



The Centipede

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Concord Academy Student Newspaper

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What's What in Concord

by Abby Brooke '13

Concord, Massachusetts. Population: 17,668. Home to a multitude of historic sites: Louisa May Alcott's childhood home, Thoreau's Walden Pond, and the Old North Bridge. During your time at Concord Academy, you will likely come to know all too well this quaint New England town. But to get you started, here is a list of where CA students often flee to eat, work, or play during freese and after school.

We'll start off with the most important kind of diversion: food! For the cheesiest pizza slice with the fluffiest crust, you can't go wrong with Sorrento's Pizza. As the shop

For a moderately priced dinner of Italian food before going to catch a theater show or watch a friend's basketball game, go to Comella's. It's tucked in behind the stores on Walden Street.

Now that you're well fed, maybe it's time to hit the books. While you can always study in CA's library, the Concord Public Library (the CPL), directly across the street from Main Campus, is infinitely quieter and has more abundant and more comfortable places to sit. But if it's sunny outside, many students prefer to just grab a patch of grass on the Quad instead.

When that history essay is finally finished and you have started graphing cosine



A crisp fall afternoon at Walden Pond. Photo courtesy of www.tripadvisor.com

is located right next to the Concord commuter rail train stop, you can stuff your face with some delicious Sorrento's and still make the 5:18 p.m. inbound train home.

Even closer to the tracks is Bedford Farms Ice Cream. Arguably the best ice cream in town, Bedford Farms is the classic New England ice cream shop. One specialty flavor is Moose Tracks, a combination of vanilla, chocolate, and peanut butter cups.

Other food features include Dunkin' Donuts and Starbucks for the much needed caffeine fix. Hint: it is possible, though maybe not advisable, to make it to these coffee shops and back to school on foot during the daily 10:00 a.m. break, given the right footwear.

In downtown Concord, one can find food with a little more local color. Main Street Café, while pricy, is a CA staple with offerings ranging from Paninis to Italian soda.

Try Helen's, just a few hundred feet farther down Main Street, for unbeatable onion rings.

curves in your sleep, you may need somewhere to unwind. Above Main Street Café is one of Concord's hidden gems, Nesting. A home décor and antiques store like no other, Nesting is as cluttered as it is fanciful. As the home of an ever-changing assortment of oddities, this treasure trove is a place where you never know what you'll find.

If you are in the mood for a more outdoorsy diversion, Walden Pond in the early fall and late spring is a beautiful spot to soak up the sun. Follow in the footsteps of CA runners and jog the two miles there, jump in for a quick dip, and jog back. It's a CA experience you won't regret.

If you seek more zen than that, walking or biking around Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, particularly in late October, is a great way to spend an afternoon.

No doubt you will discover your own favorite spots while you attend CA. But when in doubt, or visited by boredom or hunger, give this list a look.

What I Wish I Knew

by Gaurav Verma '13

Across the nation, students entering their first year of high school face the task of acclimating to a new environment while juggling such responsibilities as schoolwork, athletics, and social commitments. The following are several unwritten rules and pieces of advice that will help your transition to Concord Academy go as smoothly as possible.

Pronunciations: Here at CA, we have many abbreviations for the names of different on-campus locations. You will soon find that the pronunciations of these titles are a bit more confusing than you might initially imagine. The Performing Arts Center (P.A.C.) and the Arts and Sciences Lobby (A.S.L.) have the letters sounded out, as in "pe-ay-see." Meanwhile, the Math and Arts Center (M.A.C.) and the Student Health and Athletic Center (S.H.A.C.) are pronounced "mack" and "shack," respectively.

Don't cut across the Quad: The Quad is the large green area in front the Main School Building at the center of campus. It is among CA's most versatile spots, and many enjoy using the Quad to play Frisbee or do homework, hang out with friends or practice sports. While you should feel free to partake in any of these activities, cutting across the Quad is highly frowned upon.

Don't walk on the Senior Steps: Underclassmen are not supposed to cross the stone stairs located at the far end of the Chapel Lawn, otherwise known as the Senior Steps. The first time a CA student is supposed to walk down the Steps is at the beginning of the Commencement ceremony during gradu-

ation. While violating this tradition will not result in disciplinary action of any kind, doing so is still frowned upon.

Check C.A.B.B.S.: The Concord Academy Bulletin Board System (C.A.B.B.S.), pronounced "cabs," is a valuable resource to all CA students. Students and faculty alike communicate information about everything from upcoming events to class assignments via this email system. It is important to make sure you check C.A.B.B.S. frequently so that you don't miss updates; just make sure you aren't online all the time!

Check the lunch schedule: One of the most frequent mistakes that members of the CA community make is showing up to the wrong lunch. Lunch is divided into three sections: early, middle, and late. If you have a free during lunch block, feel free to grab your food whenever you choose to do so. However, if you have class during lunch block, check your schedule to find out your class' room number. Then read the schedules posted around campus and on C.A.B.B.S. to figure out the correlating lunchtime so you arrive at class on time.

Don't be afraid to ask for help: In many schools, there is a certain stigma that surrounds asking teachers for extra help or working with a tutor. I cannot stress how untrue this is at CA. Do not go through your four years here thinking that it is a sign of weakness to ask for a little help or guidance. Adults will be more than happy to spend time helping you if you take the initiative to reach out to them. Your peers will certainly think no less of you for doing so, and you'll be better off in the long run.

10 Places To Know On Campus

by Chris Pappey '15

Over the course of your application and revisit process, chances are that you have become at least a bit acquainted with Concord Academy's campus. But if some upperclassman says he'll meet you in the A.S.L. or the S.H.A.C., you might find your head spinning with acronyms. Here's a quick introduction

Building, it connects the language hallway and the science classrooms, and features a staircase that leads directly up to the library.

On Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings at 8:25 a.m., the entire school congregates in the Chapel, the white structure behind the Main School Building. While CA has no religious affiliation, the Chapel is where all seniors give their chapel talk, a



A view from the quad. Photo courtesy of www.concordacademy.org

to the most important areas of the school to help you find your way around during your first days at CA.

The Arts and Sciences Lobby, or the A.S.L., is likely the first area you enter on campus each day. Before the school day starts, all students leave their various bags, instruments, coats, and other possessions on the hooks and on the ground in the open area of the A.S.L. Located in the Main School

fifteen-minute speech consisting of anything that a given senior feels like sharing. Many seniors choose to tell stories, whether funny or serious, share advice, or reflect on their time at CA. Before the chapel begins, friends, family, and classmates line up in a "hug line" to give the senior hugs and support before that senior begins his or her speech. Friends

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Inside This Issue...



Arts 101

by Katherine Oh '14

Most freshmen will begin their artistic journey here at Concord Academy in the Level 1 classes that the Visual and Performing Arts Departments offer. Students may then either delve deeply into a particular discipline, or experiment with different areas at varying levels of study. So don't worry: even the kid who is terrified of the paintbrush won't find it hard—and will probably even find it fun—to fulfill the ten art credits CA requires.

Painting 1 is one of the most popular beginner's art classes. Painting Teacher Jonathan Smith said that Painting 1 "requires no particular skills in order to participate and enjoy. You just need a willingness to make an effort and to take risks." Smith said that the course covers the fundamental "nuts and bolts" of painting that enthusiastic artists will be able to build upon as they continue to more advanced courses. Starting from drawing and moving on to tone, color theory, and composition, Smith said that painting students work to master "the particulars of each painting medium." Alex Craig '14, who took Painting 1 during her freshman year, said that her favorite piece was the apple project. In this still life study, all students painted the same apple but were seated at various vantage points, producing a wide range of results. "I loved that we could choose our own scene, yet we all had a little restriction," Craig said.

Drawing 1 explores the technical and expressive components of drawing and

design. Drawing Teacher Chris Rowe said, "I teach students to break down the process of drawing into its various elements, such as line, volume, shading, and composition." Projects range from the creation of a simple book incorporating abstract mark-making to a polished study of CA's Chapel. The class explores a variety of drawing tools, materials, and subject matter including still life, perspective exercises, abstraction, and figure studies. Students also view and discuss famous paintings that capture the techniques learned in class

Another popular introductory art class is Photography 1. As a beginner's level photography course, Photo 1 encourages students to develop the basic skills involved in creating compositions. Photography teacher Cynthia Katz said, "Students learn to use the tools specific to photography, in addition to exploring vantage point, texture, contrast, and tonal range." Katz said she guides students as they investigate images and find the best composition that "communicates well to viewers." Students then develop their black-and-white photographs in CA's darkroom. Katie Shin '14 reflected on her experience in Photo 1. "I especially liked spending time outdoors trying to figure out what was worth taking photos of, and then coming back into

the studio to see how I did," Shin said. "It is very rewarding to see the photo develop once you put the print paper in the developer and see the black lines of the image begin to appear."

Ceramics 1 introduces the basic modes of building artwork with clay. The class starts out with a few simple, ungraded exercises that allow students who have not worked with clay in the past to get a feel for the discipline. During the second project, all artists construct pieces based on historical ceramic artifacts of their choosing. Students then work on a sculptural project, the focus of which changes each

year. The semester ends with an introduction to the ceramics wheel. "We emphasize the process rather than the product in Ceramics 1," said Ceramics Teacher Ben Eberle.

Film 1 covers the entire process of making a film, from developing concepts to finishing a project with a proper sound mix. Students learn basic filming and editing techniques using both digital and analog tools. They also are exposed to a variety of films from various genres and time periods. Film Teacher Justin Bull said that the goal of Film 1 is to "instill some foundational skills in visual aesthetics. Heavy emphasis is given

toward visual storytelling."

It is equally easy to get involved with the Performing Arts at the introductory level. There are two Theatre 1 offerings at CA: The Mythic Journey and Acting the Text. The Mythic Journey focuses on the development of basic acting skills, such as actively listening and responding on stage. Collaboration with fellow actors is emphasized, and students additionally build a unique character of their own over the course of the semester. The class culminates in a final production during which the students each perform as original characters.

Acting the Text is designed to teach students to act based on the written word. The class incorporates the works of Stanislavski, Hagen, and Chekhov through improvisation and scene work.

A final course, Dance 1, is designed for students who wish to learn the basic principles of dance, particularly those who do not have much experience with discipline. Through the study of dance forms such as ballet, modern, and jazz, students build the physical and technical foundation necessary to go on to the next level in the dance program. Students also learn to choreograph their own dances while working on increasing strength and coordination.

From Ceramics to Theater, Photography to Dance, the wide range of introductory offerings in the Art Department ensures that all students will have ample opportunity to find their artistic calling during the course of their time at CA.



Painting 1. Photo courtesy of www.concordacademy.org

Art Beyond the Classroom

by Teresa Dai '14

As you will soon discover, Concord Academy's Arts Departments provide various opportunities for students to discover, develop, and display their skills both inside and outside of the classroom. During the fall semester, students will showcase their talents

ater elective open to juniors and seniors, students have the opportunity to direct their own shows. Regina Coyle '13 was one of the student actors in last spring's *Running with the Bulls*, an original work inspired by Ernest Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast* and directed by James Wyrwicz '12. "It was all about student collaboration," Coyle said.



A performance of "Running with the Bulls." Photo courtesy of James Wyrwicz '12

for the greater community during the Fall Mainstage Production, a Directors Seminar, Departmental Studies, the Fall Student Art Show, and Coffee House.

An early production of the semester is the Fall Mainstage, one of three mainstage productions that the Performing WArts Department puts on every year. These shows range from dramas to comedies, musicals, or experimental works. This year's Fall Mainstage Drama Production is Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses*. According to Theatre Program Director David Gammons, "This magical re-imagining of classic tales is sure to amaze and delight. It will juxtapose the ancient and the contemporary to reflect the persistence of narrative in the face of inevitable change."

In Directors Seminar, a yearlong the-

"Rehearsals were always casual, but also very effective. I loved being involved in the Directors Seminar." This fall, Bruno Baker '13 will stage his own Directors Seminar Production.

"These productions will all provide a bounty of challenging and entertaining theatrical experience for our audiences," Gammons said. "As always, we strive to expose our students to important playwrights, genres, and texts, and to encourage original, risk-taking work that celebrates artistic vision, innovation, and creative collaboration."

Additionally, students will develop and then present Departmental Studies in the Performing and Visual Arts Departments. Last year, seniors painted murals, drew graphic novels, and choreographed dance sequences.

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10 Places To Know

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who choose to do so then fill the "friend section," the series of benches directly in front of the podium, while the senior invites several of his or her closest friends to sit on the "friend bench" behind the podium.

On most Mondays and Thursdays, the CA community meets for announcements in the Performing Arts Center, or the P.A.C. The whole school gathers in this auditorium to hear announcements by anyone from club heads to faculty members.

After chapel or announcements finishes, the time has arrived to head off to class. For math and arts courses, cross campus to the Math and Arts Center, or the M.A.C. The M.A.C. includes the math classrooms, a computer lab, the Ransome Room (a meeting room), faculty offices, the photography lab, and the painting, drawing, ceramics, and fiber arts studios.

Once lunch rolls around, follow the herd into the Lower Student-Faculty Center, or the Stu-Fac. The Stu-Fac, which houses CA's dining hall, serves three meals a day on weekdays, and two on weekends. The freshmen tend to sit in the Sunken Dining Room, more commonly referred to as the Freshman Pit. It is situated at the far end of the Stu-Fac, adjacent to the faculty tables. Thanks to the Pit, no freshman experiences the panic of not knowing where to sit; there will always be an open seat in the Pit.

Directly above the Lower Stu-Fac is the Upper Student-Faculty Center, or the Upper Stu-Fac. Many students migrate to this area to hang out after school or during free periods. There are couches and tables where you can talk with friends, and if it is quiet, you can try to get some work done, too.

If you seek a more focused study area,

the J. Josephine Tucker Library may be the place for you. This library is accessible both through the door at the top of stairs that lead up from the A.S.L., and from the history hallway on the second floor of West Campus. The many computers, desks, and carrels spread throughout the library are available for your use.

After too many hours in the library, seek the sun outside on the Quad. On sunny days, you will often find students relaxing on this grassy expanse located in the center of campus, playing Frisbee and even sunbathing. During the cold months, snowball fights are apt to occur there as well.

So you aren't late for sports practice, remember that directly behind the M.A.C. stands the Student Health and Athletics Center, or the S.H.A.C. This large brick building houses CA's basketball courts, dance studio, counseling and health offices, wrestling room, squash courts, and fitness center. You can go to the S.H.A.C. anytime during the day to workout, play a pickup basketball game, or hang out with friends.

Once you've gotten changed and are ready to go, make your way over to CA's new Athletic Campus, where you will find two multi-purpose fields, a baseball diamond, a field hockey field, six tennis courts, and a field house. Many fall and spring practices and games will be held at this brand-new, state-of-the-art facility.

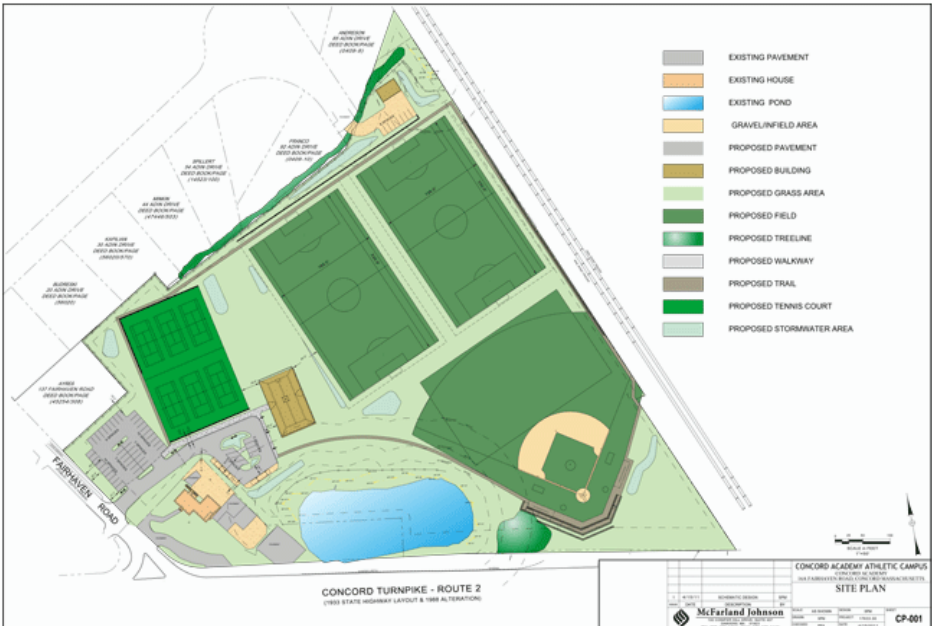
While it will take some time to adjust to CA, hopefully your newfound comprehension of Concord's facilities will ease your transition. And if you are ever feeling lost and don't have this guide by your side, remember that upperclassmen and faculty will always be happy to point you in the right direction.

Remember to Recycle
The Centipede!

A Guide to CA's New Athletic Campus

by Ryan Hussey '13

This fall, on September 12, Concord Academy's new Athletic Campus, or the AC, will open to the CA community. There are two multi-purpose fields, a field hockey field, a baseball diamond, six tennis courts, and a field house located at this new facility.



The Athletic Campus. Photo courtesy of www.concordacademy.org

The field house includes a gathering space, changing rooms, public restrooms, an office, a training room, and storage spaces.

While many practices and games will be held at the AC, all current fields and tennis courts on CA's main campus will still be used.

For students on Main Campus, sports practices will run from 3:15 to 5:00 p.m. every day. However, students practicing at the AC will board shuttle busses that will arrive at the AC in time for practice that will run from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Alternately, teams will have the option to warm up by running to the AC, a distance just over one mile. Those practicing at the new campus will also be able to use the changing rooms and work with the school's athletic trainers in the field house.

On game days, a shuttle will run continuously between Main Campus and the AC, so

that any student who wants to can easily see the games. Fans are also welcome to bike, walk, or run to the AC.

Director of Athletics Jenny Brennan said that she believes that the AC will improve the experience of CA's athletics for players and fans alike. She said that she anticipates that the porch of the field house will be a great

place from which fans can watch games, and that it will become a central component of the new campus. "When you walk through the field house and the fields open up before you, you will feel incredible pride," Brennan said. "That feeling will translate into exciting games and the creation of new traditions."

Brennan said that she is already planning one such tradition: a CA victory bell. After a win, teams will be able to ring this bell, which will be located on Main Campus. Brennan said that traditions such as these will make it feel as if the AC has always been a part of CA. She also hopes that events such as barbecues will take place during games, making the AC a fun and special place. Brennan concluded, "I hope students will embrace and enjoy all that the new AC has to offer."

Club Expo: Behind the Scenes

by Marisa Kager '13

On the second Friday night of each school year, organized chaos descends on Concord Academy's Student-Faculty Center. Crushing mobs of students weave through the crowd, the smell of food from various cuisines wafts through the air, and ear-shattering music pulses through the constant chatter. Welcome to Club Expo!

Dean of Students David Rost's predecessor, Anne Smith, formed Club Expo with the purpose of introducing new students to the 76 student-run clubs that the school offers. During the yearly event, clubs set up tables and attempt to woo students to sign up for activities ranging from Model UN to Hammock Club.

"Clubs were the main reason I first got involved in the CA community as a new student freshman year," said Ashley Briggs '13. "I couldn't help but want to get involved once I experienced Club Expo's very enthusiastic, albeit overwhelming, atmosphere."

Most clubs' tables offer various foods, many of which are desserts or ethnic specialties such as samosas, Korean ice pops, or German pretzels. Other clubs encourage students to enter a small competition to win

a prize. While certain clubs require auditions to become a member, such as the a cappella groups, the vast majority are open for anyone to join.

It can be challenging to sort through the multitude of clubs to find the ones that interest you. So here's my recommendation: sign up for anything that sounds exciting! After all, sometimes it is hard to know whether you want to become more involved in the club until you have attended a meeting or two. Dean of Students David Rost said, "It's one of those things where you get out of it what you put into it."

Also, remember not to panic if you realize at the end of the night that you forgot to sign up for the one club that you know you wanted to join. You can always contact the club heads via email to get involved. Furthermore, starting a new club is easy at CA; you can propose a group centered on any topic, and it will likely be accepted as long as there is not already a group that covers that interest and you can find a faculty advisor.

Also, don't be afraid to try something new. Your first year at Concord Academy is a new start, and a great time to take up something you've never done before...such as writing for the school newspaper!



Students enjoy Club Expo. Photo courtesy of www.concordacademy.org

Getting to Know the Stu-Fac

by Alyssa Taylor '13

During their time at Concord Academy, students will find that the Student-Faculty Center, or the Stu-Fac, becomes a major part of their daily lives because it houses the school's cafeteria. While it can be challenging to navigate the Stu-Fac's bounty and to find the option that best suits one's tastes, here is a guide to some Stu-Fac options that you should not pass up.

The Panini: make sure to get a spot in line for the Panini machines, which are sure to be heavily used. The Stu-Fac always offers cold cuts and a variety of breads and cheeses with which you can craft your own hot sandwich. Adding some vegetables from the salad bar to your Panini can also make for a healthier option.

Fried rice: While preparing fried rice can take around five minutes away from your dining experience, it is well worth the wait. Students help themselves to vegetables and other mix-ins from the salad bar, and then use the grills located beside the Panini machines to cook their rice with soy sauce. One grill is reserved for vegetarians; for the meat-eaters, adding some chicken from the salad bar or roast beef from the sandwich bar can add protein to your creation.

Soups: Stu-Fac soups are often overlooked, but they make for a surprisingly satisfying meal on a cold fall or winter's

a grilled cheese in the Panini machine to dip it into the bisque for a classic combination.

Soft-serve machine: To the delight of

as crumbled cookies or peanut butter and Nutella. That brings us to our next point, Nutella.

Nutella: As you will soon find out, Nutella is essentially a basic food group for many diners at Concord. Whether spread on toast or a rice cake, mixed into soft serve, or simply enjoyed in an overflowing spoonful, Nutella is consumed in huge quantities. It would probably be possible to build a small village with the number of Nutella jars that the Stu-Fac goes through in a year. If you haven't already, you will soon learn to love this hazelnut-chocolate treat.

Brunch: Many CA students consider brunch their favorite Stu-Fac meal. On Saturdays and Sundays, well-rested weekenders spend their mornings and afternoons enjoying the large selection of brunch options, including pastries, omelets, waffles, and pancakes. Brunch's more lunch-like options include the salad and sandwich bars.

If you remember to consider these options, you will be sure to have a variety of choices for every meal. CA students are never at a loss for putting a twist on the food that the Stu-Fac provides, so your imagination ensures that there will certainly always be a delicious dining option available for you.



The exterior of the Stu-Fac. Photo courtesy of www.concordacademy.org

day. From vegetable soups to chowders, the soup options rotate over the course of the week. When tomato bisque is offered, make

both students and faculty, soft-serve is available during both lunch and dinner. Students add creative twists to their ice cream such

The Centipede

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Art Beyond

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During the final days of the semester, the Visual Arts Department showcases work from each individual who participated in a visual arts class during the fall. This Student Art Show provides a satisfying culmination to a semester’s-worth of work for every student who opts to take a visual arts course during the first half of the year.

A major event in the fall is Coffee House, a tradition during which the senior class puts on a show that combines singing, dancing, acrobatics, skits, videos, and other performances. “Humor is always a huge part

of the show, and I think the Class of 2013 is a group that can deliver,” said Senior Class President Phil Stefani '13. “I’m looking forward to seeing some funny skits and videos in addition to showing off the musical talents of our class.”

Student Head of School Kelsey McDermott '13 believes that Concord’s arts offerings are one of the strongest aspects of the school as a whole. “Arts opportunities are one of the things I love most about CA,” McDermott said. “Not many other schools can say that they offer their students the same range of opportunities.”

Advice From an Orientation Leader

by Kathleen Melendy '14

Orientation is undoubtedly a pretty scary adventure. Even as an Orientation Leader, I still sweat when the freshmen descend on the gym doors during their first day. Some new student always starts to look horrified as he realizes the folder he was expressly told not to lose is nowhere in sight. When I rush over and assure him that it will all be okay, he still looks like he may be sick. And, usually, he’s not alone in that feeling.

Witnessing orientation from an on-looker’s perspective, one sees at first that it seems to mimic the stereotypical high school portrayed in every movie, with the cliques and drama and excitement. It’s easy to identify the various forms of teenage defense-mechanism that come into play, from the kid who talks with his head down to the one texting throughout the get-to-know-you games. But as orientation hits its stride and the new students start to warm up, the scene becomes more tranquil and inviting, and Concord Academy finally becomes the place we all signed up for.

One piece of advice to remember during your first days: orientation will not determine

the rest of your high school experience. If you don’t immediately meet your best friends, that in no way indicates your standing as a social pariah for the next four years. That said, orientation will be a lot more fun if you take the opportunity to put yourself out there. I would have been happier with myself, more confident in my new relationships, and more prepared for freshman year if I had taken the risk of being more outgoing.

About two months into freshman year, I finally started to feel more comfortable. I let loose a little, and suddenly one of my friends turned to me and said, “Whoa. Who is this girl?” And I just thought, “Well, this has been me all along!” Her reaction was no one’s fault but my own. So remember to try to be fair to yourself—and all those new friends you’re making—by genuinely being who you are.

Now, as an Orientation Leader, I feel that I will have done my job if I help to ease the worries of even one scared newcomer. If you are feeling at all nervous, simply reach out to an Orientation Leader. We really are here for you, and I promise we are incredibly excited to meet all of you! Just remember to be yourself and to be open to others, and your orientation will surely be a success.

A Fresh Start

by Charlotte Weiner '13

There are few moments in life when you are given the opportunity for a truly fresh start. Maybe you move to a new town, or start a new job. For me, coming to Concord Academy was the first instance I had been given such a chance.

As a thirteen-year-old eighth grader, I had lived in the same town and attended the same small school since I was three years old. I knew every face at that school, all the teachers and students and their families. I knew every corner and crevice of the campus, from the tilt of the red slide in the back playground to the grooved pattern of the cushions in the nook of the library.

Everyone at that school had known me since pre-kindergarten, too. How could I meet new people, explore new interests, form new friendships, when my classmates’ perceptions of me were firmly entrenched by every interaction we had shared over the past decade? In their minds, my eighth-grade-self was inseparable from the curly haired toddler in patterned stretch pants, from the middle-schooler who always parted her hair straight down the middle and wore braces. Although I loved my school and could not imagine being any place else, I felt unable to separate myself from the image that others had formed of me, and that I had formed of myself, over those ten years.

In the final days of summer freedom before my freshman orientation at CA, anxiety-producing realizations started to strike me: I knew none of my classmates. I had no idea who my teachers would be. I didn’t know

my way around the school. I didn’t know the traditions or the unspoken rules or who I would sit with during lunch. But, as these truths piled up around me, I realized that, while I knew no one else, almost no one knew me either.

Now, it seems like an absurdly obvious realization, but, then, it was the most liberating idea. When I arrived on the first day of school, no one would have any preconceived notions about me or what I would or should do, where I would go and whom I would talk to and how I would behave. Even though, at thirteen, I really had no idea what choices I wanted to make or how I wanted to define myself, I realized that I would be able to have a new beginning at Concord.

My advice to you, on your first day of CA, is to realize that you have the freedom of a clean slate. You have four years ahead of you to learn and to make mistakes, to figure out what you love and what you can’t stand. You can form opinions that are your own and stretch your boundaries and start figuring out who you really are.

So on your first day, go over and talk to that person who just might become one of your closest friends. Stay up late with your roommate. Don’t care about how ridiculous you look trying to square dance for the first time. And then, later on, sign up for that class you want to take just because it looks interesting. Try that sport you’ve never played. Raise your hand and hazard a guess at a question in class when you aren’t sure of the answer. Realize that you won’t have this opportunity, this liberation of a new beginning, for another four years, so now is the time to embrace it.



Welcome to CA! Love, *The Centipede*



