a theater is like boarding an airplane. You show your ticket, you sit down, and in a few hours, you find yourself in a new and captivating place. The stage functions as an oasis of imagination, the fourth wall as a threshold between impossibility and reality. And yet, even the most wonderful lands of *Oz* and *Camelot* often embody issues that pose fundamental human questions. The 2014 Fall Drama, *Mr. Burns, a Post-Electric Play*, exemplified this intersection of exoticism and relevance in the most profound and artistic way. The production was brave, brilliantly executed, and in the end, indeed flew the audience to a new and captivating place.

Written by Anne Washburn, *Mr. Burns, a Post-Electric Play* pre-

miered in the spring of 2012 in Washington D.C. and ran again in New York City for about a month in the fall of 2013. The play is comprised of three acts, each of which takes place in a different time period. The first act introduces several of the characters as survivors of a recent cataclysm, the second act takes place seven years later, and the final act takes place 75 years after that. The show plays with the memory and reenactment of television show *The Simpsons* as an example of popular culture.

"I knew the moment I nestled into my attendance at the original performance that I would do whatever it took to do this play here," said Clare Mottola, director of the Fall Drama.

Mottola was inspired by the challenges posed by the piece. The demands it puts on the performers,

audience, designers, and directors were huge. But ultimately, she said, it was absolutely a worthwhile endeavor.

"The process was totally crazy," actress Sari Kamp said.

Cast into this challenging production were Babe Howard (VI), Lilly Sternberg (V), Vedika Gopal (VI), Greg Pizzurro (IV), Eva Neuwirth (VI), Will Conard (VI), Quincy Confoy (V) and Sari Kamp (V).

"There's a large portion of the process that is simply about building the ensemble and developing a solid foundation for the company," Mottola said.

The strength of this intimate ensemble was evident in the relaxed and confident presence each actor projected.

One aspect of this show that set it apart from the majority of Fieldston productions was its overt modern-

ness and representation of contemporary popular culture. The second act, for example, contained a medley of several pop songs, ranging from Beyoncé's "All the Single Ladies," to Katy Perry's "I Kissed a Girl."

Assistant director Rachel Serebrenik (V), who was responsible for much of the show's choreography, described the complexity of weaving modern references into the play while "stay[ing] in the context of the show." When choosing the medley's choreography, she explained, the production crew "had to think like the characters in the show and figure out which parts of the music videos they would still remember 7 years in the future." Serebrenik's process resulted in tasteful and polished scenes. The inclusion of these contemporary allusions added familiarity, humor, and artistry.

In writing about her piece, Washburn says that the thrust of this play is storytelling, and how storytelling characterizes our existence.

"Our culture," she writes, "is defined not so much by what has happened to us, but by how we remember it, and the story we create from that memory."

Washburn's reflection on the play helps explain her choice to have the story take place in three different time periods. She believes that "all storytelling is a remaking of our past in order to create our future."

For Mottola, the post-apocalyptic backdrop played a large role in giving meaning to the show.

"*Mr. Burns, a Post-Electric Play* is my worst nightmare," she wrote in the show's playbill. But the resilience of the characters "has given me the lightness to know that although there may be looming darkness ahead, we just may have what it takes to be a little more alright."

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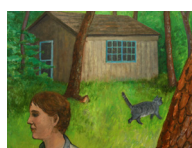
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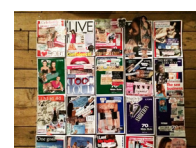
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Two Students Bring ‘Humans of New York’ Inspired Facebook Page to Fieldston

BY PREZ THOMAS AND
DAVID FISHMAN

Humans of Fieldston, a newly created Facebook page, garnered more than 200 likes in its first 24 hours of existence. The page — launched on October 27, run by Dylan McGrath (III) and Zaj Vidal-Burgie (V) — is modeled after Brandon Stanton’s famous Humans of New York (HONY).

Like Mr. Stanton’s page, which has over 11 million likes, Humans of Fieldston features portrait-esque photographs of students and teachers, quoting them on everything from “What’s the funniest thing you’ve heard a student say?” to “What has been your greatest accomplishment at Fieldston?” to “What’s one of your favorite things about the arts at Fieldston?”

“Humans of Fieldston is a page which I created,” Dylan said. “The concept, of course, was ‘stolen’ from the Humans of New York page, but I wanted to integrate that into the smaller Fieldston community. It means a lot to me, as it is something which I created, has been well received by the community, and allows us all to learn a bit about students who we may not know well or talk to often. It is a means by which we can all get to know each other a bit better.”

Zaj similarly felt like the page was a good way to learn about his peers and connect with friends.

“Over the years Fieldston has done a lot to connect us,” Zaj said, “but nothing like this. Humans of New York is something that almost everybody from Fieldston knows about. It’s something that makes New York seem like a place that’s not totally gigantic, a place where there is a sense that we are all not that different after all. We tried to get the same themes that are presented in HONY and use them to further strengthen our school as a community. We did not at first think that the page would be anywhere near as successful as it is currently.”

The page is averaging about 6,000 reaches a week and over 400 likes, according to its founders. Many of the photos, some of which have gathered more than 100

likes, take on a humorous tone. Jack Makari (VI), staring thoughtfully into the distance, is quoted saying: “Sometimes I wonder, am I the real Slim Shady?... Should I stand up?” Joe Kleinman, illustrious History teacher, states simply: “I don’t want to have any part in this!” Carl Anhalt, Form III dean and math teacher, smiling directly into the camera, proclaims the funniest thing he’s ever heard a student say is: ““You need Jesus!””

Other photos, however, capture a more serious side of the school. When asked why he teaches, music teacher Russell Currie answered “Why do I teach? Well because it’s very illuminating, and I learn something new everyday.” Myles Cameron (VI), when asked about his drive as a musician, answered that he is happiest just sitting at the piano, singing and writing music. Andrew Garcia-Bou (V), looking gloomily towards the ground, said: “I feel alienated because I live in the suburbs.”

“I saw versions of Humans of New York based in other cities and towns,” Zaj explained. “I wanted to see what would happen if I introduced the same concept to a much smaller community. Obviously, while the idea is the same, the fact that every person you see on Humans of Fieldston is someone who you have seen in real life is pretty cool.”

Currently, with 27 portraits and 467 likes, Humans of Fieldston is already well on its way to becoming a staple of the community. As for long term plans, Zaj said he’d like the page to become a place where students can display their collective work — written and visual.

“I think it’s going to become something big,” Zaj said, “and it’s going to make Fieldston a much more friendly place. I really just want it to be an embodiment of the school, what it means to be a member of the Fieldston community as well as what makes Fieldston unique and special.”

Humans of Fieldston is available for all to see on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/HumansOfECFS>, or by searching for the page.



PHOTO BY DYLAN MCGRATH

“I feel alienated because I live in the suburbs,” says Andrew Garcia-Bou (V)



PHOTO BY ZAJ VIDAL-BURGIE

“I don’t want to have any part in this!” says history teacher Mr. Kleinman



PHOTO BY ZAJ VIDAL-BURGIE

“Sometimes I wonder, am I the real Slim Shady? Should I stand up?” says Jack Makari (VI)

Blood Drive Participation Falls Riverdale

Food

BY TYLER FRIEDMAN

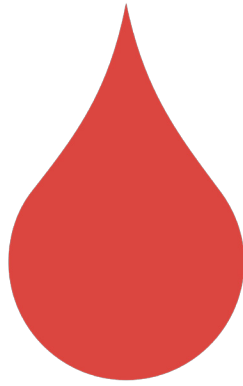
On Monday, November 17, for the fifth year in a row, Fieldston hosted a Blood Drive, organized by Evan Weinstein (VI). The drive drew approximately 65 donations, down from the 80 donations made last year. Weinstein took over the process from Amelia Nirenberg ('14), who started running the drive her sophomore year, and continued to organize it until she graduated.

"I am always happy with the turnout," Weinstein said. "This wasn't our best blood drive and it wasn't our worst, but the donations we received will help people."

When students entered the Commons on blood donation day, many turned away in fear of the perceived pain in giving blood. Others believe that donating blood is practically painless.

"I genuinely believe that donating blood is in some ways the best

form of charity out there," Weinstein said. "It isn't the rich giving to the poor or the privileged giving to the underprivileged. Anyone can donate blood, and anyone, at any



given time, can need blood."

To be eligible to donate, one must be at least 16-years-old, weigh 110 pounds or more, and be in good health. Students felt the need to do-

nate blood for a variety of reasons.

Lorenzo DeSario (IV) advocated donating by "encouraging anyone and everyone willing to donate blood to go through with it."

Will Klein (IV) felt donating "was [his] moral responsibility."

Max Huberman (IV) said she donated because "it was an easy way to help people who are in need and could use the help."

Daniel Sorkin (IV) said that he "donated because it seemed like [he] could make a significant difference in someone else's life by doing something that did not take very long."

Every two seconds, someone in the world needs a blood transfusion. Each pint of blood can save up to three lives.

"Perhaps more people could have donated," Weinstein said, "but I am incredibly grateful to those who donated, and those people should feel just as happy as I do."

BY EMMA MITNICK

Salvatore's, Yo-Burger, and Riverdale Deli are all restaurants frequented by Fieldston students looking for an off-campus dining experience, but just a few of the options Riverdale has to offer. Riverdale Avenue is teeming with a diverse selection of victuals, from Rolan bagels to gyros at Greek express.

Shoshi's Market, just steps from Yo-Burger, is another alternative. Owned by Uri Allon, Shoshi's offers everything Israeli. Quick, easy, and inexpensive, this market is perfect for a snack of hummus and pita, a classic deli sandwich, or even falafels.

Directly next to Shoshi's is the Corner Café and Bakery. An extensive menu coupled with inexpensive prices makes this restaurant the perfect place for students and faculty. The café has aromatic pastries lining the counter tops, five types of omelets, strong coffee, and sandwiches and paninis to go.

Farther down the block is Tiny's Diner, a vintage 1950s American diner complete with classic red and white booths and comfort food such as burgers, fries, chocolate egg creams, and root beer floats. The fried chicken and Reuben sandwich are highly recommended by Fieldston students. In addition to its pickup service, Tiny's offers free delivery anywhere in Riverdale.

Greystone Avenue also offers a variety of restaurants. Aside from New Kam Sheng and Riverdeli, there is Jasper's, famous for its chicken fingers and fries. On the corner, students can find Goodfella's Pizza, which has great daily specials, all under nine dollars.

Johnson Avenue houses the local Starbucks, perfect for times when students find themselves in need of caffeine after a sleep-deprived night of studying. Just a step away is Hunan Balcony, ready to satisfy mid-day dumpling cravings.

However, while I love eating Jasper's wonderful fries and slurping down Yo-Burger's shakes, I can't help but notice that there are no healthy, organic options. How can it be that the restaurants surrounding our school only offer fast food?

Revival of ECF Debate Team

BY BEN THIER

After a multi-year hiatus, Fieldston's Debate Club has been revived by Eric Hochberger (V) and faculty advisor Robert Vincent. For Hochberger, starting the club was an obvious choice going into junior year.

"One of my fondest memories from middle school was when a high schooler would come each week and run a debate club for us," Hochberger said. "Upon reaching the high school I was very surprised a debate club didn't exist."

Throughout the first three months of school, members of the Debate Club worked tirelessly to prepare for the annual Horace Mann Invitational. This year, the resolution, as it is called in debate terms, was: "Resolved: On balance, the benefits of genetically modified foods outweigh the harms." The team researched both the pros and cons of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) to prepare for game day, scouring the web for material during Activities period each Tuesday.

On Saturday, November 22, seven members of the club and two

student judges went next door to Horace Mann. The all-day affair, featuring 20 schools and 42 teams from New York and New Jersey, contained six rounds of heated argument.

The highlight of each debate is the three minute "Grand Crossfire" in which all four members openly argue their points without constraint. Often these crossfires get heated to the point of yelling and screaming, and it is up to the judge to calm the animated participants down.

"It was encouraging to see younger students get excited about such a complicated topic," said Fieldston judge Dani Vaamonde (V). "It's obvious that debate is a true passion for these kids, like how some of us have sports or theater or dance. These kids have debate."

All of the team's effort seemed to pay off. Each pair earned two victories against opponents who have been debating for years. For students at experienced schools such as Regis and Montgomery, debating complex topics comes easier than doing algebra. For first time debaters at Fieldston, the pressure

was on. Notably, the freshman duo of Jack Tolson and Samantha Ratner went undefeated in the morning rounds.

"I didn't expect to do well but we ended up winning a bunch of rounds," Tolson said.

Hochberger was overjoyed with

"Often these crossfires can get heated to the point of yelling and screaming"

the club's success.

"We went in there as the first team Fieldston has ever sent to a debate competition," he said. "It's hard to call them just club members now because over the course of the day, we became teammates."

Faculty Display Work in First Art Show

BY ALEX GREENBERG

On November 10, the Fieldston community gathered in the Tate Library and the Upper School Art Gallery to celebrate the inaugural “Everybody Makes Art” exhibition. Led by community service coordinator Diane Krukowski and ECFS parent Wendy Brandes, the exhibition brought to light the diverse and unexpected artistry within the Fieldston staff and administration. Over 30 faculty members from the Upper and Middle Schools participated in the exhibition.

Ms. Krukowski talked about the inspiration for the show in a recent interview.

“It resulted from a conversation with Dean Reyes well over two years ago,” she said. “In the middle of a discussion about art, he mentioned that he was an art major in college. Who would have guessed, and what other generally unknown talents are working here at Fieldston?”

Pursuing this question — and considering the multiple platforms that students had to present their art — Ms. Krukowski brought her idea to Laura Danforth, who was very receptive. The show itself ran from 5:00 pm to 7:30 pm and was “a huge success,” according to Upper School Ethics teacher, Vivian Matz. Ms. Matz had several pieces of her own in the show, including

her oil-on-canvas piece entitled “Gas Masks: 9/11.”

“I purchased gas masks during the aftermath of 9/11,” said Ms. Matz. “Buying gas masks seemed like the logical thing to do, everyone was worried about Anthrax and a possible chemical attack. There was never a reason to use the masks, so I used them in a still life that I painted in my studio in Brooklyn.”

Others, like Middle School Science teacher Jon Richer, took a different approach in both the construction of their pieces and their messages. Mr. Richer built a canoe which he named “The ‘Wee Lassie.’”

This life-size replica of the original design “played a pivotal role in

canoeing history,” said Mr. Richer. “This type of canoe helped to popularize solo, open-canoe Adirondack camping.”

During the exhibition, the showing rooms were filled with animated conversation. Parents and students applauded the artists for their work, many awestruck by the range of undiscovered talent. Additionally, teachers engaged in deep discussions about their personal, artistic processes and the origins of each other’s passions. One of the biggest hits of the night was by administrative assistant, Loraine Wepler. Ms. Wepler’s piece, titled “Mallard Duck,” was a stained glass image portraying two Canada ducks she saw while taking an art class.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIK HANSON

Coffee table crafted with wood from a cherry tree by Erik Hanson



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTINA SCHLESINGER

“Jonah, the Studio and Me,” oil on canvas painting by Christina Schlesinger

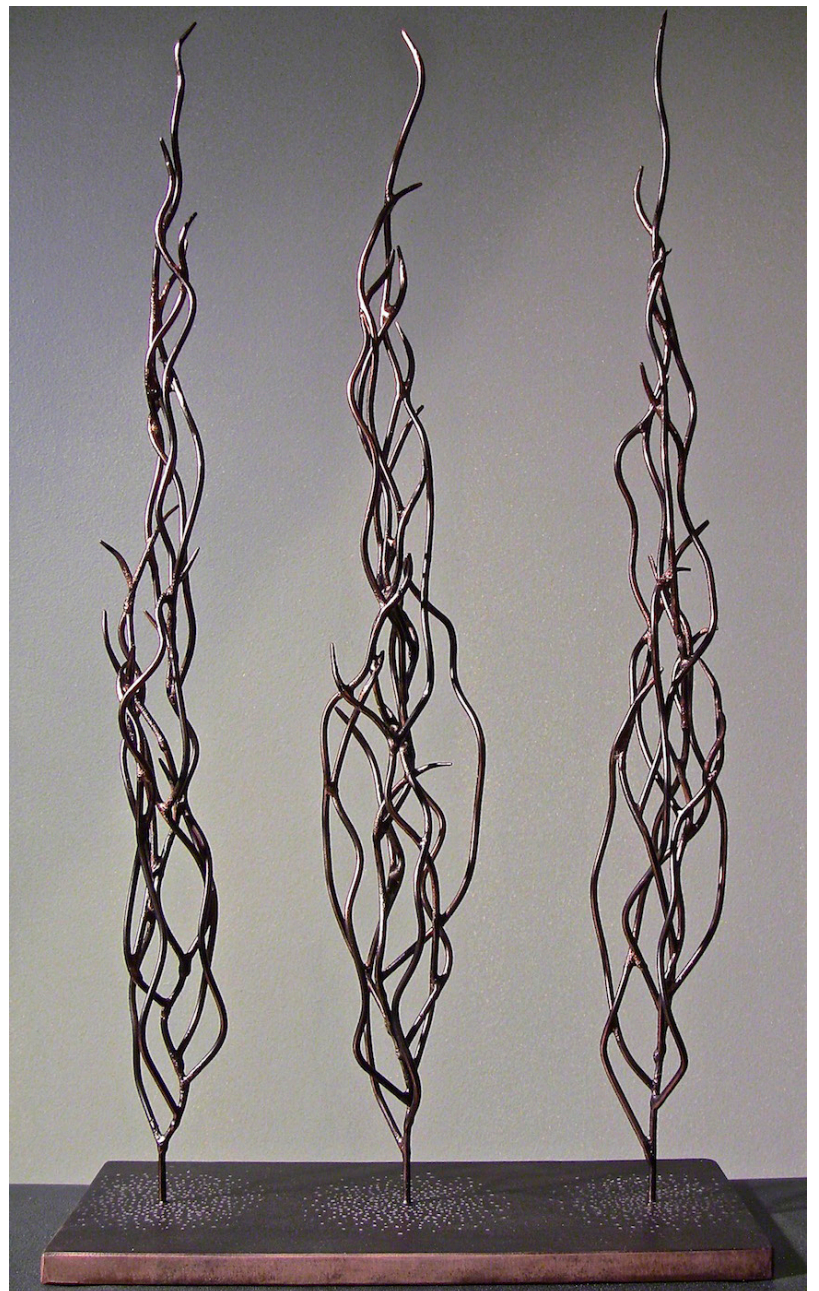


PHOTO COURTESY OF MARK ATTEBERY

“ICONS,” maquette made with steel, copper-plating, and paint by Mark Attebery

Male Identity: Gender Issues

BY YASH DESHPANDE

Towards the end of the last school year, Fieldston was buzzing with various movements like “I Need Feminism Because...” When I think about those that are more vocal about their gender issues, I tend to think about females. Believe it or not, the Men’s Leadership Meeting was initiated at Fieldston years ago and remains a space for men to voice their opinions. As one of the Men’s Leadership Meeting leaders said, “in no way is this males trying to compete with females.”

The motivation of the meetings, in organizer Carl Anhalt’s words, is to “give the young men of Fieldston a forum to discuss issues relevant to them in a single-gender space and to better learn their side of the gender discussion.”

Recently, I attended the first open meeting of the year and was shocked at how many similarities and connections could be made with most of the students there. The meeting started with a couple of thought-provoking questions, which eventually exploded into an open discussion. Last week we touched upon the idea of gender discrimination in the classrooms and outside during P.E. As of now, Mr. Anhalt, Randy Slaughter and Paul Schorin (VI) are still in discussion on what the topics should be for the upcoming lunch meetings. Mr. Anhalt said that anyone who is on the fence about attending these meetings should stop by.

“They are flexible in topics,” he said, “and if there is a particular topic that people want to talk about that they should reach out or feel welcome to bring it up on the lunches.”

As Mr. Anhalt said, the meetings have been through “varying degrees of success,” but it is definitely worth it for young men show up to these lunch meetings to discuss issues and have their voices heard in a closed environment.

The Feminist Agenda: A Retreat

BY SASHA LANDAUER

It was the break of dawn on Saturday, November 15. A group of girls huddled around the Rock, getting ready to load onto the bus. The girls were preparing to depart to an undisclosed location to discuss a matter so secret that the retreat had to be held off campus: The Feminist Agenda.

Over that weekend witchcraft was practiced, beauty magazines were vandalized, culture was jammed, and the patriarchy was defied. In other words, misogynists’ worst nightmare. The 24 participating girls were all part of the Women’s Leadership group and were overseen by Ms. Perez, Dr. Tammi, Ms. Fischhoff, and Dr. Banks.

The group started out by talking about words commonly associated with feminism — positive and negative. The tension between how others view feminism and how feminists view themselves was a common theme.

“I think that people are just terribly misinformed about what it means to be a feminist,” said Olivia Antrobus (VI). “It’s just a false tension.”

The students then practiced culture jamming, a practice which involves taking advertisements in the media that are derogatory towards women and “vandalizing” them to make a more positive message. The result was a collage of advertisement clippings that reversed the media’s negativity.

“I really enjoyed making the covers because it was a way to do a positive action against misogyny and sexism in the media,” said Alie Brussel-Faria (IV). “We have all these discussions but we don’t always have an opportunity to show how we really feel and turn the media against itself.”

Some examples of reversed headlines are “stop split ends” turned into “stop objectification” and the question “how far can you go?” was answered by “until she says no.”

For many, the power of the retreat stemmed from having a safe space to come together and discuss the common struggles that girls and women face.

“The sincerity and passion with which people spoke was really inspirational,” said Beth Awano (IV). “It makes me want to be a more ac-



PHOTO BY SASHA LANDAUER

Mosaic of magazines and ads “vandalized” to create a more positive message

tive feminist in the community rather than just name myself as a feminist and act on my self-proclaimed title.”

The inspiration and sense of community experienced at the retreat was tempered by the realization of how many of the girls had experienced sexual harassment.

“We have become desensitized to a lot of what is being said to us, which is sad,” said Nina Redpath (V). “I thought it was surprising hearing a lot of stories of what happened during school at Fieldston, which we consider a safe space exempt from racism and sexism.”

Multiple girls had experienced guys messaging them saying that they jerked off to their profile pictures. Others, commiserated about the constant judgment they feel from peers — boys and girls — regarding their dress and diet.

The feeling of common struggles was amplified by the skits that the students and teachers put on about what it is like to be a woman. Many of the same themes of harassment and disrespect were echoed throughout the performances.

“I really enjoyed the teacher skit because it didn’t really register that they could still be going through the things that we are going to,” said Aurielle Kaminski (V). “The things that they went through as female faculty were very similar to what I felt as a female student. It was a very connecting moment because it was nice to feel like we are not in it alone.”

The teacher skit highlighted the lack of respect that many hold for

female teachers. It portrayed two boys messing around and repeatedly ignoring their teacher’s reprimands. When a male teacher came, however, they stopped immediately.

The second half of the retreat focused on positive action in response to sexism, specifically at Fieldston. Students broke up into three groups — athletics, academics, and leadership — and brainstormed possible responses to address gender disparities. Students were pleased to end on a hopeful note of possible change.

“There was a point where I felt very discouraged,” said Eliza Uberuaga (V). “I didn’t know what it was all for. It is hard to think that we are returning to the same sexism as before. The feeling that we have this supportive group around us and we can slowly improve little things is comforting. This group of girls is incredibly empowered and determined to make a change.”

The same hopeful sentiment was echoed by Nancy Banks.

“There were so many powerful moments when I felt so much solidarity in the room,” said Dr. Banks, “and I felt so proud of everyone who was there, and really hopeful for change. When you get generations of women together talking, to me that’s what the feminist movement is. All of us talking to each other, sharing our experiences, and brainstorming how we can change the world.”

It will be exciting to see the energy and ideas the Women’s Leadership Group will bring back to Fieldston in the coming year.

Millstein's Short Film

A Closer Look at the Quality of Life Task Force

BY ANANYA TINAIKAR

BY THEO MATZA

The Film Production room, located on the first floor of the library, is hidden in the back of the building. There are a number of talented students who operate in that room, ranging from Forms III to VI, who produce an array of short film work for all of Fieldston to enjoy. One of the more recent additions to Fieldston's short film collection is Sam Millstein's (VI) new piece, "The Library." It is a very well-constructed piece about a young student who falls asleep in a library while reading. When he awakes and finds that the doors are locked, he wanders the library, only to stumble upon a middle-aged man who he soon finds alters parts of certain books in the library.

The first time I saw it, after a certain point I lost curiosity and did not find that there was much closure or elaboration at the end of the film.

After pondering my antipathy towards the ending of the film, I had an insight that influenced me to revise my standpoint. Short films are not always meant to make perfect sense. Most good short films are characterized by some sort of statement or motif that is entwined throughout. However specific or general, there must be an assertion intended by the filmmaker in his work. I realized that this film succeeded in doing just that, and that Millstein's argument was clearly illustrated at the conclusion of the piece with a quote by T.S. Elliot, displayed across a blank screen.

Another component that I appreciated about the film was that classical music accompanies the majority of the picture. This adds a stylistic tone, expressing both suspense and intrigue for the viewer to experience.

Overall, this is a film of clear visual style and categorical tone that I recommend to all those interested. Those curious may view the film on Vimeo.

At Fieldston, we pride ourselves on our warm and welcoming environment, but like any other community, there is room for improvement. That's where the Quality of Life Task Force (QLTF) comes in. With the purpose of improving student life at Fieldston, the QLTF handles everything from scheduling conflicts to introducing more efficient technology. Though the work of the QLTF has significant impact on student life, very few people are aware of their current efforts.

"Last year, Laura Danforth asked me to work with her and Mr. Cairo to address some challenges and ambitions that Fieldston had over the schedule," said Mr. Meyers, when prompted about the origins of the task force. "It began with concern over scheduling conflicts over A and B Band and a desire to include more flexible time for students, a saner day. It became clear that our concerns over the schedule were connected to other questions and aspirations. We ask three questions: What is working? What is not working? And what are your ambitions for what we are not doing, but should?"

From the three questions above the task force established eight categories of concern: Workload and Assessment, Yearly Calendar, Weekly Schedule, Student Support, Program, Interdisciplinary Work and Civic Engagement, Technology, Communication, and Coordination.

Sasha Landauer (VI), another active member of the QLTF, said that space is a big issue Fieldston faces. "I think the issue of space is one that must be addressed in order for the others to work," she said. "Many of the existing issues with scheduling and interdisciplinary work stems from a lack of classrooms."

Another QLTF member, Adam Chan (VI), offered his opinion on issues at Fieldston as well.

"I think the issue of peaks and valleys of student workload is the most important," he said. "This phenomenon prevents students from doing their best work. That's what I'm focusing on for the QLTF."

Mr. Meyers echoed a similar opinion about student workload.

"The solution could be as simple as the more diligent use of the test calendar and as ambitious as reframing our approach to assessment," Meyers said. "Students also seem intrigued by the possibility of a J-Term or 'Eagle' Term...a sort of 'ALP on Steroids.' There also seems to be the desire to support more interdisciplinary courses and programs."

Mr. Meyers also made it evident that in upcoming months, the QTLF will partake in thorough research and exploration.

"We are now in the research phase," he said. "We will be visiting other schools and inviting guests to visit us, so we can explore different weekly schedules, yearly calendars, approaches to interdisciplinary work, and methods of progressive teaching."

Seeing as this task force is a relatively new installment in the Fieldston community, many participants had varying degrees of excitement and optimism for the future of the group.

"So far I have had a very positive experience with the QLTF," Sasha said. "I appreciate the balance of

students, teachers, administrators, and parents, and I feel like every voice is valued. I am also excited that students are taking leadership positions within the five subgroups as these issues primarily impact them."

"So far everything has gone well," Adam said. "Andy Meyers has done a great job organizing and I think it will be a success."

From an organizers perspective, Mr. Meyers felt like there has been enormous support from students, parents, teachers, and administrators for the process.

"I suppose the only thing I would change is the ironic fact that our meetings have added yet one more commitment to our busy calendars," Meyers said.

The QLTF, although time-consuming, has many ambitions for the Fieldston community. From a potential "Eagle Term," to the possible addition of auxiliary student spaces, Fieldston students have a lot to look forward to in the coming months.

The Quality of Life Task Force is an excellent addition and serves as a testament to Fieldston's dedication to its students' happiness. Only time will tell whether the QLTF's pursuits will be successful.



Opinion: Seniors in the Bahamas

BY RACHEL SCHARF

Every year a good portion of the senior class takes a trip over spring break to Paradise Island in the Bahamas, or as it is affectionately called, PI. The five days spent there are notoriously always the source of crazy stories. Although in the past only a small number has gone, in recent years it has become highly popular among a much larger sample of the senior class. Last year, over 100 Fieldston students from the Class of 2014 went. There are currently 82 people from the Class of 2015 signed up, but 112 people are in the relevant Facebook group.

There has always been a wide range of opinions about the Bahamas among the Fieldston community, and even though its popularity is clearly growing, there still exists

“There are currently 82 seniors from the Class of 2015 signed up to go to the Bahamas”

a division on the subject.

Financially, the PI trip is no walk in the park, coming out to \$1699, plus \$69 for optional travel insurance. Financial aid is available, as the trip planners Flora Sahlman (VI) and Dalia Wrocherinsky (VI) have made clear to all interested students, but they declined to disclose how the process works or the amount that is covered for the privacy of those involved. Flora did make clear that it is possible, and that they want it to be used so that they can get “as many people as [they] can to come on this trip and celebrate senior year!”

That being said, I can’t imagine aid covers the entire trip, making it

a difficult consideration for many members of the community.

There is also the notion that many students, or their parents, are simply not comfortable with the lack of structure and supervision available on the trip. An organization called Grad City organizes and plans the trip as well as various other spring break and graduation trips for high schools.

“Grad City provides a trained team of staff available 24 hours and brings their own US medical team,” Flora said.

“The medical team is basically made up of American EMTs who follow the group around everywhere we go,” Dalia said.

Although there is this medical supervision, many students and parents can’t help but be concerned about the fact that it would be so necessary in the first place. These worries about the trip’s activities can be a largely divisive topic.

Because of all of these considerations and more, the looming Bahamas trip creates tension and division in the senior class. This trip is one of the few social activities that every member of the grade is invited to partake in, and not going could create unavoidable isolation. For those students who choose not to attend, whether due to financial inability, discomfort, or other reasons, there is bound to arise some “FOMO,” or fear of missing out, a concept known all too well in high school.

I for one am not going on the trip due to other commitments over that part of spring break and because my parents are less than enthusiastic about the supervision on the trip. I am not in all honesty that torn up about missing those five days of fun; I know that I’ll have many opportunities to enjoy myself and spend time with all my friends before graduating.

What worries me is not missing the trip, but all my friends being on the trip without me. And as normal as concerns like this might be in high school, it is important for us to consider how polarizing “grade bonding experiences” like the upcoming Bahamas trip be for members of the community.

FSG Grade Reps

BY GREY MOSZKOWSKI

Fieldston Student Government is the student body’s main representation in the overall governance of Fieldston. FSG is supposed to interpret student needs, such as concerns about the number of major assessments per week, and create solutions. But interpreting what an entire student body wants can be a daunting prospect. That’s where Grade Representatives come in.

“In general what a Grade Rep does is relay information between students and the larger administration as a whole,” said Form V Rep Julia Rosenberg.

“Each grade rep should and does tailor whatever they do to their form,” said the other Form V Rep Jonathan Hazin. “It’s a matter of listening to what they want. It’s a matter of trying to work with people in the form, though we do interact with the Grade Reps of other forms, and also with the FSG Presidents.”

Communication between the Presidents and Reps is imperative to ensure that FSG is representing everyone in the school. Co-president Jake May weighed in on the issue.

“A lot of the way we work is gauging issues in school right now and how we want to address those issues,” May said. “The main way to gauge those issues is through Grade Reps.”

With that in mind, what exactly are the Reps doing right now?

“Our overall goal this year is to make life more enjoyable and less stressful,” said Form IV Rep Andrew Celli.

Thus far there have been very few suggestions made. Major initiatives have included school-wide requests for the controversial 2-ply toilet paper and snack shacks.

“We’re working on an online suggestion box for anyone to give a suggestion,” said Form III Rep Ben Ginsburg, “specifically in our grade.”

This is one of the only new ideas suggested by a grade rep.

“At this point,” May said, “the stuff that we’ve really been working on has come more from [co-president] Adam and I.”

It seems that, overall, there has been very little impact made by Grade Reps in FSG. There could be a reason for this, however.

“Sometimes people are complaining about things and they don’t really have ideas to improve them,” Celli said.

But if Celli is correct — that there are complaints and all Reps’ voices are heard — there must be a disconnect.

This disconnect could be bridged via the online suggestion box. If grade reps can make it easier for a form to express their needs, perhaps with those online suggestion boxes, then maybe grade reps can be a more efficient part of FSG.

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Sports

The Fieldston News

Challenges Ahead for Basketball *New Start*

for Ice Hockey



PHOTO BY CLIFF BROOKS

Boys' Varsity Basketball team at the annual ECF alumni game

BY SAM KREVLIN

Coach Cliff Brooks is a perfectionist. His closed-door practices prevent anyone outside the Boys' Varsity Basketball team from entering the facility, and a strict dress code consisting of white shirts, navy shorts, white socks, and high tops is required at every practice.

Many players thrive in his system and have found his meticulousness beneficial. Senior forward Jack Upton praises Brooks's perfectionism and believes it prepares the team for greatness.

"There are very few times where he is satisfied with the job being done," Upton said. "He always expects more from us and he wants us to keep driving."

"Every detail matters to him," said senior guard Andrew Sofer. "Whether it's wearing double socks or running the play correctly, and we carry this attitude into the games."

However, some players have found Brooks hard to play for, especially how his rigor affects team chemistry.

"Coach Brooks had a hard time connecting with players on the team last year," said an anonymous source. "For the team to find suc-

cess this year, there will need to be better chemistry between coach and players. Brooks is a capable coach and hopefully will be able to adjust to such adversity and create a more sound relationship with his players."

Senior leadership will be critical for the team's overall chemistry. Andrew Sofer, Jack Upton, and Kyle Axelrod have all played for Brooks the past four years. They will need to work with Brooks to get this team on the right track.

"Some players on the team have played under Brooks for four years and perhaps that time spent together will strengthen the bond and ability to communicate the team needs between coach and player," said the same source. "I believe the team has the tools available. Their success relies merely on their internal foundation."

After a losing season, Brooks hopes to turn things around in his second season as varsity head coach. Teams in Ivy League are expecting the Eagles to significantly improve this season. Riverdale's senior shooting guard Michael Gardner is focused on breaking the Eagles' press defense as he realizes

that their lack of height is made up for in athleticism.

"I expect somewhat of a bounce back year because Fieldston had a pretty young team," said Gardner. "A team that presses a lot and plays hard like Fieldston is always tough to beat, so I would say that Fieldston is definitely a tough opponent for us."

The Eagles have already made great strides, winning their first three scrimmages. Brooks has installed a 1-2-2 defense, which is still a work in progress.

"We are one of the only teams in the Ivy League that plays a 1-2-2," Upton, "so not many teams have an offense to break it. We are very close to mastering it and have taken a huge step since last year."

Three freshmen including Nick Gibson, Jared Maharaj, and Noah Gold have been added to this year's roster, along with seniors Ben Gottschalk and Daniel Handwerker.

"Gottschalk is a very versatile player," Upton said. "He is gonna help us with our depth and we can use him in a variety of ways."

With a lack of size to control the paint, the Eagles will rely on their athleticism to win games. Opposing teams are looking to take advantage of a small Eagles team.

"There is no question that we are a very small team," said Sofer. "But other than Poly, there isn't a very tall team. More importantly, we have other things like intelligence and heart. We have the most heart in the league and it can make up for our height."

Justyn Rogers will hold his ground in the paint, as he is one of the most athletic players in the Ivy League. Dylan Schneider will take on a leadership role as a returning member and will control the tempo at the point guard position. The Eagles will need scorers, and will therefore utilize Gabe Ravetz, a sharp shooter. Lastly, Andrew Sofer, Jack Upton, and Kyle Axelrod will be the leaders of the 2014-2015 Fieldston Eagles and will work with Coach Brooks to put the Eagles back on the map.

BY ALEX HSI

The Fieldston hockey team suffered a disappointing 2013-14 campaign, going just 2-9-1, battling multiple injuries, and losing to rival Poly Prep. This year, however, things seem to be looking up.

Team co-captain Karan Reddy (VI) is optimistic for the upcoming season, and takes note of the team's "improved work ethic." The Eagles' six returning seniors look to provide experience and leadership, and have already made a positive impact in the eyes of coach Kirk Jackson.

The seniors have brought "good spirit, good determination and good team bonding" to the team's off-ice workouts, said Coach Jackson.

Outside of the seven seniors, the team's roster is bolstered with four returning varsity players and three experienced freshmen. In addition, four "fighting squirrels" (beginning-level players) look to continue improving and developing, in hopes of contributing to the varsity squad.

Co-captain Noah Knopf (V) believes his team is "definitely capable" of achieving its goals for the upcoming season of making the FAA league playoffs, winning the newly formed NYC high school hockey league, and, of course, beating Poly Prep at Chelsea Piers.

The keys for success, according to Coach Jackson, are staying away from injury, having a top goaltender, and a solid defense. He also believes that constructing a solid 2nd and 3rd forward lines will help support the top guns up front and make for a more balanced attack. Jackson is confident that Fieldston will be able to reverse last year's losses and return the Eagles to their winning ways.

Cheer on the hockey team when they play at Chelsea Piers on Friday, January 23, and on Saturday, February 21, against Poly Prep.