

Where's My A, CA?

by Michael Ruscak '11

"Good work, great insights: B," concludes the comment on the paper you toiled over for endless hours. If the paper was so great, you think, why didn't you receive an A? This experience sounds familiar to most Concord Academy students. You might feel as though your assignment had fallen victim to one of Concord Academy's combatants in the war against grade inflation.

Grade inflation occurs when teachers award grades higher than those that would have been assigned to work of the same quality in the past. It is a problem that has cropped up in the past few decades among many high schools and universities across the country. This artificial increase in grades makes the process of differentiating students more difficult.

Recently, the much higher volume of students applying to colleges has put pressure on teachers from students, parents, and administrators to reward students with higher grades. Additionally, many teachers seek better evaluations and do so by assigning higher grades to students, with the hope of winning their positive feedback. Also responsible for the widespread grade inflation is the fact that once other schools start giving undeserved higher grades, teachers feel that if they hold out and stick with the same grading standards as the past they are making their own students appear less hard-working and intelligent. Therefore, many schools jump on the bandwagon and decrease grading standards.

So where does Concord Academy fall in the scheme of grade inflation? Academic Dean John Drew says that Concord Academy has not decreased its grading standards in the past thirty years, the time frame in which grade inflation started occurring. German teacher and former dean of faculty Susan Adams, who has worked at CA for over 30 years, recalls that the median GPA of the graduating classes when she taught here in the late 1970's fell between 3.00 and 3.30 (B), which is where it has remained for the most part.

Both college counselor Kate Peltz and Drew agree that one key reason Concord Academy has resisted grade inflation is the lack of outward competition seen in other

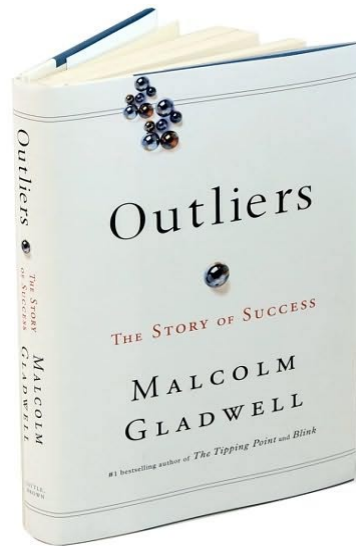
schools that pressures teachers to increase grades. Math teacher Kem Morehead recalls that at the school she taught at previously, parents pressured the department to put their children in advanced classes. When these unqualified students started receiving C's and D's, Morehead was forced to lower grading standards to fit into the acceptable range. She notes that there isn't that same pressure at CA, although she is rarely forced to give out grades lower than a B-.

A different trend though, may have pervaded CA grading. Drew mentions that many schools have experienced "grade compression," though he is not sure what effects it has had on CA. Grade compression occurs when the percentage of grades in the B+/A- range increases while the number of grades in the A/A+ range and the C/D range falls. Because grades at both ends of the distribution are moving closer to the center, the average GPA is not affected and thus grade compression's prevalence is harder to measure. Peltz offers a number of explanations for possible grade compression. She believes that increased support for students has played a fundamental role. Twenty years ago a student who perhaps had the potential to achieve a B+ might not have had the ability to move course levels or the access to tutors that he would have today, and thus received a lower grade than he would have with these resources. Alternately, a student who might receive an A+ in a particular course now has the opportunity to move up to a more challenging level where they might not receive as high a grade.

Don't worry, neither the fight against grade inflation or the possible occurrence of grade compression is negatively affecting your chances at college. The college counseling office maintains a close relationship with prospective colleges, who are able to see how CA's grading distribution compares with that of other high schools and who understand how demanding CA courses are.

Well, maybe the kids here 20 years ago had to work just as hard to get a B on that paper, but the next time you get an A, give yourself a pat on the back because it will be well-deserved. A student at a school that has become subject to grade inflation could not say the same.

Faculty Reads *Outliers*



by Kate Nussenbaum '11

Rick Hardy mentioned it in his installation speech, and from that point on, talk of the book *Outliers* has peppered school conversations. It may please students to hear that they are not the only ones with summer reading; all faculty members were required to read the New York Times best-seller over the summer, and then discuss it at the first faculty meeting of the year.

Outliers was not, well, an outlier; every summer a different book is chosen for the faculty to read.

"I think one of the things we enjoy as faculty members is intellectual exchange with one another," Dean of Faculty Peter Laipson explained. "It's fascinating to have one of these common reading and thinking experiences." He continued, "We always choose a book that reflects in some way on our teaching or teaching practices."

In *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell examines success through what he deems an untraditional lens. Instead of examining the qualities most successful people have, he looks at how different situations, coincidences, and strokes of luck enable people to shine.

Laipson said, "There are some lessons from [the book] that are very provocative for a place like this." He went on to say how Gladwell's chapter on communication styles resonated, reminding him of the communication challenges at CA. Gladwell explains how an airplane crash could have been avoided had the pilot and copilot communicated better. Laipson said that CA experiences its own airplane crashes, as students attempt to

fly without understanding what their copilots are telling them. "At Concord we're very oblique. An advisor might tell a student -" Laipson switched to a slightly higher pitched hypothetical-situation voice - "You know, you might want to consider doing XYZ." Back in his normal voice he continued, "And if you are fluent in Concordese you know that means 'Do XYZ.' But if you come from a very direct communication style, it takes a long time to understand what people mean."

Other faculty members took different lessons from the book. Both Health and Wellness teacher Jeff Desjarlais and English teacher Sandy Stott were drawn to Gladwell's "10,000 hour rule". Gladwell explains that to become really good at anything, one must spend 10,000 hours doing it. He believes that while some level of innate talent is required for success, the reason why some people are just good at something while some people are incredible at it is simply because the latter have spent more time perfecting that skill.

Stott said, "The rule of 10,000 hours struck me in two ways. It struck me that so often at CA we work with talented students but you guys are required to have 6-7 courses, extra-curriculars, sports - you can't possibly put in the amount of time it takes to master something." He acknowledged that this often frustrates both students and teachers. But, he says, students do acquire a mastery of something. "By the time you guys get to be juniors and seniors, you have put in close to 10,000 hours learning how to learn. CA might not have anyone who's a master violinist or a master dancer or a master writer or a master scientist. But it's going to have people who, once they decide what to do, have mastered how to learn in those areas."

Desjarlais agreed. "People can't be really good at something at 15 or 16 or 18 and the pressure to do that is just way too much." His goal is to "frame somehow that you don't have to know it now, that this is a moment in time, not the only time."

He also found relevant Gladwell's explanation of how growing rice influenced Chinese culture. "The book talks about the American idea of well, you plant stuff, you water it and you let it grow." But then it compares American farming to the amount of time and effort Chinese rice paddies take. "Those two approaches, based on the agriculture of the area merge into the philosophies

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Green Cup Challenge: Round Two

by Julia Levinson '12

Tired of losing to other schools in athletic competitions? Don't worry, not all hope of victory is lost! There is a competition coming to CA that we could win by sheer effort. It is an opportunity to show all those schools that have defeated us on the soccer fields and basketball courts that we have it in us finally to beat them. No, this is not a basketball tournament or a lacrosse game. This is the Green



Photo by J.R. Lee '12

Cup Challenge, where we can finally prove to other schools that we are the best, and in this case, the most environmentally friendly.

From January 25th to February 22nd, CA will be working to reduce our

electricity usage. Across the country, 183 other schools will be competing to lower their emissions as well. Some of these schools include Phillips Andover, Brooks School, Deerfield Academy, Belmont Hill School, and the Rivers School. Judges at the Green School

Alliance will compare each school's bills from last year and the year before in order to determine which school was able to make the most energy efficient changes. After analyzing each school's bills, the judges choose an overall winner. The question that remains to be answered is this: can CA take first place this year?

Last year, CA reduced its bill by an impressive 8%. Hopefully this year we can do even better. According to Environmen-

tal Co-Head Kate Nussenbaum '10, "CA students can shut lights off, shut computer screens off, unplug any chargers that are not being used, and reduce the amount of time they spend using electronic devices. While we have gotten pretty good at shutting lights off when we leave rooms, during the Green Cup Challenge we are going to try to instill the mentality that even when you are using a room, a lot of times there is enough natural sunlight to keep the lights off." Is it really necessary to have lights on in the Stu-Fac if it is a sunny day? The Environmental Co-Heads do not think so.

Sadly, there is one logistical obstacle standing in our way of winning. CA's electricity bills come every three months, instead of every month. By the time we send in our bills, the results have already been announced, which gives us an obvious disadvantage. What can we do about this? Hopefully by having outstanding changes

in our energy use, we can be noticed by the judges. In fact, last year CA placed 8th overall even with this challenge to overcome! This year, however, we want to do even better.

In the Green Cup Challenge, small changes really do make all the difference. It all comes down to shutting off lights and unplugging electrical devices. If you are leaving an empty bathroom or classroom, shut off the lights. If you see a charger that's not currently in use, unplug it from the wall. Putting in this minimal effort works towards making CA a more green and energy-efficient school while also bringing us one step closer towards winning the Challenge.

The Green Cup Challenge is an opportunity both to help the environment and win a friendly competition. Hopefully, all the unplugging and down-switching that students do will bring us closer to victory and sustainability. Remember: only you can help us win the GCC!

Healthcare: Where We Are and What It Means

by Talene Bilazarian '10

Since Obama's inauguration last January, health care has remained the president's top domestic priority. We thought the issue would be resolved by the summer of 2009. Over those few months filled with talk of a public option, the political intrigue looked to be almost over. But the health care debate has lasted long into the fall and winter—it still rages even into February, 2010. So where are we now?

As of early this month, both the Senate and the House have passed health care bills. It was a battle in itself to get to this point, but now Congress must create a unified bill that they can both ratify and present to the President. The two bills are different, and each is incredibly complicated. The house bill alone is 2,000 pages...let's hope it was double-sided.

The extension of health care programming seeks to cover all Americans. But both plans go about this very differently. According to a CNN Health Care report: "The House bill creates a public option, which is a government-funded, government-run health care option, similar to Medicare. The public option would be a part of an insurance exchange available to people without coverage or unable to afford private coverage. The Senate bill does not create a public option. Instead, it allows nonprofit private insurers to offer coverage with approval of Office of Personnel Management, which oversees the federal employees' health plan."

Under the House and Senate plans, the estimated cost of reform would range from 800 billion to 1 trillion dollars, making this the biggest expansion of health care since Medicare.

The question of how the American people will respond to the plan places additional pressures on both bodies. Some people will claim that it costs too much, that "Obama care" is simply too much government. Many advocate a state controlled plan—much like the health care plan

Bay-Staters enjoy under "Romney care".

Whatever the plan that emerges out of the two bills, it is going to be expensive. The question is not how we will pay for it, but rather whether or not it will succeed in providing medical care for all Americans.

There are some controversies that stand out in the health care debate, mostly to do with illegal immigrants and abortion. Again according to the CNN Report, "The House bill prohibits any health plan receiving federal subsidies from offering coverage for abortion. The Senate plan allows states to choose whether to ban abortion coverage in health plans offered in the insurance exchanges. Individuals purchasing plans through the exchanges would have to pay for abortion coverage out of their own funds."

On illegal immigration, "The House bill mandates insurance coverage for illegal immigrants and allows illegal immigrants to enroll in the public option and to buy private coverage in the national insurance exchange, but prohibits government subsidies for such private coverage. The Senate plan exempts illegal immigrants from the health coverage mandate, and prohibits illegal immigrants from participating in the insurance exchanges."

These issues are the cause of many controversies, but the two plans remain united on the issue of mandatory health care. The two bills both require all Americans to buy insurance.

One thing can be sure; the political theatre is far from over. The race to provide health care for all Americans soldiers on. With the newly elected Senator Scott Brown vowing to be the 41st vote against the plan, the fate of the bill seems as unsure as ever. There is still much more work to be done; it was difficult enough for the two houses to agree on their own bills, now they must combine their two very different versions into one which can be explained to the American people. It has taken us through summer, fall, and half of winter, and we can be sure that the health care debate will not be over any time soon.

The Stu-Fac's New Look

by Adam Pfander '13

On January 5th, as students sat down to their first meal back at CA, a new Stu-Fac catered to them. It was clear that the kitchen had undergone renovations— but what remains of the old Stu-Fac, and what has been replaced?

The salad bar, counters, and main service line are all new. The kitchen also received an updated paint job, although the equipment within it remained the same.

The reason for the changes was not completely routine. In fact, the equipment

The new food code states that hot food must be kept at temperatures above 140°F, and cold food must be kept lower than 41°F. It also added "leafy greens" to the cold food category. This new code is far stricter than the old standard, and made the revamp necessary.

Even under the old, more relaxed code, the machinery had trouble meeting requirements. That is not to say food was ever dangerous or undercooked. Still, the old service apparatus could not keep foods at the right temperatures, frustrating many kitchen workers. With an undertone of exasperation,

the kitchen staff describes the effectiveness of the previous machinery. "Some things weren't working properly," re-

marked one frustrated worker, "They couldn't hold food at the right temperatures. They were just outdated."

This combination of malfunction and tougher standards signed the old equipment's



Photo Courtesy of Malu Malhotra '10

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A Forum for Change

by Lola Ogundipe '12

The Student Leadership Diversity Conference (SDLC) is a multiracial, multicultural gathering of high-school student leaders (grades 9-12) from across the country. The conference focuses on self-reflection, forming allies, and community building. This two-day conference in Denver, Colorado is filled with workshops and activities designed to engage teenagers and teach them how to develop cross-cultural communication, practice expression through arts, and learn networking strategies and principles. This year the SLDC was joined by the People of Color Conference (PoCC).

Marie Myers, Head of Admissions, and Laura Twitchell, Admadjaja House Affiliate attended, as did our very own Tiffany Nova '11 and Scarlett Kim '11.

When asked why the SDLC was appealing to her, Nova '11 responded "I have always been interested in diversity issues concerning race and ethnicity. I

thought it was a cool idea that kids my age all over the country were gathering with the same mindset to talk about the same issues. So I thought I would join them." Kim '11 says, "watching the movie 'Saving Faces' helped me to ponder what it means to belong in two minority groups. I wondered whether there is a proper way to express myself." Not only does the conference provide an open and secure environment in which to explore issues of diversity, but it also provides a number of workshops for further exploration. Tiffany reports that there were so many workshops offered that it became difficult to choose which to attend. "There was one workshop where we all held hands in one line. The facilitators would ask questions about race, socio-economic status, etc. and if anything was true you would have to step forward. It was interesting to see the most privileged always in the front and the "underprivileged" behind them." A similar activity was performed in Daysha Edewi's "Got Privilege" workshop on MLK Day, and is typically participated in by the entire

CA community during the "Culture Circle". Said Kim '11 regarding the SDLC activity, "It was fascinating and powerful to see the honesty and acceptance in one room. It really helped us open up to one another."

The SDLC allows many students to open their minds, and consider the world in a different way. Lovelie Tejada '10, a member of SDLC 2008, recounted an eye-opening moment when one boy from Paraguay said that he had never met anyone else from his country. He started to cry when another girl in the SDLC introduced herself as Paraguayan. "It was really amazing how someone could

be comfortable enough to get so emotional in front of 3,000 strangers" said Tejada. Kim adds, "I met a lot of young people who were dedicated activists from other independent schools who worked to bring awareness about diversity." In bringing so many students together from independent schools in the area, SLDC provides



Photo Courtesy of Bruce Duggan '12 for teenagers to meet other students who are

interested in the same issues, which in turn works towards building a strong community of student activists. Jen Cardillo, a member of the Community Equity team, said, "I have heard many students and adults talk about advances that they have made in their own sense of identity, investment in community membership and leadership, growth in confidence, and forging of important connections with peers at other schools. Many students have come back to realize that CA's affinity groups and C&E programs mean more opportunities for conversations about equity, discrimination, identity, and diversity than are possible at some other schools." A lot of us take for granted our C&E programs and the open affinity groups designed for students of color. Nova explains, "I met some kids from other schools which didn't even have affinity groups. That made me proud that we have a school that celebrates diversity and things like C&E for the whole community." The SDLC has been a great experience for past students, and will continue to provide an excellent forum for openness and acceptance.

death warrant. When it did become apparent that the old machinery would have to be replaced, Don Kingman took action. Spending nearly \$100,000, which he had budgeted earlier for this very purpose, he placed the orders for the new equipment. Barring a serious issue, Don said that this new equipment would remain part of the Stu-Fac for the next fifteen years at least.

First to arrive was the salad bar, which was prepped and installed over Thanksgiving break. Next came the cabinets, service line, and the kitchen's new paint. Working tirelessly, and coming in almost every day over the break, Operations managed to complete the renovations on schedule. When the Stu-Fac finally reopened its doors to students, it was completely ready for use.

And what do the students think? The general reaction has been predominately positive. They like the new set up and be-

lieve it to function better than the old one. Cindy Do '10 said, "a great improvement. Everything's cold, or hot, like it's supposed to be, and all the food just seems fresher."

It did, however, come as a bit of a shock. Most were not expecting such a dramatic change to the one place used most often at CA. During that first meal back on January 5th, so many students were looking around with either puzzled or fascinated expressions that hardly any meals were being eaten.

But now that the dust has settled, everyone can look at the new face of the Stu-Fac with pride. The stalwart, seemingly tireless operations staff may now rest with knowledge of a job well done. The administration can relax and stop fretting about whether or not their food service is up to snuff. And the students, who receive the true benefit of these renovations, have yet another reason to be proud of their school.

 by Kate Nussenbaum '11

Rick Hardy began the year not only as the newly installed Head of School, but also as a teacher. He taught a new English minor, Writing the Feature Article. Hardy created and taught the course at Milton, and decided to introduce it to CA students as well. The course involved tackling the daunting task of writing a 4,000-word

Farmers Markets and Local Farming: A Fruitful Future?

feature article. Along with my five other classmates, I picked a topic of my choosing, went out and interviewed a wide range of subjects, and with the help of individual conferences and peer editing ultimately crafted a final piece.

Published below are brief summaries of and excerpts from each of the six pieces. To read the complete articles, please contact the writers.

But better than what exactly? The consumer is no doubt referring to the local farmers' nemesis: the supermarket, whose shelves of produce rival the UN in terms of geographic diversity. In one grocery store one might find raspberries from California, pineapples from Costa Rica, and bananas from Ecuador. Even some of the pumpkins and apples, both of which can be grown throughout the fall in Massachusetts, come from hundreds of miles away.

The sheer number of farmers markets would indicate that eating locally is a growing phenomenon, that consumers are leaving behind their shopping carts and shining tiled floors in favor of the local produce and homier atmosphere of the markets. Throughout the summer and fall Massachusetts hosts just under 200 weekly markets, including over 30 in Middlesex County alone. Judy Dore, the coordinator of the Newton Market, proudly states that the market draws around one thousand visitors every Tuesday.

But Porofino remains unconvinced that buying local is a growing trend, or at least, he does not believe that it is a trend growing rapidly enough to preserve local farming into the future...

 by Kate Nussenbaum '11

My article explores the challenges local farmers are facing as well the effects of buying local produce on the environment, the economy, and one's health.

"There's a crispness," Shaun Porofino, a farmer at the family-owned and operated Millbrook Farm in Concord, tells me, and he's not referring to the weather. Standing behind a table laden with fruits and vegetables Porofino continues describing the freshness of the produce at the market, explaining, "The produce is picked either the night before or that morning. It's healthier and more flavorful." A consumer overhears us and eagerly chimes in, "The taste is so much better!"

Steady Sisters: Why Young Women Today Choose Women's Colleges – Or Don't

lumbia. You will meet plenty of men."

"No, I know, it's not that, it's not even just about guys, I just really can't see myself at a women's school. I just can't."

" I c a n . . . "

I chip in, and the faces at the dinner table turn towards me. Here at Concord Academy, a private day-boarding high school about sixteen miles west of Boston, the more usual topics of homework, pop culture, and who's-dating-whom, have been dominated by talks of college and the uncertain future. I speak enthusiastically about how I believe that society still direly needs more opportunities for women and how women's colleges can empower, inspire, and change women's lives. The listeners nod their heads, even my friend who just renounced Barnard. Then she adds, "That's really great. But it's just not for me."

What does that mean? What makes women's colleges a fit for someone, whereas for someone else it may seem completely unappealing?

 by Daphne Kim '10

My article examines the reasons behind young women's decisions to attend or not attend a women's college.

"I took Barnard off my list."

" W h a t ? "

" W h y ? "

"I really can't see myself at a women's school."

"Ok, but you know that Barnard isn't really a women's school. It's in Manhattan and right next to Co-

Textures, Colors & Shades of Grey

had put up a new piece, one highly abstract and curious that didn't fit in with the others. It was crazy. Fat chunks of paint bulged from its surface and a vast array of colors clashed together to form something really out-there. The critics moved in on it, raised their glasses and puzzled over it. They all wanted to know about this new work. This is when the good doctor decided to play a game and asked his friends to name the artist. They named various modern artists with whom they were familiar but no guess was correct. How could this be? Then Dr. Kursis asked which picture of the lot was worth the most. The group agreed that the abstract painting trumped the others and was probably the most valuable. Dr. Kursis then revealed the artist: his own six-year old grandson, my brother. Silence gripped the room. The night didn't go on much longer and the men all filed out leaving Dr. Kursis, my grandfather satisfied and chuckling in his apartment...

 by Andrew Zarins '11

One evening in the mid 1990's Dr. Arnolds Kursis invited a group of friends to his Stockholm flat. It was a casual gathering at which the assorted horn rimmed- intellectuals drank cognac, criticized opera, debated Tolstoy, and most importantly, discussed the doctor's canvasses. Arnolds' walls were filled with large and fabulous paintings of the 19th and 20th centuries. That night, Dr. Kursis

Deep Recovery

 by Scott Berkley '12

"Deep Recovery" is a collection of stories about mountain climbers recovering from life-threatening injuries to return to their sport.

After a day and a half of enjoyable climbing, Broxson was leading the last pitch of the route. When climbing, the lead climber places small pieces of metal in small

cracks in the rock, to which he or she clips the rope. This process, called "protecting" or "placing pro," thereby safeguards against a long fall – a climber will only fall twice the distance they are above their last piece of protection, normally five or ten feet.

Finished with the pitch, Broxson had only one thing left to do to finish the route: anchor himself to the cliff by tying to a tree, and allow Pat to climb up. "I remember... standing on the ledge and yelling down to Pat that I needed just a little bit more rope to reach [the tree]," says Broxson calmly. "Right after I yelled at him – I don't know if I was stretching up to get the oak branch and I lost my balance, or a little bit of rock crumbled, or tension was on the rope – I really have no idea what happened, but I was falling."

"There was not a cell in my body that thought that I was going to survive that fall," says Broxson of the sudden shock of flying through the air. He hit a ledge 75 feet down and bounced into the air. When the rope came taut, he had fallen 200 feet....

The Staff of the Lion:

Senator Kennedy's Regional Office

me in. Stacks of paper and books are piled all around her desk, obscuring my vision of her. She is on the phone and I wait for her to finish the conversation. As she sets down the headset, a staffer peeks in the door, saying "I'm just going to leave this for you to read. I need to get them out today." Souliotis nods.

Souliotis is a large, older woman with radiantly tan skin and a lilac suit. She leads me down the hall to the Senator's office, so that we might speak privately for a few minutes. Along the way, an issues staffer stops her. "Do you have a moment, Barbs?" She says that she will speak with him in a few moments and then leads me through an oak door into the largest room in the office. As we sit down around a small coffee table, I take a moment to look around.

Sitting in this world renowned office I can hardly believe that the "Lion of the Senate" is gone. His desk sits grandiose and enormous above a royal blue carpet. Drapes with the senatorial eagle crest loop across windows overlooking Boston and the ocean beyond. An antique street lamp from his mother's childhood hangs above his desk and multitudes of trophies and awards decorate the bookshelves...

 by Kendall Tucker '10

My article profiles different members of Kennedy's staff and explores how they contributed to his relationship with his constituents, and to his legacy.

...The receptionist buzzes me through the door and I am overwhelmed by the silence of this previously loud and crowded office. Intern desks sit empty in the central room and I nod to some staffers flitting about. I walk to the office at the end of the hall. The door is open, but I knock nonetheless.

Barbara Souliotis, the late Senator Edward M. Kennedy's chief of staff, calls

The Case for Zoos:

The Obstacles Zoos Must Face in the Struggle for Support

holding tightly on to the back of her young daughter's bright pink T-shirt, stained with the chocolate ice cream that she had purchased earlier that day from the Safari Grill. "This is one of our favorite places to visit. It's a great place to bring her, because it's not an overwhelming walk and she loves seeing all the animals," she said gesturing to her daughter. This much was apparent from the girl's wide eyed stare and gaping mouth, pushed up against the thick pane of safety glass separating her from Bubba and Smokey, the two black bears at the Stone Zoo. Roy, like many others, lives nearby and finds the Stone Zoo to be the perfect afternoon activity for her and her young daughter. It is no surprise then, that many residents were distressed to discover the shocking news about the possible fate of their beloved zoo.

On July 10th, a Boston Globe headline read, "Cash-strapped Boston Zoo May be Forced to Close Doors, Euthanize Animals." After 104 years of sometimes-interrupted operation, the Stone Zoo was faced with the prospect of closing yet again, due to a lack of operating funds. Much of the public had one question – Why? ...

 by Tess Mellin '12

My article centers around the issues zoos face in society today, especially with regard to finding funding.

... Iggy is one of the many wild animals that now reside at the Stone Zoo in Stoneham, Massachusetts. Though she moved to this new exhibit at the beginning of the summer, by July many feared that she, as well as the other residents, would be left with nowhere to live.

"We were so upset when we found out that the zoo might have to close," exclaimed Bridgett Roy of Stoneham, Massachusetts. She stood with one hand

Building with Blocks: Scheduling at CA

by Dan Weiner '11

The creation of academic schedules at CA is a remarkable process. Among the hundreds of students, faculty and courses, it is no wonder that Deborah Gray, scheduler and mathematics teacher, describes the system as being as challenging as “solving a huge sudoku puzzle of a dozen interlinked grids.” However, many people take their schedules for granted. After submitting their course registrations in the spring, students do not see their schedules until they appear in their registration folders many months later. Accordingly, many do not consider the intricacy of designing schedules for every student and teacher at a school like CA.

By the time advisors and advisees meet in the late spring to discuss course selection, the scheduling process has been underway for many months. Each year, the procedure begins in late January, when the departments start compiling their course offerings for the following year. After students submit their requests, the lottery process occurs in early June. Many components are still completed by hand: Ms. Gray factors in elements ranging from preference points to seniority in determining which students will be selected for which courses.

The heart of the scheduling process, described by Ms. Gray as the “solving phase”, lasts from mid-June through early August. This “phase” begins with a computerized evaluation of the block conflicts between the various courses using software called QSchedule. Paul Quimby, CA class of 2008, designed this program during the summer after his sophomore year. While previously this aspect of the solving stage was completed manually, the efficiency of QSchedule has shortened the solving process by weeks.

After using Quimby’s program, Ms. Gray begins the intensive process of manually evaluating the schedules. Intricate grids are displayed on rectangular sheets of paper the size of small tables. In a recent presentation, Ms. Gray encapsulated this component of the scheduling process using the following Michelangelo quote: “I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free.” Similarly, with this visual representation of the schedule in its preliminary phase, Ms. Gray eliminates combinations of courses and blocks that do not fit until the remaining elements work well together.

The solving stage normally finishes around the first or second week of August. According to Ms. Gray, even



*Angel With Candlestick, Michelangelo.
Photo Courtesy of Ms. Gray and
Google Images*

though there are computerized elements to the procedure, it is one dominated by human input. Nevertheless, she is especially grateful for the technological backing having witnessed the process with its absence.

When Ms. Gray began at CA in 1977 as a math teacher, the assignment of classes was completed manually. She recalls that schedules were created by organizing slips of paper that contained student course requests. Ms. Gray became the scheduler in 1981. The next year, Bill Adams, mathematics teacher, adapted a commercial scheduling program for the school’s needs. Ms. Gray left CA in 1983 and returned ten years later. Until 1994, the department heads had created the master timetable of classes before registration. That changed in 1994 with the introduction of Mac School, a software program that allowed students’ course selections, not a previously determined timetable, to be the impetus for scheduling. While Ms. Gray assisted the scheduling process from 1994 to 1996, she became fully involved the next year.

One of the reasons that the solving process is so time-intensive is the sheer scope of course offerings at CA. According to Academic Dean John Drew, CA “offers many more elective courses in all departments than any other school our size.” Consequently, Ms. Gray believes that the most challenging aspect of the whole process is “making sure all students are assigned to core courses while minimizing conflicts among the electives.” Even though there are inevitable scheduling disappointments, Mr. Drew believes that “in the end, the system works out pretty well for everybody.”

Mid-Year Q&A with Rick Hardy

by Marisa Kager '13

What have you enjoyed most in your first six months?

Listening to chapel talks, talking with students at lunch or in the hallways or on the sidelines; watching students sing, act, dance, play, laugh – and appreciating their senses of humor. Humor here is really, really smart – and I like that a lot.

What are some of the biggest challenges you’ve faced since becoming Head of School?



Learning the community, the culture – students’ names! Not to mention parents and alums; that’s been a lot of fun, too, but it’s been a lot to learn in a short period of time!

What goals do you have for the remainder of the school year?

As I said in my chapel talk, staying in the moment, making the most of the days ahead of us, finishing the school year well.

What surprised you most about CA?

The combination of intensity and genuine warmth; they make for a unique community, I think.

Exams Reexamined

by Dan Weiner '11

When a typical CA student thinks of winter exams, he or she is often reminded of a mental marathon of seemingly endless preparation and stressful testing. Next December, however, winter exams will be divided by a weekend. Due to the design of the calendar, the administration decided that exams will begin on Thursday, December 16th. After an exam on Friday, students will have the weekend to prepare for exams on Monday and Tuesday. Boarders will depart on Wednesday, December 22nd.

While this change may at first seem quite revolutionary, it is by no means unprecedented. As recently as 2000, exams were divided by a weekend. In fact, that year there were exams offered on Saturday and Sunday; students selected one of the two days based upon preference. Sue Sauer, Registrar, recalls that exam schedule as a “tough one”. John Drew, Academic Dean, hopes that students do not worry about such a radical exam schedule because, he says, “I don’t think we’ll be doing that again any time soon.”

The motivation for the change to the winter 2010 exam schedule lies in the calendar. Drew explains that if the exam schedule from last year had been employed this December, exams would finish as early as December 15th. Such an early release would magnify the discrepancy between the length of the fall and spring semesters. As currently constituted, the fall semester is approximately three weeks shorter than the spring semester. The change to the exam schedule will “certainly help even out the time difference between fall and spring term”, according to science teacher Joan Kaufmann. Along the same lines, Sean Pathawinthanond '12 adds, “by balancing out the fall and the spring semesters, teachers will not have to rush as much to reach the requirements according to the syllabus.”

Mark Engerman, math teacher, points out that the change will be quite beneficial as “many math classes are supposed to cover the same topics in the fall and spring semesters, and it can be very challenging fitting everything into the shorter fall semester.” While he acknowledges that this change will not dramatically alter the imbalance between semesters, he believes that “every bit helps”.

The Monday through Wednesday before exams will serve a variety of purposes for different CA students. Drew says details need to be worked out about the final weeks, but most likely no new work will be introduced during the last few days of classes. Danny Klinger '11 thinks, “it is a very sensible change to have the definite switch over from new material and assignments to review for finals, which the new schedule would provide.” In order to help students prepare for exams, there will be no after school activities, such as sports, during this final three-day stretch. The idea, according

What is your favorite CA tradition?

The hug line at chapels is pretty cool. Such a simple, genuine expression of warmth and support.

What was the funniest teaching moment you remember?

I was teaching eighth grade, and we

to Drew, is that students who have exams beginning on Thursday will have the evenings earlier in the week to prepare for these tests. With the expectation that students will have already started their exam preparation in the preceding weeks, Drew believes “this change does not add or subtract study time.”

Yet another benefit to the change in exam scheduling is increased time between Thanksgiving break and winter exams. According to Drew, the stretch can “end up feeling like one extended crunch period.” By increasing the number of school days between the return from Thanksgiving break and the start of exams, some of this academic fervor should be alleviated.

One of the most anticipated benefits of the change is the effect of the weekend in between the blocks of exams. Drew points out that many students, especially underclassmen with four or five exams, are “completely out of gas by the time they get to the last couple days of tests.” The weekend will present stu-



Photo Courtesy of Jenny Jeong '10

students with an opportunity to, in the words of English teacher Ayres Stiles-Hall, “recharge their batteries.” Nick Phillips '11 thinks, “the weekend will give extra energy for final exams. I always felt exhausted by the time we got to the fourth or fifth exam in just three days.” Furthermore, Drew notes that when exams are not divided by a weekend, the departments in the last few slots see “a real drop-off in exam performance,” a trend that he hopes this

change will mitigate. However, the effect of the weekend is not perceived by all as beneficial. Izzy Mattoon '13 believes that the weekend will “make it hard to concentrate on exams,” a valid point as there are many parties and family reunions during this weekend and the days before the holiday.

A potential downside to the change lies in the reduction of time for seniors to complete their college applications. Since many colleges have a January 1st deadline for regular decision, this change in exam scheduling will reduce the time for seniors to work on applications over break. However, Drew does not think this will be a major issue, as there remains one week between the holiday and the January 1st deadline. Drew also points out that many schools have application deadlines later in January which would alleviate some of the pressure created by the reduced vacation time before the New Year. While there is vacation time lost before the New Year, school does not reopen until January 11th, 2011.

While there are many perceived benefits associated with placing a weekend in the middle of exams, students should not become accustomed to such a schedule. In December 2011, winter exams will revert back to the “traditional” schedule and will not be broken up by a weekend. Nevertheless, next winter’s exams, for many, will be a welcome change.

were reading [Book 23 of] the Odyssey, where Odysseus is reunited with Penelope. It was a very warm day for fall, 60 degrees, and I had the window open. I asked the class, “How do you think Odysseus and Penelope would feel when reunited?” Nobody answered. Just then, a car drove by with the radio on; the song, “When a ma-a-a-an loves a woman,” was playing. Everyone started laughing!

MLK Day Recap

by Kris Kim '12

On January 20, Concord Academy opened the celebration of Martin Luther King Day with an inspirational speech from Massachusetts State Representative Byron Rushing. Rushing, a popular advocate of human and civil rights, asked the community how it fits in the legacies of Martin Luther King and civil rights movement. "Of all the MLK days I was here at CA for, many keynote speakers talked about themselves, and their achievements," said Anna Morton '11. "But Mr. Rushing's talk actually related to Martin Luther King, and how his achievements affected the world. It really changed my perspectives of Martin Luther King."

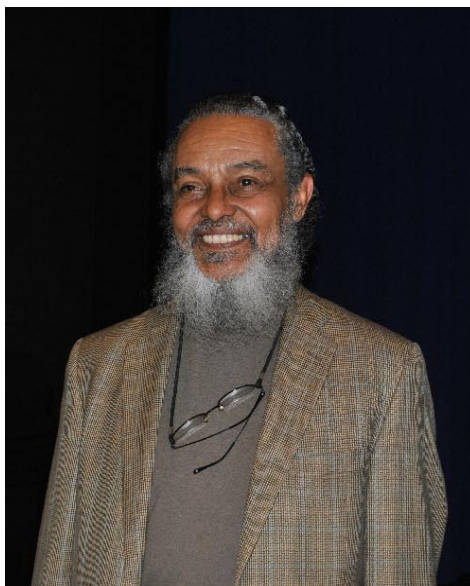
After the opening address, the students headed off to workshops hosted by both teachers and students. The wide range of workshops, from "The Last Days of King" to "The Vagina Monologues," were designed to focus on identity and the diversity of the CA community. "It was interesting how boys and girls thought different from each other and asked different questions," said Halsey Hutchinson '13, who attended "The Gender Maze".

Some students chose to participate in various service trips, which allowed them to partake in the process of improving different communities. Sid Assawaworrarit '10, who attended Horace Mann School for

the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, said it would have been sad if he was not able to be on the service trip that day. "These kids, although they lost one of their senses, were very creative," said Sid, "and interpreters working there were very committed. I am glad that there was such a variety of helping hands."

Despite the overall success of the MLK day, some students were not glad that the traditional "culture circle" had strayed from its usual focus and scope. Christine Wu '11 and Lena Lax '11 both attended the "culture circle" workshop and said the outcome was unsatisfactory. "The past culture circles provided us with a safe zone, and usually gave incentive for GSA members to 'come out'," said Lena. "The questions were based on experiences, not who you are as an individual." "Also, the limited participation did not provide the safe system required, which made students feel vulnerable," Christine Wu '11 added on.

Most students wanted the return of the "big cultural circle". Rachel Carr '10 remarked, "It seemed more communal as the whole school. This is the only time the whole school gets together and looks at each other." Anna Bang '11 said, "I feel like having a small group of people did not help us to challenge the assumptions or stereotypes that we have about each other." Whether or not the all-school culture circle will make a return remains unknown.



Keynote Speaker Byron Rushing.
Photo Courtesy of Emma Starr '12



CA History Teacher Peter Sun Leads a Discussion
Photo Courtesy of the CA Website



The faces of MLK Day 2010. Photos Courtesy of the CA Website.

Coming Full Circle

by Daphne Kim '10

"What?" was the first word I said in disbelief when back in December someone told me that there would be no all-school culture circle this year at MLK day. I had looked forward to finishing my last MLK day at CA with a sense of support among everyone that I love. More specifically, I had been excited about the idea of coming out. I was sick of trying to slip in my bisexuality into conversations, correcting people when they assume otherwise, et cetera, et cetera. I had looked forward to the day – my last MLK day at CA – where I could share a part of myself with the school that I love, with no more awkward explanations or silly excuses.

Later, someone else clarified to me that the culture circle was not entirely gone but offered in an optional workshop, capped at fifty, rather than a mandatory all-school activity. Questions involving sexual orientation, cancer, alcoholism and other "intense" issues were to be taken out.

I could not help but feel something had been taken away from me, the incredible connection and solidarity that I felt with hundreds of other people as I stood in the gym with them. Upset, I spoke to members of the Community & Equity team to try and understand the reasons behind the changes. They informed me that students had visited counseling services because of the culture circle. Some students came out in the culture circle and later realized that they were not ready to deal with the consequences of being "out"; some students were not ready to come out, and felt dishonest and guilty after "lying" in the culture circle.

Apparently, I wasn't the only one feeling emotional by the change. I talked to my friends involved in the Gay/Straight Alliance who felt that the change took away something important from CA's LGBT community. Others said that they loved the culture circle and it would be impossible to get rid of or change something every time someone got hurt by it. I felt myself more and more stirred up after every heated lunchtable debate, and I wrote a very long email when Jen Cardillo emailed the GSA conference to ask for opinions about the change.

For me, the original culture circle engendered in students a sense of responsibility and self-representation. When one chooses to step into the circle, one is sharing a fact about oneself without apology or clarification. It is not meant to be a moment of exploration or experiment, but rather definition and decision. If students wish to come out, in the culture circle or outside, they need to realize that they may encounter feedback, positive or negative. That is a personal journey like many other choices that a student must make. CA, even with its excellent support system for students, cannot take care of students in every aspect of their life. If someone feels dishonest about lying about their sexual orientation in the culture circle, that is not pain caused by the culture circle. That is called being in the closet. I believed that taking away the chance to come out from willing LGBTQ members did not solve the issues of those who were not ready to; it only silenced more people.

But my views became more complicated when I spoke directly to Jeff Desjarlais from counseling services. After listening to his experience advising the students that had been scarred by the culture circle, I remembered my own two years in the culture circle where I had lied. Sophomore year, there was no category for "questioning," and I claimed that I was heterosexual. Junior year, the "questioning" category appeared, and I stepped in, happy at the sight of so many people who were or had gone through the same experience. But I also had stepped in for "heterosexual" al-

though I knew that was not true. There was no question – of course, of course I would date a girl. I went through shame and guilt and confusion and a whirlwind of emotions because of what I had done that January day.

Finally, I truly empathized with why the change was made. I was glad that the C&E team spared some students of that pain; of course a school should care for students' safety, first and foremost. But did that solve everything? Without the all-school culture circle, there would still be suffering LGBTQ students. There would still be students struggling with personal history, family history. Plus, the culture circle served as discomfort that may prove beneficial. Because my feelings had been so stirred after the culture circle, I knew that my bisexuality was not a phase but a fundamental part of me that had been oppressed. I was angry, and slowly I realized I was so upset because I wanted to come out so badly. Representative Byron Rushing told us on MLK day to "be dangerous;" the biggest stigma around C&E programs is that they do not provoke people enough. The culture circle provoked people; the mere fact that changing its format caused dramatic discussions proves how successful a tradition it was.

I do not believe the changed format of the culture circle served as an effective replacement of the original one. I participated in one of the 50-person workshops, without the questions deemed "too intense". Neither the small number of people nor the lightness of the questions helped me feel solidarity or support. There were things about me that I wanted to share, share with people that I am not close enough to talk to on a regular basis. The follow-up discussion did not strengthen the connections we had made; in the original culture circle, the most powerful part had been the end, where hundreds of students and faculty would leave the gym in silence, having shared themselves in body and spirit. If there were whispers, if there were names floating around, they were voices of support and congratulation, not mockery. "I'm so happy for A, that was really brave of him." "I didn't know B was bi, but that's awesome."

For me, the struggle of those students cannot be blamed on the culture circle, but only on our society, where unfortunately, LGBT persons are discriminated against every day. We must blame the society where brutal hate crimes happen and people are forced to stay in the closet for their own safety. Perhaps even CA lacks support for those students – out students, not-ready-to-be-out students, questioning students, who need people to talk to. I remember being stuck and confused, especially as a freshman, on whom to confide in; I was fortunate enough to have a friend whose kindness and patience gave me the courage to accept my feelings as real. Others may not be. Others may need an older student or an adult who can offer seasoned advice.

Jeff Desjarlais and I finished our conversation with no clear conclusion other than that students need a safer place to come out, and that students need a stronger support system, especially from adults. I love the culture circle; I love the idea that an entire school can gather in one space and physically feel each other's presence, connect with each other in silence and acceptance. So, can we make the culture circle a safer place to come out – not even just for LGBTQ students, but for everyone who ever hesitated before deciding whether or not to share something personal in the circle? The burden should not be just on counseling services, the C&E team, the GSA, or a few individuals; the burden should be on all of us, trying every day to accept each other without requiring explanations, trying to empathize with each other before making assumptions.

TV Show Transforms CA Geeks to Gleeks

by Kate Nussenbaum '11

Fox's newest hit has all the ingredients of a failed TV show: stereotypical high school characters, painfully unrealistic relationship drama, all set in a school called "McKinley High" (Freaks and Geeks anyone?). But "Glee" has appealed to both the nation's and Concord Academy's hearts, or

come to life with hilarious bits of dialogue and downright heartwarming moments.

Take Finn in Quinn's bathroom for example. Finn is the leading male of both the Glee club and the football team, and Quinn is his pregnant cheerleader's girlfriend. Finn was over at Quinn's house for dinner, and was planning to inform her parents of their daughter's pregnancy. Anxious, he went to the



Photo Courtesy of Google Images

rather, their ears. Ryan Murphy's newest creation has evaded being the next show to get the axe with one simple ingredient: music.

Murphy has danced onto a truth so obvious, it's a wonder no other TV show stumbled upon it first. Broadway composers discovered long ago that a terrible plot could be forgiven if it was masked by fantastic music, and Murphy simply transferred this entertainment principle to the screen with one minor change. He knew that the show's target audience would not accept the spontaneous bursts into song that drive musicals, but instead developed a plot that would allow musical performances to intertwine logically into the show. The series centers around a high school Glee club, and thus its performances and rehearsals are the perfect venues for the characters to sing.

At least once a week during lunch, the conversation inevitably turns towards Glee. But never do discussions revolve around who is going to end up with who, or how tense it was when the club went to sectionals; instead students almost always break into song, giddily screaming "Don't Stop Believin'" or "Defying Gravity."

The music is the linchpin of the show, but as the Glee kids sing, the show is "rolling, rolling" due to more than its soundtrack.

The writing, while not as quick as "Gilmore Girls" or as playful as "30 Rock," manages to deliver the cringe-worthy plot painlessly. The writers seem to have tuned in to the fact that their audience is intelligent enough to appreciate a show that mocks itself. Thus the characters who piloted as boring stereotypes evolved into interesting stereotypes; the star of the club is still overbearing and obnoxious, the football player with a secret passion for singing is still sweetly oblivious, the gay soprano is still flamboyant, and the cheerleader's sidekick is still dumb as a rock. But the writers have managed to make these stereotypes

bathroom to call his friend for advice. "I gotta go," he said after quickly getting the reassurance he needed. "They'll think I'm pooping!"

Or take Brittany, the dumb cheerleader, during Glee Club rehearsal. "What's a ballad?" The teacher asks. "A male duck," she quickly responds, with the beautifully clueless expression that's permanently plastered on her face.

Even the gay character Kurt's coming out to his dad managed to pass over cliché and into heartwarming. Turns out his gruff, oafish father is a deeply loving parent after all.

Even while they didn't snag any golden globes themselves, the actors and actresses are what make the music and the writing shine. Two actresses in particular are almost as vital to the show as the music: Lea Michele and Jane Lynch. It's not surprising that Michele's voice sounds like that of a Broadway star; she is a Broadway star, most recently performing as the lead in the original Broadway cast of "Spring Awakening." She can sing anything from Rihanna to Charlie Chaplin, but is truly phenomenal when belting showtunes. She gives Idina Menzel and Barbara Streisand runs for their money with her renditions of "Defying Gravity" and "Don't Rain on My Parade."

On the flip side, Jane Lynch makes those purely dramatic moments of the show worth watching. She is the villainous rival of the Glee club, the head coach of the school's cheer squad, and the script awards her countless moments of biting dialogue. "You think this is hard? Try filling your own cavity, that's hard!" She snaps in the pilot. Her delivery of each line is perfect. She redefines what it means to "love to hate." And as she puts it, it's "delicious."

If Concord Academy has anything to say about it, Glee's Golden Globe win is just the beginning. Teachers and students alike gleefully gab about the series' magic, and bemoan the long wait for its April return.

Frosh Project Recap

by Stella Park '10

On January 23rd, the class of 2013 successfully carried out its first performing arts debut with Frosh Project 9. Written and directed by upperclassmen, the theme "Dynamic Duos" was played out using pairs ranging from Lewis and Clark to Mac and PC. As David R. Gammons says, each group took the theme slightly differently and came up with "entertaining spins." The participants expressed various thoughts and reflections, yet the common ground was that it was a valuable experience for everyone.

For the director Gammons, this Frosh Project was special in that, as a new experiment, students teched and performed all 13 of the 10-minute plays in one day. "While exhausting for the organizers," says Gammons, "this created a great sense of momentum and excitement for the evening's marathon of drama...the electricity in the room was crackling." To Gammons, the most important feature that made Frosh Project 9 successful was that, "each play managed to feature the talents of the whole cast, not just the central dynamic duo."

Bona Chang, a freshmen boarder who acted in the play Lewis and Clark: The Untold Story, talks about her first impression of Frosh Project and how it changed as she got more involved in the production: "It was pretty good! In the beginning though, I thought it was really boring because I felt like we were spending a lot of time doing nothing, but then things got better once we actually started writing our scripts and practicing...and that's when everything changed and I began to like the experience. Also, people in my group were pretty close to me, so I had more fun with it later on." Chang's experience illustrates that although some may have started off with hesitation in the beginning, Frosh Project quickly turned into an enjoyable activity through which their class bond started to take shape.

The class of 2013's Frosh Project took effort and time. Ashley Brock, one of the directors of the play that Chang was in, describes Frosh Project as "pretty eventful." She comments on how hard it was to finalize their script: "We had to write the script over and over again. Every time we met, it got changed. With the exception of the first couple of meetings, everyone started working to-

gether." Brock explains the additional stages: "My project got vetoed the first time, but then the second time David Gammons approved of it." Brock says that the play initially had some inappropriate jokes, such as changing Pocahontas' name into "Poca-hot-a**," which had to be taken out to keep the play rated "G." Despite all the difficulties, Brock is happy with how her play turned out. She says, "People said it was pretty funny at the end. It was a successful Frosh Project for all the trouble we went through. Well worth it."

Xiomara Contreras, another member of class of 2013, notes that Frosh Project was a good way to get to know others: "I got to meet new people, freshmen that I didn't get to hang out as much, and I also got to meet the upperclassmen." By being in Frosh Project, the freshmen class got a chance to get involved in the school, mingle with the older students, and introduce themselves officially as a class. All but six freshmen were involved in Frosh Project, which reflects a significant participation rate.

Frosh Project was also a good outlet of joy and goofiness within the school's serious atmosphere. Liza Comart, a senior and Frosh Project director, says, "My frosh were all willing to be really silly and ridiculous...putting gel in their hair or wearing a Christmas tree costume." In a school where many of us work and strive to our limits, and especially in a gloomy time of the year, something like Frosh Project is essential to keep our morale high. "I think it was really nice to get involved in CA that didn't have to be super serious," Comart elaborates, "And it was okay if things didn't go perfectly or smoothly, and we were able to have fun with it. I think that really showed in our play. It was just sort of goofy and our actors were trying not too hard, because they all knew that it was a very relaxed atmosphere... and I saw that in other plays, too."

In many ways, the class of 2013 Frosh Project was a great accomplishment. Gammons points out that "Frosh Project 9 celebrated Concord Academy's unique sense of humor, wacky individualism, and tremendous spirit of community." Some of our school's inside jokes such as the "dip snap" were frequent themes and brought out laughter and cheers. "I think I'll remember it," says Contreras, "senior year, I'll be funny and be like, I was stupid when I was a freshman."



Photo Courtesy of David R. Gammons

please recycle
the centipede



January Athletics Highlights

by Ryan Hussey '13

CA winter sports teams are off to a promising start. One of the most exciting moments for the squash team was their game against Portsmouth Abbey. Portsmouth teams are always competitive, so CA's squad was particularly excited to face talented opponents. In the heat of the battle Johanna Douglas '10 was locked on the squash court for over an hour. After playing several consecutive games (parts of a full squash match) without any water breaks, she was saved by a locksmith who had to remove the door handle. The team won by a sweeping final score of 5-2. Charlotte Weiner '13 said, "... everyone on the team played great games, and we had some really exciting victories... it was great to see how all the individual members of the team came together." The girls squash team rode its momentum to wins against Dana Hall (5-2) and St. Marks (6-1).

The alpine ski racing team has also

been dominating the competition this season. The team is undefeated in races through January 22. Many newcomers have been placing along with veteran team members. The boy's team skied especially well in the January 22 slalom race. Stephen Sarno '11 had the fastest individual time by over two seconds, a large margin of victory in the sport. Coach John McGarry said, "[Sarno] obliterated the field by more than two seconds for the commanding victory." Peter Benson '11 was a close third, and Peter James '12 took fourth. On the girls' side, every racer earned a place, led by Hadley Allen '12. Allen skied to a third place finish, with Captain Alexandra Urban '10 a close fourth. Several other teams have celebrated early successes. After being demoted to club status, boy's squash has compiled a record of 3-1 through January 27. Captain Walker Nordin '10 says, "Although we no longer attain the illustrious 'varsity' status, the team has been having one of its best seasons yet."

A Classic Tradition

by Nick Phillips '11

On New Year's Day, 38,122 fans packed into Fenway Park, ready for an exciting game in Boston's favorite ballpark. But the match up did not include the Boston Red Sox, or any other baseball team. The diamond had been transformed into a hockey rink, specially prepared for the 2010 NHL Winter Classic.

For decades, Americans have celebrated winter holidays with family, friends, food, and football. The NFL plays two games each Thanksgiving, and many high schools play their football archrivals in an annual "Turkey Game." New Years belongs to College Football; the Rose Bowl headlines a plethora of exciting competitions. In recent years, other major sports have tried showcasing their games on holidays. For several years, the NBA has promoted its Christmas Day matchups. The more interesting addition came just over three years ago, when the NHL announced its first Winter Classic.

Unlike the NBA's Christmas contests, the Winter Classic is more than an NHL game that happens to be played on January 1. The league collaborates with an MLB or NFL franchise to build a unique, outdoor ice rink. The first Classic was played in upstate New York at the Buffalo Bills football stadium, between Buffalo in Pittsburgh. Wrigley Field, legendary home of the Chicago Cubs, hosted the 2009 game between Chicago and Detroit. For 2010, the league chose Fenway Park to stage a matchup between two old rivals – the Boston Bruins and the Philadelphia Flyers.

In 2004-05, a lockout shut down the NHL for a season, as players and league officials squabbled over player salaries. The league returned to action in 2005-06, revamped rules to create a faster, more exciting style of play. They hoped more fans would buy seats and watch games on TV, boosting the league's revenue. Four years later, the changes appear to have worked, but the "New NHL" has its critics. While league finances are important, many say that the NHL has become too far removed from the roots of its game. Many of the league's stars did not grow up playing for elite club teams with private arenas, or even in loosely organized



Photo Courtesy of Google Images

youth leagues. The majority began playing hockey on frozen ponds or backyard rinks.

The Winter Classic was created to showcase hockey as it was originally played – on a frozen rink in the bitter cold. The 2010 game did not disappoint. Two of the league's oldest and most storied franchises converged in America's most historic ballpark for the afternoon's contest. With the temperature below freezing, players warmed up in winter hats while fans threw snowballs in the stands. Both teams played with high intensity from the start, leading to a scoreless first period. At 4:42 into the second period, the Flyers netted the game's first goal. For 33 more minutes, the squads skated in deadlock, leaving the score at 1-0. Miraculously, with just over

two minutes remaining in regulation time, Mark Recchi tipped a beautiful shot past Philadelphia goalie Michael Leighton. Neither team scored in the final minutes, sending the

game into sudden death overtime. The Flyers barely missed a quality scoring chance in the first minute that was turned away by Bruins goaltender Tim Thomas. On the very next play, Patrice Bergeron brought the puck up ice and flipped a soft wrist shot on goal. Marco Sturm rushed to the net for a tip-in score to win the game. Fenway Park erupted in the wild cheering that used to shake the original Boston Garden back when the Bruins ruled the NHL with the likes of Bobby Orr and Cam Neely.

While the Winter Classic is still obscure compared to the century-old Rose Bowl, it is sure to become another beloved American tradition. The Classic is an exciting, new setting for young players, and brings back nostalgia for older fans that grew up playing on frozen ponds in their younger years. Already, cities are lining up to host the 2011 game. New York hopes to freeze over Yankee Stadium, perhaps only to keep pace with their Bostonian rivals. Minnesota has some of the most dedicated hockey fans in the nation, and wants to hold the Classic at Target Field, home of the Minnesota Twins. The NHL's Canadian teams expressed desire to play a Classic across the border in 2011. Whichever venue is selected, the game is sure to be an instant classic.

Wrestling 101

by Dan Mansuri '11

Most people in the CA community have some vague knowledge of "that room off the SHAC classroom," but few have ventured inside, and even fewer understand the sport played within. Wrestling is a sport of pure competition, one man vs. one man. Today, many people misunderstand wrestling because of its distortion in leagues like WWE and UFC. In high school, the sport is still played in the pure form that has existed for centuries.

Ever since the dawn of man, man has wrestled. In its most primitive form, wrestling is a sport to show dominance and power over a fellow competitor. Early humans fought endlessly for authority over food and reproduction. Over time, wrestling has become the quintessential sport of pure struggle – the only thing stopping your opponent is you: your willpower, your strength, your determination. Winning a wrestling match is a display of brute force and power that, throughout history, has been synonymous with a man's personal worth.

Wrestling has played a part in mythology ever since people could first begin to tell stories. In ancient Greek mythology, during the ascension of Zeus and the overthrowing of the titans, the conflict culminated in a wrestling match between Zeus and Cronos for the right to lord over the universe. Genesis, the first Book of the Bible, tells the story of Jacob wrestling a mysterious figure in the night. The next morning, an angel tells Jacob, "You have wrestled with God and with men, and have prevailed." For this, Jacob is given a new name, Israel.

For a contest with so much historical weight, the rules are fairly simple. The goal of wrestling is to get the opposing wrestler's shoulder blades on the mat. Every move that a wrestler makes is in pursuit of this "pin." There are three two-minute periods in a

match. In the first period, both wrestlers start from a neutral position: standing up and facing one another. The wrestlers grapple and jockey for good position. When one wrestler gets a good hold, they will try to take down the other person. Take downs are awarded with two point. From there, the "top" wrestler, who just scored a take down, attempts to push his opponent onto his back. The bottom man, who was just taken down, fights to get off the mat and return to neutral, which earns him one point. If the bottom man can



Photo Courtesy of Dan Sanford

"switch," and flip the top man onto his back, he earns three points. If he manages a pin, forcing his opponent's shoulder blades to the mat, the top wrestler immediately earns the victory, regardless of the time or period.

But none of these rules really penetrate the wrestler's psyche as he walks onto the mat. The rational, intellectual, and reasoning aspects of your mind leave you. The wrestler is left with his perception, reaction, and above all, primal instinct. Pain is a necessary evil for wrestlers, but it must be ignored for a successful performance. Alex Milona '11 says, "wrestling is the art of pain and control."

The CA wrestling team is excelling this year under the coaching of Matt Bloom, who is undoubtedly the most intimidating member of the squad. Senior captains Dylan Awalt-Conley, David Do, and Jeremy Owades have helped the team's eight new wrestlers settle into the sport and make considerable progress in their first year with playing the sport. Under their careful guidance, the team has made significant strides, and excelled in its matches. Recently, the team lost a match to Middlesex by two points, but would have won had it not been forced to forfeit because of weight class restrictions. They beat Chapel Hill handily, and defeated Landmark, a team that beat CA last season. The team is quite likely the hardest working on campus, and their perseverance is already paying dividends.

CA's College Jocks

by Josh Suneby '11

Who says CA kids aren't athletic? The class of 2009 alone boasts seven athletes playing intercollegiate sports in their freshman year. Four are playing the sport they played at CA, but two are rowing crew, a sport that is not offered here at CA. Hannah Kaemmer, Jake Dockterman and Bonnie Cao are playing squash at Williams, Harvard, and Bowdoin, respectively; Eric Benvenuti is playing basketball at Hamilton. Jen Lamy is rowing at Wellesley, Eric Edelstein at Dartmouth.

Before college, these athletes had varied experiences in sports. For Lamy, crew is the first athletic team she has participated in. Edelstein, on the other hand, was a co-captain of CA's cross-country and tennis teams. Benvenuti was the only official recruit, but Cao and Kaemmer both had contact with coaches during the college application process. Dockterman, Lamy, and Edelstein were all walk-ons.

All the athletes agreed that the greatest distinction between Concord and College

sports is the intensity. The level of play is higher, and the commitment is greater, but they agreed that the energy and effort required by college teams was the most marked difference. They spoke about practices starting weeks before vacation is over, year round training programs, and grueling workouts. Lamy wakes up at 4:15 each morning for practice, but still says, "Deciding to row was one of the best decisions I've made... I really can't complain." Edelstein puts it more bluntly: "We're meant to experience the maximum amount of pain we can every day." Cao says that her coach assumes that his players will make a serious commitment to squash. She says, "the coach has higher expectations... the players have to take responsibility for their own performance in the drills and games." Kaemmer has a more balanced view, saying "playing a sport is a serious commitment, but it's not like selling your soul." Institutional support is another difference between sports at CA and at college. Dockterman says, "More money, attention, pride, and time

Continued on page 8...

Snowskating: The Story of a Unique Community

by Scott Berkley '12

His face set with steely determination, Tim Chamberlin pushes off down the icy slope. His green jacket contrasts against the white snow as he gains speed and launches off a jump. With balance and precision, he lands lightly on a rail, his black snowskate perpendicular to the ice-coated feature. Now is the moment of decision. He could lose his balance and composure and smack hard into the snow in defeat. But instead, he flips his board up and off the rail, schussing down the remaining snow slope with grace, jumping away from his board's edge. A cheer rises from the crowd perched at the top of the hill.

"Pulling off tricks, it's just the best feeling," Tim comments later, cheeks still flushed with pride on this early January day. Indeed, he seems to have mastered the delicate and popular art of snowskating, which combines the jumps, tricks, and terrain-park features of snowboarding with the balance of skateboarding. The snowskate itself is an odd piece of equipment, slightly like a skateboard deck with a ski on the bottom. Quinn Sweeny, a similarly inclined sophomore who spends a few hours each day honing his skills on the hill down to the Upper Field, says of Tim, "[He's] the B+ team, and all of us here are the B team." Tim pulls off trick after trick, sailing effortlessly into the runout zone

and stopping in the deep crust of the field.

But snowskating is more than just free-period entertainment, more than just an on-campus substitute for snowboarding, and more than just an off-season diversion for those who might longboard in the warmer months. In fact, all of the participants are bonded in a deeper way than might otherwise be expected of a group of CA students. When asked his favorite part of snowskating, Tyler Baldwin responded, "I love how snowskating brings people together...I feel accepted here."

Just minutes before, Tyler took his turn on the communal snowskate (originally manufactured by Burton Snowboards and bought by Hadley Allen) only to crash down on the icy, snowless

section directly following the rail's end.

Obviously, flashy tricks and recognition are not as important to Tyler as feeling like a part of this small but dedicated community. But his is not an isolated case; other participants echoed the sentiment. Quinn named his favorite part of snowskating as "the cheering after someone falls." And Tim, in a burst of universal love brought on by stomping yet another run, stated, "I like you" to no one in particular. Indeed, although these kids might be intensely longboarding or intensely studying in the warmer months, they are brought together by a love of shredding New England ice, exhilarating jumps, and a strange sort of winter skateboard.



The Snowskate. Photo Courtesy of heather.unit-e.com

Top Ten Ways to Beat the February Blues

by Kate Nussenbaum '11

1. Fleece. Fleece is the best, whether it be fleece pants or a cuddly snuggie. It's soft and it keeps you super warm. Note: wearing fleece pants underneath a snuggie may cause overheating.

2. Celebrate February 15. What is special about this day you ask? It's the day after Valentine's day. Why is that day so great? Answer: Stores decide, "oh, Valentine's day is over, candy must not taste good anymore." False. Candy still tastes good and it goes on sale, so it tastes extra good. Plus, buying your crush a box of chocolate the day after Valentine's day is the perfect way to make a subtle statement. It says "I like you, but not enough to buy you full-priced candy, so I'm still kind of hard to get if you're into that."

3. Get psyched for Museum Day! I am not totally sure what Museum day is because it only happens once every four years - clue number one that it is special. But here is what I do know. Everyone gets to miss a class, and see a cool museum. Win-win.

4. Participate in the Green Cup Challenge! You may not actually find this fun, but even if turning off lights does not invoke the kind of euphoria you were hoping for, you can take pride in the fact that you are helping to save power.

5. Smartwool socks. Smartwool socks have just enough wool to keep you warm, and just enough synthetic fabrics to not be itchy. Sometimes during class, I look down at my

feet and say, "I am so glad I wore Smartwool socks today. My feet are so warm." I encourage you to share this fantastic experience. Note: Do not actually speak aloud to your feet. Comments should be made in your head only.

6. Go see Bat Boy! What could be better than a black comedy about a half-boy half-bat set to great music? Answer: Nothing (except maybe smartwool socks.) Go see it.

7. Think of how much you are learning throughout one month of continuous school. Pause in the middle of February and make a list of everything you know that you didn't know at the beginning of the month. Though your friends may mercilessly mock you for such a plunge into nerdhood, remember that learning is cool and in February, you are doing a lot of it.

8. Get excited for Groundhog Day on February 2. I do not really understand Groundhog Day. Why we let a groundhog determine the start of spring is beyond the scope of my knowledge* *Not anymore, thanks Wikipedia. But regardless of the holiday's roots or implications, the opportunity to watch a furry rodent on TV should be relished.

9. Watch the super bowl! If you like football, then this one is a no-brainer. If you don't like football, like 98% of CA's population (sorry football club), then enjoy the excuse to stuff your face with chili and watch good commercials.

10. Remember that February is National Pet Dental Health Month. Can you say great theme party?

Concord's College Athletes, Continued from page 7

explains that money plays a role as well: "The Dartmouth Rowing Club pulls in several million a year in Alumni contributions."

The athletes offer a range of advice to CA kids about athletics in the college application process. "The earlier you start talking to the coach, the better," explains Cao. Kaemmer expands on the benefits of early connections, saying, "Talking to coaches really helped me understand the role of sports and the teams at the different

type of schools I looked at." Benvenuti recommends diligent preparation: "Hit the weights. Hard. Don't think because you're an All-Star in the EIL means you will be an all-star on your Division III team." Jen, who never played team sports at CA, encourages all current and former CA students to consider college sports. "There aren't many reasons not to get involved in athletics in some way. Being on a team has given me some of the closest friends I've ever had."

Outliers, Continued from page 1

Office, Alison Tomlin found particularly relevant lessons about success and opportunity *Outliers*. "It's made me more cognizant of making sure I do what I can to help students find unique opportunities and take advantage of them." She explained the chapter about the opportunities several famous computer programmers found that enabled their success reinforced her belief in life-changing experiences. "Whether it's helping a student go visit a college that they are not really sure they like, or encouraging a student to apply for a scholarship, you never know what seemingly small opportunity is going to change someone's life," she says.

Not all faculty members found Gladwell's words meaningful throughout the fall semester. When I mentioned *Outliers* to Deanna Douglas and Stephanie Manzella, both emitted a sound like a cat hacking up a hairball.

"I hated it," Douglas said.

"I hated it too," Manzella agreed.

"He took one idea and repeated it ad nauseum," Douglas said.

"He would make one large claim based on one piece of anecdotal evidence," Manzella added, citing his theory about the natural advantage given to hockey players with birth-

days early in the year. "He used one team!"

Douglas's list of complaints grew. "And it was sexist, every example was male, with the exception of his mother."

"Oh and Cleopatra," Manzella added, though the additional example did nothing to quell her dislike. "There's no acknowledgement of hard-working women. There's no acknowledgement that men are expected to succeed and provide and therefore resources are put behind them."

Manzella did locate a lesson within the book, though probably not the one Gladwell was hoping she would find. "I thought it related to the C&E team in that it raised a lot of issues about stereotypes and how you can package one. The whole thing about Asians being hard-working because they come from rice-growing cultures bothered me. He didn't even acknowledge that Chinese people don't grow rice everywhere, they grow wheat!"

Perhaps Douglas and Manzella will be happier with the book choice next summer, when faculty members once again embark on a shared reading experience that will hopefully reinforce the value of their own work and reward them with a new perspective.

Did You Know?

Collected by Charlotte Weiner '13

Tyler Rost '13 is a certified radio DJ?

Librarian Martha Kennedy has climbed all 48 peaks over 4,000 feet in New Hampshire?

Jack Moldave '11 used to have blonde hair when he grew up in California?

Language teacher Sarah Gore learned to ride a bicycle after her children?

Yong Murray '13 played Liszt's Consolation No. 6 at Carnegie Hall when he was 11 years old?

Erinn Geyer '12 climbed the 14,179-foot Mt. Shasta over the summer?

Math teacher Tim Seston is a children's entertainer who spends time outside of CA telling stories at libraries, schools, museums, and at birthday parties?

Gap Year: Worth It?

by Katie Simon '10

Since I was seven years old, I have known that at some point around the conclusion of high school and the beginning of college, I wanted to take time off from the "real world" and do something a little crazy. After travelling around the world with my family in second grade, I dreamed about doing it again, but on my own. As I grew up, I became familiar with the concept of a "gap year," and realized that I would probably take one to travel after my senior year of high school. But as my high school career concludes, I came to realize that while the concept of a gap year has been entrenched in my mind for over a decade, my peers might have different perceptions of the concept. Was a gap year just for me, or did my classmates have similar plans? I started asking around, and while there were varied opinions about the role of a gap year, what type of person takes one, and how somebody can look into the option, I came to a few conclusions about gap years in relation to CA.

Several students, while unsure of their personal plans, recognized the benefits of taking a gap year. "I've been in the formal education system for the past thirteen years and almost everybody I know just goes middle school, high school, college. It's sort of an expectation of society. The experience you get in a gap year could be more valuable than what you get in a classroom," said Jeremy Owades '10. Other students cited burnout, a desire to try something new or to pursue a passion, as factors in gap year decisions. Johanna Douglas '10, on the other hand, decided that a gap year was not the best choice for

her. "I know where I want to take my future and I feel that gap years are more for if you need to discover something about yourself."

From going to school in France for a year to recording an album to volunteering in Haiti, CA seniors presented a variety of potential gap year plans when asked. But many of them pointed out that while they knew they could ask their college counselors about gap year options, gap years were not often brought up in conversations. Jeremy Owades elaborated: "It's a surprise that CA advertises semester away programs so much sophomore year, and I haven't been presented with any gap year programs." Several students I talked to felt sure that they wanted to go directly to college, but many of these students also admitted that they had not researched or been exposed to many gap year options.

While there are still several months left to think about post-CA plans, I feel that awareness of gap year options could only help students plan their academic and professional futures. Friends and acquaintances of mine who have taken gap years are quick to list the positive impacts of their experiences on their lives. Gap years can provide a break from the traditional routine, allowing individuals to reflect on their desired path and select a future profession or lifestyle that best suits their needs and goals. While they can serve as deserved breaks from intense academic and extracurricular commitments, by looking into a gap year as an active option rather than a lack of plans, would-be college students can explore their interests and build toward their futures. I don't believe that gap years are for everybody, but personally, I am planning for the next few years with an open mind.

The Legend of "Senior Spring"

by Dee Smith '10

First semester of senior year was a whirlwind of writing papers, doing projects, and of course, applying to college. When we weren't reading books for history, we filled out applications and scheduled college interviews. There were many points throughout the semester during which it was impossible not to hear someone talk about the college process both inside and outside of class, especially during those dreaded crunch weeks. As one might guess, it is tough trying to juggle everything at once. But, with a lot of support from the college counseling office and my family, I got through it. Having understanding teachers who were willing to push back due dates and give extensions when needed was useful as well. It helped for those who wanted to do their best on both their college essays and their academics. As a senior, I appreciated their generosity and worked

hard to make sure it did not seem unwarranted, completing my assignments in a way that showed my willingness to do well in the class.

As winter break brought the semester to a close, I was excited to finally relax and spend some much needed time with the family and I did just that...at least for the first week. I realized that I still had some college applications to finish and a few calls to make. It was not the way I envisioned I would spend the rest of my break, but I figured it would be worth it come second semester. So I finished

that last application, hung out with my family and hometown friends, then headed back to CA with weight lifted off my shoulders. I had gotten past the obstacle that was college and was heading toward what I thought was the legendary 'senior spring.' Little did I know that the legend was only half true.

Now in the second semester of my senior year, I see that I do, in fact, have work that needs to be done. Finishing my college applications did not mean finishing the school year. I learned this lesson the first week back and since have taken the necessary steps to recalibrate my brain to focus on school. After talking with various seniors,

I found that others have had the same experience. Even so, many agree that this semester is much easier to deal with than the previous. Already having met most of the school requirements for course credits, many seniors were able to choose classes that they were truly interested in,

which makes for a real "love of learning."

With the stress of applying to college gone from the minds of Concord Academy seniors, we can now focus on the anticipation of warm days and senior privileges. Seniors can be excited for the real 'senior spring,' in which we can break out our shorts and lawn chairs, and listen to music on the quad or at Walden Pond. All the blood, sweat, and tears the class of 2010 has had these past four years have finally paid off, and we're all too ready to celebrate.



Photo Courtesy of Alison Merrill '09

Thoreau's Retort

by Sandy Stott

*Dear Emily,
You misapprehend me.*

Your recent letter to the fine student publication at the academy that bears forward both the name of my brother's and my first school and some of my ideals for an uncommon education wraps the body of my reputation in the same tired chains of complaint: Henry was no hermit; Henry went to town for dinner; Henry was misanthropic; in short, Henry was a hypocrite.

A few thoughts from the beyond: My time at Walden was cast, both in practice and in writing, as an experiment in living, not, as you imply, in retreat from it. My hope, common enough, was to understand the

necessities of life and prune away the superfluous; in that way I hoped to awaken myself to life's fullness, to its reality, and I hoped that my example might incite questions from my town's citizens and my kinfolk, who seemed to me enslaved by the tired routine

of their lives as farmers and merchants -- round after round of what some of you call the "same old same old." I also cast myself as Chanticleer precisely because he lived in the "barnyard," near neighbor to the woods.

You cite, as counterexample, the estimable Henry James, who also, if I recall correctly from this great distance, left home to discover himself, albeit in the thickets of European society. In your letter you draw comparison between me and some of my fellow transcendentalists and Mr. James: "They were rural and spiritual; he was urban and materialistic. They were committed to being deliberate Americans; he passionately expatriated himself." A query: how has the urban and materialistic focus worked out? Have people reached finally some contentment in their material lives? Have they found that they no longer labor under a mistake in

their drive to acquire more material goods, more square footage? And then there is the idea of "passionately expatriat[ing] himself." Here, I think, we agree. If home doesn't suit, find one that does; reimagine yourself and your relations; become, perhaps, a one-person revolution. It does, however, strike me that one sets out on this course of discovery as an individual, that faith in the seed of self is not misplaced, whereas faith in the wisdom and entertainment of society seems a grim predictor of the commonplace.

I hope my letter eases some of the color of choler that made you write, "I'm still livid about the fact that Thoreau doesn't mention in Walden that his sparse woodland diet was supplemented by dinners at the tables of friends... He did need his social world, and he was dependent on others." Livid?

Calm thyself. Of course I dined some in town -- I was invited; I acknowledge my dependence on others in pursuit of my independence. Early in my book, I wrote, "It is difficult to begin without borrowing, but perhaps it

is the most generous course thus to permit your fellow men to have an interest in your enterprise."

Yes, I went to the woods to live deliberately, at a little distance from the hub and bub of town, but I also went there so that I could see clearly the value and infinite extent of my relations. I went to escape the poverty of days driven by social routine, and at the pond (which from my vantage point still gazes back as earth's eye) I found the smile in a pine and the laughter of a loon. My family, my society, grew larger there not smaller.

A final thought about your final thought: "The New Englanders may always irritate me, but I guess I will always be one of them." Welcome Home.

Yours in eternity,

David (you can call

What is Interfaith Club?

by Charlotte Kugler '10

I have been one of the co-heads of CA's Interfaith Forum since last year. We don't meet very regularly, but when we do meet, about a dozen people show up and we discuss our individual spiritualities and world religions in general. Some of the regular participants in the group are Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, atheistic, agnostic, and pantheistic.

I have found that I fit into the Interfaith group better than I would in some of the other clubs because the people who attend are similar to me -- meaning not that they share my beliefs, but that they enjoy having philosophical discussions and sharing their thoughts. While not all clubs at CA have as strong an intellectual orientation, this club attracts other students who, like me, are looking to learn more about themselves and others, and to connect with each other in a substantive way.

The discussions we have tend not to be very structured in nature. Usually one of the co-heads (myself, Ben Weissmann '10, or Bronwyn Murray-Bozeman '10) will pose a question about a general aspect of religion. From there, each person's response to that broader topic will be more specific and reflective of their own beliefs. In this group, there

is never a right or wrong response, and the only tension between participants that I have observed has always been playful and light-hearted rather than inimical. If portrayed visually, our discussions would often look like a tree -- we start with a central question or topic and from there, we branch off into related areas and varying viewpoints, yet all are usually connected to the theme of the meeting.

One of the themes that often surfaces is that of the necessity for mutual respect between followers of different spiritualities or lack of spirituality. I believe that an individual's belief system, and the evolution of that belief system through questioning, learning, and life experience, is the most uniquely appropriate worldview for that individual, and not necessarily for someone else. Therefore I value the willingness displayed by Interfaith Forum participants to share and understand many points of view.

I think that groups like the Interfaith Forum at CA allow students to learn through conversations with each other about the variety of people's beliefs, and more about what they believe as well. In this and in similar ways, students will approach adulthood with a peaceful and interested, instead of confrontational, attitude towards theological issues and views in the world.

The Centipede

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Youth in Philanthropy: Doing Research to Do Good

by Esme Valette '12

A few years ago, an anonymous donor endowed a \$10,000 fund to every school in Concord in support of the Youth in Philanthropy program. This donated money, as well as another \$1,000 raised by the members of Youth in Philanthropy (YIP) at each school, provides the funding for each program. So what exactly is YIP? It's a CA program devoted to teaching its members about philanthropy by showing them how to work as a team to identify and to fund worthy beneficiaries. Throughout the year, the YIP student members collectively decide upon a single nonprofit organization in the Metro-West area to fund. Having to make this decision is a very large responsibility, especially for high school students. Even though many nonprofit organizations are trustworthy and devoted to worthy causes, it is a tough choice for YIP members to select the winning group.

During the five months preceding YIP's big decision, the members meet every week to absorb and discuss the basics of philanthropy. This conversation gives students an understanding that helps guide them in their efforts and decision making process. By May, the student members will have learned how to read and fulfill grants, how to read budgets of nonprofit organizations, and how specific nonprofit organizations in the Metro-West area work.

During the beginning of the process the students cut down the eight to ten grants they initially received to approximately four final organization options. After they have thoroughly read the grant proposals the students visit the four potential organizations and verify the claims the organization has made in their grant proposals. Elizabeth Bedell, head of the English department and

CASA faculty advisor, is leading YIP this year. She explained, "the process of deciding who gets the grants is one that is long and hard, because it's awarded by consensus, not by vote. That means people talk through both their intuitive and unconscious criteria and their logical ones, sometimes unearthing more assumptions in the discussion."

Though this program is one devoted to learning how to help others and community service, this year the Youth in Philanthropy program isn't as popular as in past years; only six students signed up. One possible reason for this lack of participation could be the differing schedule from last year's program. This year the program runs in two time slots instead of one, making it more difficult for people to fit into their schedules. The low attendance is certainly not a result of a lack of a satisfying and interesting program offered by YIP, however. Ally Chung '12, one of youth in philanthropy's members, points out that YIP offers her something hard to find as a boarder: the opportunity to get involved in community service. As an international student striving to support local charities, this course provides a great opportunity for her. Erinn Geyer '11, another YIP member, saw this program as an opportunity "to learn how to work as a team and to give money to a different deserving organizations." Erinn went on to describe a long list of things she has already learned from YIP. For example, the group has already started to explore many of the problems in our area, such as homelessness and a lack of education. Like Ally and Erinn, many CA students are eager to find ways to efficiently and effectively help others. Youth in Philanthropy offers CA students a chance to develop and express their philanthropic sides, as they look beyond themselves to reach out to those in need.

Happy Days

by Kate Nussenbaum '11

A couple of weeks ago, I was sitting in the upper Stu-Fac when Morgan Mead walked by, brownie in hand, and a smile on his face. "I just think it's incredible," he said, "that every day after school there is a plate of brownies out and anyone who wants can just take one!"

Sometimes being happy with CA feels like wearing Crocs if you are over the age of 10 – socially unacceptable. And while February is one of the hardest months in which to appreciate CA, a growing disenchantment with the school seems to have pervaded the minds of all upperclassmen during the other months of the year as well.

CA is not perfect. Everyone has experienced one of those moments, or one of those days, when CA seems like the worst possible place to be.

"I have two tests tomorrow and kitchen duty tonight."

"Ring begs are going to suck. Stupid hazing rules."

"All my friends got DC'ed, the administration needs to chill out."

"My love life is the pits."

These problems are real, and they are not insignificant. We kvetch and we moan, providing ourselves with a sense of communal suffering, and often, that sense of community is quite therapeutic.

But these moments of misery can blind us to all the positive aspects of our school. We are grading CA on an unreasonable curve we engrain in each other's minds. "Great school,"

we might write in our comments. "A few places need improvements. Overall grade: D."

Here is a confession: I am completely infatuated with this school. Though sometimes I feel like a bit of a black sheep, it's worth it, because my love of CA makes me happy to go to school every day. It's not wrong to imagine an ideal school and constantly hope that our qualms will one day find a resolution. But if you remember that the vast majority of the time, CA is a pretty gosh-darn incredible school to attend, perhaps you too will face February with excitement rather than dread.

Think like Morgan Mead. Remember that plate of brownies does not appear at every school. Think about the free candy sprinkled throughout the school. (Freshmen, take note: It's not just in David Rost's office.) Think about the raw honesty of chapels, think about the freedom we have to leave campus, think about Jamie Morris-Kliment volunteering to get pied in the face. Think about how easy it is to just email your teacher when you have a problem. Think about the humor that seeps into every announcement, every class, every conversation. Think about the fact that every day you get to go to a place where people actually want to learn, where the concept of disruptive behavior destroying a class does not exist, and where compassion and respect are so present that they are taken for granted.

Add this major assignment to your February calendar: find something about CA that makes you happy, even if it is as small as the daily plate of free brownies.

Come See Bat Boy!

by Walker Nordin '10

This winter, Concord Academy Theater took a departure from the ordinary. Although the fall mainstage production, Macbeth, followed a more traditional Shakespearean plotline, the winter will bear witness to a more novel production. Bat Boy, a whimsical yet touching musical based on a book by Keythe Farley and Brian Flemming, will steal the stage. The premise is quite as strange and exciting as it sounds. A description posted on CA General last year reads, "When a half-bat, half-boy is discovered in a cave in Hope Falls, West Virginia, the town is thrown into upheaval as it confronts what it cannot easily understand. Bat Boy: The Musical transcends its campy premise and evolves into a touching parable about forgiveness and acceptance." The cast, led by James Wyrwicz '12, Aliza Rosen '10,

Andrew Murray '11, and Grace Blewer '11, promises a spectacular and graphically gripping performance that will bring audiences to both gleeful hysterics and gushing tears. Opens February 19-20, tickets on sale soon!

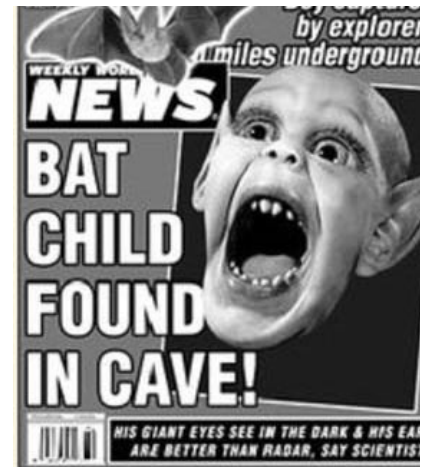


Photo Courtesy of Google Images

HELP ME RHONDA!

The Centipede's new advice column

Q: I have started to really like this girl, but I used to date one of her best friends. I really want to tell her how I feel, but I am not sure if this is a good idea. HELP ME RHONDA!

A: Even if she likes you, if it is one of her best friends there's most likely no chance she would sacrifice that relationship for you. It is probably hard for you, but it would be worse if you put her in the position where she would have to choose between you. You can always talk to your ex about it if it is that important to you.

Q: I'm a senior girl who has a pretty massive crush on a sophomore boy. I think he is so much more interesting than any of the senior guys, but I feel like everyone would judge me if I acted on these feelings. HELP ME RHONDA!

A: If you like him, and you think he likes you, then definitely go for it. It's senior spring! You shouldn't worry about what people think, and if they are truly your friends they will be happy for you and your new relationship. Plus the senior guys play with nerf guns.

Q: I was out of school for four days because I was sick. Before I was sick this boy and I were really vibing, but when I came back, even though he told me he missed me, he was all over this other girl. I don't want to seem desperate to him, but I really felt some sort of connection. HELP ME RHONDA!

A: In your words you two were "vibing", so there must have been some attraction there. Attraction doesn't simply fall away over four days. If he likes you then he'll come to you.