



Bobby Philips '11, who decided not to play basketball this year and Connor Murphy '12, who decided not to play soccer. Photo by Henry Kim '11.

Room to Grow: Specialization in High School Athletics

by Scott Berkley '12

Most Concord Academy students tend to see athletics in one of two ways. Some see playing a sport as a good way to blow off steam at the end of a long academic day, while others see it as a seasonal commitment to training, practice, and hard-fought games. Still, a growing number of others are more serious, giving up not only their afternoons, but also other activities they enjoy, including other athletics, in the pursuit of excellence in a single sport. In such cases, the student tangles with athletic credit requirements, grueling off-season improvement, and disgruntled teammates for the fleeting feeling of victory that can only be won through intense dedication. But as high school students, this specialized approach seems almost traitorous to the three-season athletic system so valued in the US. "When we were growing up, we played, like, everything," boy's varsity soccer coach Ben Eberle said. "Nowadays, it's completely changed."

Indeed, there is lots of evidence behind Eberle's claim. At CA, Eberle was a three-sport captain in soccer, hockey, and sailing, and by his own admission he "definitely could have gone on to sail in a big [collegiate] program." But Eberle put equal emphasis on his athletic spirit during his time at CA. "I took a season off to play thirds [basketball]. ... it was blast," he said with a warm chuckle. Similarly, Athletic Director Jenny Brennan played three seasons of sports during her first three years of high school before taking the spring of her senior year off to play competitive basketball outside of school. She said, "I think [being a] multi-sport athlete is the right way to go."

A student-athlete who plays one sport year-round will likely be more developed than one who plays the sport for only three months a year. But many students have more

than just improvement on their minds, driven perhaps even more by college recruiting. "Scouting for college is happening at the club and elite levels, not the scholastic level," Eberle said. He noted that it's also hard for kids at CA to be on these teams that meet and play outside of school, especially during the season in which the sport is offered at CA. "A soccer player would probably not be able to play on a fall club team, just because of time-syncing factor," he explained. Still, this challenge does not dissuade some athletes, such as Josh Suneby '11. "It's impressive when colleges see three-season varsity athletes, but [for tennis players], tournament experience is everything," he said. Suneby is the only player on the boys' tennis team to have such a rigorous off-season regime: he practices at his club twice a week and plays tournaments year-round. Even though he is mostly looking at Division 3 colleges to continue his tennis, Suneby admitted that his drive to specialize comes as much from college pressures as from a desire for mastery of the sport.

The specialization trend is being felt around the country, as coaches and administrators react to the perceived focus on college recruiting. In a 2007 article for Independent School Magazine aptly titled "Winning at What?", Richard Ginsburg argued, "Independent school athletics remain one of the few arenas where students of all ages and abilities participate in a variety of sports...[yet] more and more young people are specializing in one sport to better impress college recruiters. To the dismay of many independent schools, nurturing a single talent...is taking precedence over cultivating the versatile student-athlete."

Some CA students have no desire to submit to this trend. Ryan Martin '11, who

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Community and Equity 2.0

by Charlotte Weiner '13

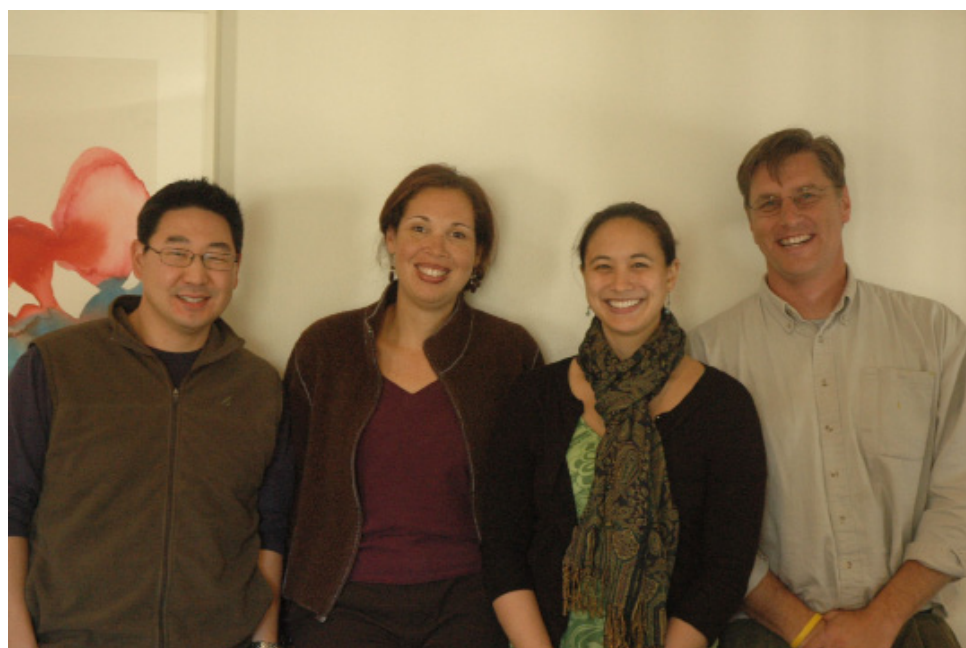
While one of the most conspicuous changes to the Community and Equity program is the new, large icon on students' CABBS desktops, there have been several other significant modifications to the program this year. C&E is a monthly program at Concord Academy in which all members of the school come together for presentations and group discussions. They cover a whole spectrum of topics, ranging from racial stereotyping to gender identity.

The most significant change to the program this year is the function of the Community Relations Units, or CRUs. Unlike previous years in which there were different student-led CRUs for each session, each group now consists of the same students and faculty facilitator for the entire year. Ayres Stiles-Hall, an English teacher and one of the faculty leaders of the C&E team, explained the reasoning behind creating a

consistent, yearlong group. He said that from now on, each CRU will be thought of as "a distinct community with its own committed members and identity," thereby creating an environment in which each student is able to contribute and have a concrete role. In this new configuration, Stiles-Hall also hopes that the teachers will have the opportunity to become familiar with the students in their CRU.

For Andrew Gonzalez '11, the transition from student to teacher facilitators is a welcome change. As the head of diversity and a student facilitator in the past, Gonzalez voiced the concerns that he and other students felt about facilitating the discussions. "I wanted to be able to participate in the discussions as well! When I was a moderator, even if I had something to add to the conversation in my CRU group, I wasn't able to do so freely." With this change, he looks forward to all students having an equal say in the discussion.

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The Community and Equity team (missing Kirsten Hoyte). From left: Peter Sun, Jen Cardillo, Ploy Keener, and Ayres Stiles - Hall.

Photo by Henry Kim '11.

Talking About Politics, or Not

by Nick Phillips '11

On November 2nd, millions of Americans, dozens of CA faculty, and perhaps a few CA students will vote in the mid-term elections. But from walking through the halls, one might guess that the community isn't aware of the upcoming elections. "If there were more time in a day, then maybe there'd be more interest," Sofia Lapidewilson '12, co-head of Republican Club, said. "But when you've got to finish your physics homework, you just don't have time to follow politics." Alice Krupczak '12, head of Young Democrats, said that aside from a small, interested group, "People don't even discuss politics here."

"This election has seemed especially complicated, which has made it quite difficult to understand," Krupczak said. Yet there may be a greater force at work than the difficulty of understanding political campaigns. "There is huge pressure here to be 'politically correct' and to not offend anyone... It's hard to learn about social and political issues without talking about them with other people, and at CA, we often don't talk about some issues because we are afraid of offending some people," Krupczak explained.

Both Krupczak and Lapidewilson said that this year, they hope to get students more involved and aware of politics. Neither club's CABBS conference has seen much action since last spring, but they are working together on a survey about students' political stances. The results of the survey may seem to be a foregone conclusion, given the notoriously liberal student body, but Lapidewilson said that in reality, CA might not be as liberal as some think.

The perceived liberal consensus at CA might not be a product of students' true political leanings. Although a "record high of five or six" people attended a Republican Club meeting, she said she thinks that may be because "people don't want to label themselves as conservative." Krupczak agreed: "I think that it's very hard to be a member of this school without being a liberal." In Massachusetts, a perennially liberal state, parental influence may also play a role. "People just regurgitate what their parents say," Lapidewilson said. According to Krupczak, outside input leads many students to take on certain political opinions "without actually examining the issue for themselves."

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Inside this Issue...



Reactions to Another Parents’ Weekend

by Jacob Weiskopf ’14

Campus buzzed with parents and students alike on Friday, October 8, the first day of Parents Weekend. Throughout the day, parents experienced the sampler or appetizer version of their children’s schedule, attending a shortened block of every class. While its purpose is for parents to get a feel for CA’s classes, teachers, and community, some people question whether the chaotic weekend truly allows parents an accurate window into CA life.

English teacher Cammy Thomas said that she thinks that parents can get a “pretty good feel” for the classes, although she added that they often are a bit rushed. With the hope of presenting a realistic view of classes, teachers often ask their students to act as if the spectating adults were not even there. History teacher Peter Sun urged his students to relax. “Don’t freeze up,” he told them. Students play the part well, according to Susan Lapidese-Wilson p’12. “I see people really thinking [in classes],” she said.

Some students believe, however, that parents do not experience what classes are actually like. “You can’t show the classes

in 20 minutes,” Wyatt Welles ’14 said. Sara Makiya ’12 agreed, but noted that there are benefits to the condensed blocks. “While the classes are shorter, we are able fit more blocks into the schedule,” she said.

Other students cited changes in their teachers’ behaviors. “Teachers seem different,” said Allie Mundel ’13. “They act more energetic, like they are trying to impress the parents.” Thomas observed this change as well. She said that this behavior is a reaction to the added pressure from having parents in the room.

Director of Health and Wellness Jeff Desjarlais said he does not believe the true benefit of the weekend lies in the class time. He explained that the day is really about getting to know “names and faces” and added, “The real parents’ day starts at the parent-teacher conferences.”

Whether or not parents get an accurate feel for the classes, many students, parents, and teachers enjoy this irregular day. Makiya said, “It’s exciting to see if people look like their parents.” Sun agreed: “I like to see how far the apple falls from the tree.” And, while Thomas does not look forward to Parents’ Weekend, she said, “It always turns out to be fun.”



The leaves at CA begin to change colors. Photo by Henry Kim ’11.

No Homework Weekend

by Lola Ogundipe ’12

For many Concord Academy students, the fall semester is an especially stressful period because there is no significant break between the beginning of school and Thanksgiving break. In response to this difficult period, last fall Academic Dean John Drew implemented the first no-homework weekend. This year, the respite will occur on the weekend of October 29th.

Dean of Students David Rost said that several years ago, Student Council was concerned with the academic pace of CA, and requested a weekend for students to catch up. However, this supposed break turned into a long weekend where teachers actually assigned more homework. “Teachers definitely struggled in the past with the no homework weekend. They assigned a lot of work due on the Tuesday after the weekend which defeated the purpose of the idea,” Drew said.

Drew said he hopes that the no-homework weekend allows students not only to catch up on previous work but also to “to catch their breath.” Drew added, however, that the time should not be mistaken for a weekend without work; rather, it is a period with no new assignments. “It provides a mid-semester breather for everyone,” Drew

stated, “particularly for seniors to focus on college applications due on November 1st.”

Drew added that October is a trying month for teachers as well. “Teachers have to write college recommendations, support Parents’ Weekend, attend a lot of admissions events, and write comments. In this way,” Drew said, “the no-homework weekend is a break for adults on campus as well.”

Drew commented that one of the primary reasons the break is happening this year is due to the positive response from the Class of 2010. Alice Krupczak ’12 said she appreciates the no homework weekend because it is a break from the fast pace of school. Peter Sun, a history teacher, said, “Concord students and adults are very busy individuals so this weekend is a nice hiatus from the regular schedule that allows us to take a step back from our busy lives. But in reality, it isn’t used to relax, but rather to catch up and do more work.” Kate Judge ’12 agreed, stating, “I like the no-homework weekend, but I think that teachers just assign the work for Tuesday or major assignments are assigned on that week.”

The Centipede urges teachers to follow the guidelines and spirit of this year’s no-homework weekend.

The Inside Perspective: CA’s New Academic Support Center

by Adam Pfander ’12

The Upper Stu-Fac sees a lot of foot traffic, not the least of which is headed to the new Academic Support Center (ASC). The ASC is Concord Academy’s newest academic resource; it offers guidance and tutoring to all those who request it.

A team of teachers and academic professionals – math and physics tutor Dan Sanford, English teacher Laura Twichell, History teacher Sally Zimmerli, Physics teacher Brian Giannino-Racine, and English teacher Liz Bedell – staff the ASC. These adults are available through both appointments and walk-ins.

Giannino-Racine said that the ASC is committed to serving every student’s academic needs. The Center features an academic hotline, which allows teachers and advisors to connect students they are concerned about with tutors. This coordination is meant to ensure every challenge, large or small, is brought to light. Giannino-Racine said he hopes that the new system will prevent kids from “slipping through the academic cracks.”

Giannino-Racine described the ASC as, “a resource for students who need help with anything from organization to note taking to writing an essay.” Because of the diversity of needs, the academic support staff is constantly balancing its schedule. Some students may only require one visit;

others may need a private tutor. The staff works with the students to determine the best course of action, and it strives to ensure that every student who comes through the doors is successful in a given endeavor.

Giannino-Racine also said that the ASC offers what he calls, “the inside perspective.” He explained that the office combines the experience of veteran teachers with the support of an appropriate advisor, teacher, or tutor to better understand a difficulty. He added that the ASC will follow up with students to ensure that the issues have been addressed appropriately.

Although some students were distraught over Study Skills Coordinator Marge Albin’s departure and the closing of the Learning Center at the end of last year, Giannino-Racine believes that the ASC will serve the community just as effectively. “The Learning Center was a safe place,” he commented, “a place where academic stress was forgotten and a student’s needs were the focus.” He hopes that the ASC will not only fill this roll, but also improve on the Learning Center’s model. For instance, according to Giannino-Racine, the ASC is open for more hours every day than its predecessor.

John Drew, Academic Dean, is enthusiastic about the promise of the center. “I hope that students will give the new model a try,” he said, “and that they will provide feedback on how we can best serve their needs.”

A New Era for CA’s Bookstore

by Marisa Kager ’13

This fall, returning Concord Academy students were greeted by changes at the school’s Bookstore. When administrators evaluated the school’s finances last year, they reexamined the operation of this institution, and the alterations to the bookstore were one result.

“The school has to make hard choices about allocating limited resources every year as we build our annual budget,” explained Judi Seldin, chief financial officer. Within the Bookstore, these “hard choices” resulted in decreasing the operating hours from four to one and a half hours every day. While former bookstore manager Betty Knake used to run the store full-time, five hired students now manage it in shifts.

David Rost, Dean of Students, rationalized the reduced operating hours by saying “You can’t spend money you don’t have. I was obviously sad to see Betty retire, but Betty’s retirement was an opportunity.” According to Seldin, since Susan Hagopian, Rebecca Wrigley, and Deb McCarthy, the adults in charge of the Bookstore, have other full-time responsibilities, “[The school] thought that they could forgo a fulltime staff person in charge of the store.” Also, Seldin said she does not believe that student operation of the store is a detrimental change, especially since kids have always worked in the store in some capacity. “Susan tells me that the students who are working in the Bookstore are quick studies and enthusiastic sales people,” she said.

Some students believe the staffing changes have negative effects, however. “With Betty running the Bookstore it was more open,” Monica Kim ’12 said, adding, “I would go chat with [Betty]... The social aspects are gone.” Nate Lamkin ’12 agreed; “Going to the Bookstore meant having someone there. [Now it’s] less accessible.”

To this complaint, Seldin responded, “We had to find ways to save money.” She maintains the only negative effect was Knake’s retirement itself, because she was “a key adult” in some students’ lives.

The final change to the Bookstore was the removal of snacks and the subsequent installation of a vending machine in the South School basement. “We had to focus on what’s most essential to teachers and students,” Seldin said. “[Students] could get snacks elsewhere,” such as in the Stu-Fac, at the newly installed vending machine, or from one of the numerous stores in Concord Center. With the limited availability due to shortened hours, the Bookstore now primarily serves the key academic supply needs of CA students.

The general reactions to the vending machines have been positive. Kim said, “For health benefits I prefer the vending machine because there is more choice.” “The vending machines are fun,” Ashley Briggs ’13 added.

While Seldin knows some of the cuts to the Bookstore have affected the CA community, the financial benefits of the change were significant. Seldin explained, “CA was founded 88 years ago. We need to make sure it is here 88 years from now.”



The bookstore’s inventory. Photo by Phoebe Chatfield ’14.

C&E

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Another adjustment in the program relates to teacher training. This year, a hired team of diversity professionals is teaching the faculty facilitators how to further refine their abilities to lead their CRUs. The five core members of the C&E team and the CRU leaders meet for two hours before each session to prepare for the program. Morgan Mead, English teacher and CRU facilitator, said he feels as though he and the other faculty leaders are now “much more prepared to lead our groups in an effective conversation.” The members of the CA community are now also able to continue their monthly discussions on CABBS through the new CRU conferences.

One of the difficulties that C&E has faced in the past is the evaluation of the programs. Stiles-Hall said he and Assistant Dean for Community and Equity, Jen Cardillo, and their team hope to measure more successfully the effectiveness of their programs by both talking with facilitators during meetings and having the opportunity to learn from each other’s experiences throughout the year. While having feed-

back forms for students is also a possible mode of evaluation, Mead said he thinks that it is difficult to appraise the effectiveness of C&E in such a concrete way. He thinks that the smaller things, like hearing students praise the program or feeling the discussion was worthwhile, are indicative of the success of the initiative.

Stiles-Hall said he hopes that overall, these changes will make C&E feel a little more like a class. The program is intended to become an increasingly essential part of the education of all CA students and to serve as a regular outlet for issues that would not otherwise be addressed. Mead said that the program is valuable because, while many people acknowledge that CA as a whole is a safe environment to discuss many sensitive topics, “C&E sends the message to students that CA both cares about these issues and is dedicating time to address them.” Above all, Gonzalez believes the programs promote honesty. “C&E is really all about honesty, not holding back, and feeling free to voice your own opinions,” he said.

Upcoming Events

Fri. October 29, 7:30 PM - 10:45 PM - Halloween Costume Dance

Sat. October 30, 8:00 PM - Horrorfest Movie Night

Fri. November 5, 7:30 PM - Kareokee Night

Sat. November 6, 12:00 - 5:00 PM - Cashunt Boston

Sat. November 6, 7:00 PM - Trip to Cosmic Bowling

Fri. November 12, 7:30 PM and Sat. November 13, 7:30 PM - Fall mainstage musical: “Chicago”

Fri. November 19, 8:00 PM - Senior Coffeehouse

DROP: CA’s New Music Publication

by Michael Ruscak ’11

If you walk around CA campus these days, it’s likely that you’ll see someone sporting a white T-shirt with the word “DROP” in black spray paint across the chest. Although this urbane apparel might appear to be a new design from a “Cool T-shirt Club,” the shirts actually bear the name of the newest addition to the gamut of CA publications, a music magazine.

Co-founded this year by Derek Schwartz ’12 and Pauly Daniel ’12, DROP sold the T-shirts at Club Expo to raise money to publish their first edition, expected sometime before Thanksgiving break. The fresh T’s are consistent with the level of novelty that Schwartz and Daniel are aiming for with their new publication. They explained that DROP will specialize in a subject underserved by previous and already-existing publications like The Gentlemen’s Standard and The Centipede, namely, music.

Schwartz explained, “People are writing artist profiles, live reviews, album reviews and various other subjects for DROP.”

Submissions to-date include live reviews of “Radiohead,” “Phoenix,” and “OK GO,” as well as pieces on “Bombay Bicycle Club” and the drummer from Radiohead’s solo album. Although the articles submitted so far are about modern music, Schwartz said DROP is open to all music and that contributors are encouraged “to write about any music they are passionate about.” In addition to articles, the magazine will include live concert photography, a long-standing interest of Schwartz’s.

Schwartz confessed that one of the reasons he decided to start the magazine is “to be able to get photo passes for concerts and stuff.” He and Daniel also started the magazine because, as, Schwartz explained, they “really like music and are interested in what other CA students think about it.” Schwartz added, “CA students tend to be very passionate about their music choices, but the also seem to be very narrow-minded. I bet that if students understand what other students look for in music, they will broaden their tastes.”

Student Council Reactions

by Carly Meyerson ’12

Every Tuesday at 5:45 PM in the Upper Stu-Fac, Concord Academy’s Student Council meets to discuss current school issues and upcoming events. Council is made up of representatives elected by the school community. According to David Rost, the faculty advisor for Council, its overarching goal for the year is to create a “happy and healthy community at CA.”

Despite these weekly meetings and this lofty goal, Council is often criticized for getting little done to improve the school. While individual members work hard and accomplish more specific goals within their positions, even some Council members admit that, in the past, Council as a whole has not realized its full potential. Erinn Geyer ’12, one of the three co-heads of environmental affairs, and so a Council member, says, “There is a fine line between discussing solutions to issues and actually executing those solutions. In the past the execution has been a little fuzzy, but I think it is definitely getting better this year.” According to Johnny Murchison ’12, junior class president, “Council works well for what it is, but really we are just advisors to the school administration. Everything we come up with has to be approved by David Rost and other faculty members first.”

One major issue facing this year’s Council is a lack of support from the rest of the community. According to Geyer, “Council itself is not the problem... right now the community as a whole doesn’t seem to have a lot of faith in Council, and we can’t change the school by ourselves. We need the support of the entire school to get things done.” Geyer is not alone in this opinion. Nearly every Council member mentions how difficult it is to get things done when very few people in the community give Council advice, ideas, or support, and yet simultaneously criticize their lack of progress. Vice Head of School Christine Wu ’11 encourages students to get involved: “We have been, and still are, encouraging students who want to have a voice to come to these meetings so that we can hear what they have to say and can let them know that Council is not an inactive group on campus.”

Wu and Head of School Dani Girdwood ’11 have already taken steps to increase the role that the CA community plays in Council meetings. Several weeks ago they created a “Council Drop Box” on CABBS. This is a conference where students and faculty can send their ideas and criticisms to be discussed at the next Council meeting. According to Girdwood, “The Council drop box has been a real change to the Council agenda. It gives the overall student body a voice at each and every meeting, making Council feel much more productive.” Only Girdwood and Wu can see the drop box posts, and they only discuss messages without reference to the name of the sender. The box is meant to encourage students to share their ideas and to help Council get a feel for the opinions of their overarching community.

Thanks to the drop box and the initiative of Council members, Council has already planned and executed several events this year. With help from Co-Heads of Entertainment Eliza Green and Lena Lax, Council organized the school-wide football tournament, Club Expo, the black-light dance, the Head of the Sudbury canoe regatta, and the acoustic coffeehouse. Behind the scenes, Council has reorganized the Lost & Found and helped to plan the no-homework weekend for the end of October. Council members also do the routine work of ensuring that the attendance records are accurate; each morning “attendance runners,” members of Council with first block frees, check the classroom of each student marked absent to make sure he or she truly absent.

Based on other suggestions from the online drop box, Council is working to install more water fountains throughout the school and make the Upper Stu-fac a more comfortable “hang-out” space. Girdwood and Wu are also working with alumni to initiate a program where students can work with CA grads to get internships and make other connections outside of the school.

In response to its negative image, this year’s Council is working hard to connect with the CA community. And, to those who still feel like it is ineffective, David Rost says, “Come to Council! If you are not a part of the solution, you are part of the problem.”

Politics

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Kruczak said that we might have left-leaning social views, but “economically there is a lot more variation, it’s just not talked about as much.” Lapides-Wilson offered another explanation: “We’re close minded. We listen to [opposing] views, but don’t try to understand them.” She said she wishes students would not write off conservative views so quickly and with so little consideration.

The faculty and staff also may hold some responsibility for not encouraging diverse political discourse among students. Kruczak noted that “C&E presentations certainly encourage a liberal attitude.” Lapides-Wilson remembered running into two of teachers in the ASL shortly after Scott Brown was elected to the Senate. “They were blatantly complaining about

him,” she recalled. “I didn’t feel like I could say anything.”

Although a politically homogeneous

population does not seem ideal, political differences can often lead to heated arguments. Both club leaders stressed that they wanted to raise awareness, while encouraging respect for other opinions. But the combination of broad political diversity and mutual political respect may be hard to

come by. Kruczak said she finds the political atmosphere at CA comfortable. “It can be very relaxing to occasionally talk about politics and not have your conversation turn into an argument.” The few Republicans on campus, both “closeted” and “out,” can take solace in the fact that those conversations are few and far between.



Alice Kruczak, head of Young Democrats, between Sofia Lapides-Wilson and Elke Schipani, co-heads of Republican Club. Photo by Scott Berkley ’12.

Cultural Transitions: More Than a Language

by Dan Weiner '11

Eleven percent of CA students are international, and the vast majority of these 40 students hail from countries in which English is not the primary language. In exchange for the opportunity to study in America, these students face a unique array of challenges including long flights home, cultural differences, and switching back and forth between English and their native language. But, of course, many of these challenges take place where most CA community members can't see them. And so The Centipede set out to see if it might bring some these challenges to light.

The process of learning English often begins early in the lives of international students. "I was five years old when I started studying English," recalled Henry Kim '11 of South Korea. After nine years of study, "[I] could only sustain basic dialogue, since it was more focused on grammar than on speaking," he explained. This year's Thai Scholar, Pai Buabthong '11, started learning English at the age of six at school. "In classes, it was only writing and reading, but not much speaking," he said.

Although many families embrace the value of learning English in school, at home, they use their native language. Ebay Vaniyapun '11 of Thailand said that while his parents can speak English, they only speak Thai at home. For some, speaking their native language is an issue rooted in traditional values. "My family is conservative, so we don't speak English at home," Scarlett Kim '11, a South Korean, said.

Many international students said that fluency in English is a sign of high socioeconomic standing because of all the supplemental schooling required to achieve it. "In Thailand, we consider English to be the language of the elite," Vaniyapun explained. Henry Kim has noticed that, since South Korea integrated English into its public school curriculum, rudimentary English skills have become common, but he explained, "True proficiency is a sign of wealth."

For many, learning English is an im-

portant step in gaining access to an American high school education, part of a larger effort to avoid the higher education systems in their home countries. "The education system in Thailand is pretty bad," Sean Pathawintranond '12 commented. "It is based around lectures as opposed to discussion. You sit down, take notes, and study your notes. You don't have a voice in your class because the teacher is dominating." Amy Huang '11 said that this holds true in Taiwan as well. "In Taiwan, it is much more about memorizing and regurgitating what has been taught, but in America it is much more about learning valuable applications of the material." Furthermore, she believes that this difference is reflective of a cultural disparity. "In Asia, many see intelligence as equivalent to memorization and not related to how the knowledge is applied." Henry Kim's frustration at the South Korean approach to education lies in their insistence on the "correct" understanding of elements that Americans might consider open to personal opinion. He said, "They would tell us that there was one way to understand a metaphor, and on a test, if you don't put down the 'right' interpretation, you are wrong. In America, you have much more freedom in this regard."

While attending a school like CA certainly carries many benefits for an international student, the experience is not without challenges. Given that some freshmen are as young as thirteen, Pathawintranond said, "It

can be challenging for a lot of students to be half-way around the world for such extended periods of time." Another of the trying aspects of studying in America is the transition from one language to another. "It gets a little bit confusing," Huang said. "Sometimes I will talk to my roommate in Mandarin by accident. I once asked her if I could open the window in Mandarin because I was really tired and I wasn't thinking." Buabthong said, "My brain still thinks in Thai, so I keep translating between English and Thai, back and forth, back and forth." In addition to the strain of adjusting to a new language, international students must cope with cultural and idiomatic differences between their home country and America. "Some of the thoughts and beliefs I have in English are very hard to translate back into Mandarin when I am talking with my parents," Huang said. "In this sense, not only is there a language gap, but also there is a cultural gap." She cited the disparity in perceptions of individuality between Taiwan and America as an example of this phenomenon: while the dress code in Taiwanese schools is very conservative, American schools are much more liberal and emphasize individuality to a greater extent. In Thailand, Vaniyapun said, "We really emphasize familial values; the way you treat parents and teachers is much more formal than in America." From her perspective as a house parent, Marie Myers observed, "There is a huge and wholesale transfer of cultural expectations for these

students when they come to the States."

For some international students, the annual transition to America brings more than a new language; it evokes a change in personality. "In Thai, I think I am more thuggish because I generally use a coarser, less refined language, whereas in English I think I am more polite," Vaniyapun said. For Scarlett Kim, Korean and English serve different purposes. "Since Korean is my first language, it is very intimate for me. When I speak about emotions or something that makes me vulnerable, I tend to speak in English because I can be more removed, whereas in Korean, I feel very exposed," she said. Such pronounced linguistic roles are not as defined for all, however. Henry Kim said, "I don't think I experience a drastic personality change." "But", he added, "even if I speak English well, that does not translate to knowing the culture well. It sometimes causes me to be more timid if I am unfamiliar with the slang or music."

"It is sad because I sometimes forget simple words in Korean after speaking so much English at CA," Scarlett Kim said. Indeed, after immersing themselves in English for months at a time, some international students find that they must make an effort to maintain their native language. Huang will often speak Mandarin with the other students who speak the language at CA, but she said that, "Learning to balance speaking with other students in Mandarin with respect for the English-speaking community is an issue as well." Some international students like Henry Kim do not feel a need to practice consciously; he finds it hard to fathom a day when he would forget his native tongue.

Henry Kim, Scarlett Kim, Vaniyapun, Huang, Buabthong, and Pathawintranond plan to attend college in the United States. Huang said that after years of American education, adjusting back to the Asian educational system for college would be challenging. While not every American high school is well-known in Thailand, Vaniyapun explained, "Everybody at home knows that attending a prep school in the United States is a sure ticket to an American college and all the opportunities it presents."



International Students Amy Huang '11, Henry Kim '11, and Sean Pathawintranod '12. Photo by Josh Chung '12.

October Blues

by Gaurav Verma '13

Welcome to October. The leaves turn vibrant shades of red, yellow, and orange; the days shorten; the air becomes crisp. As nature transitions from the verdant liveliness of summer to the cold hibernation of winter, Concord Academy, too, undergoes a transformation. Workloads increase, the college process hits full swing, and students lose the energy and excitement that came with the new year in September. Liveliness in classes and on the athletic fields slumps. Why is it that so many people find October a tedious slog of a month?

For one, October holds nothing to look forward to. Dan Weiner '11 said, "Like February, there is nothing exceptional about [October]. In September we are fresh off summer break. In November we have Thanksgiving. December feels exceptionally short in anticipation of Winter Break. October is just... October." Aside from Halloween at the very end of the month, there is no special holiday or event.

Eitan Tye '12 attributed the October blues to the weather: "It's getting colder and darker," he said. Though the days have been getting shorter since mid-June, the loss of daylight accelerates in October. The days of after-dinner Frisbee games on the quad will soon come to an end, with the sun setting before six o'clock.

Dani Girdwood '11 suggested that October is stressful because of the numer-

ous major assignments. She added, "We are getting some of our first graded assignments back. People are really feeling the pressure of grades and work." Girdwood also pointed out that the college process adds another layer of anxiety to most seniors' lives. "It's driving us all crazy. I feel more academic pressure than I have ever felt before. We're all very tired and stressed."

CA has tried to address October's dreariness with events like the football tournament and the no-homework weekend. Students, however, feel that more can be done. Girdwood said she likes the no-homework weekend, but wants to insure that teachers do not give major assignments due on the following Tuesday or Wednesday, which she said "defeats the purpose." Sara Makiya '12 said that teachers need to ease up on the workload in general, stating that they show "no hesitation" to assign a burdensome level

of homework. She thought that if teachers communicated deadlines better they might avoid the dreaded "crunch weeks."

English teacher Ayres Stiles-Hall did not think that his classes have been adversely affected by October. In fact, Stiles-Hall noticed that classes are actually "starting to gel and trust each other." As a result, his classes are, "really getting going," rather than losing momentum. He agreed that seniors are stressed, mostly due to the college process.

Photography teacher Cynthia Katz said, "Kids seem to be a bit more tired," but explained that this has not really affected classes. While Stiles-Hall, who is also the girls' varsity soccer coach, said he has not noticed a drop in energy on the fields, Adam Simon, the boys' varsity soccer coach, has. Simon theorized that this energy droop is due to a combination of factors including an increased workload, seniors' visiting colleges and writ-

ing applications, illness, and the weather.

Some students, like Will Jacobs '12, said they see nothing wrong with the month. "I've never thought of October as a down month. Actually, I never have down months, except for, sometimes, late November through early December, if there's no snow, he said. Jacobs explained that "he loves it here" and that he "can't see why it would get boring." He also said that he often tries to switch things up a little when he wants a change from his daily routine. Some of his changes include starting a club and planning trips. Jacobs advised students to "find ways to fully entertain themselves" reasoning, "Those who are resourceful enough to keep themselves happy and interested will like life a lot more." Still, he stated he has noticed a decrease in enthusiasm. "Kids hold doors for each other a bit less now than last month," he said.

Charlotte Weiner '13 acknowledged that October does bring an increase of work, but that she still enjoys it: "I think that although October is definitely a really busy month, it isn't really a down month for me." She said that soccer season and her love for fall help her get through the month: "I really like this time of year, and it's soccer season!" she said. Louisa Dodge '14 said she also enjoys October, her birthday month. She said that although she may soon lose the excitement of being new, for now CA is "still as fresh and surprising as ever!"



Fall Foliage on the CA Campus. Photo by Henry Kim '11.

CA in Retrospect

by Eliza Brooke '09

Breaking news: Concord Academy is not a big school. Unfamiliar faces are few and far between: you know the name of nearly every student you pass on the way to class. You know if your friends have gotten to school by identifying their backpacks amid the sea of L.L.Beans in the ASL.

College is slightly different. CA grads go on to study at colleges and universities with undergraduate enrollment anywhere from five to over fifteen times larger than CA's student population. Leaving the fishbowl for the ocean was for me an undertaking both exciting and intimidating. The upside: meeting new, fascinating people every day, not to mention the misanthropic joy of not having to tolerate classmates I didn't want to see on a daily basis. Potential downside: never finding a community as close and comfortable as CA ever again.

By my junior year of high school, I had become fully ensconced in my small, safe Concord Academy bubble. I had found a group of friends that made waiting in the snow for the morning train worth it. CA's size is not to be discounted here: with such a small student body, you get close to people, fast. As long as the proximity doesn't make you want to kill too many of them, this is a great thing. According to most teen movies, high school can be rocky. Knowing CA inside and out gave me a level of confidence within my community that many high school kids never experience. Check any study in academic achievement: the correlation between confidence and academic and extracurricular success is anything but negligible.

For all its benefits, though, CA sometimes seemed too small. Senior spring found me alternating between craving the social excitement of a 5,000-plus college campus and worrying that high school would be the

last community that I truly felt took care of me, in a gradual release into the utter independence of adulthood.

But niches form everywhere, even in college. Extracurriculars, from club sports to singing groups, are the easiest way to find communities of like-minded people, primarily because you end up spending so much time together. Even semi-independent activities like writing for the school paper end up bonding you to a group. Think you're not going to become friends with the editors and writers, when you regularly work into the wee hours of the morning to put out the next day's issue? Think again.

Even if I hadn't joined the paper or the club squash team, I would have had a hard time avoiding finding a community of my own. At my school, undergraduates are placed in one of twelve residential colleges the summer before their freshman year, each one roughly the size of CA. I live in my college, study in its library, and work in the snack shop. The dean of my college sends out emails telling us to turn in our course schedules already, or to sign up for apple-picking excursions. Lunch in the Stu-Fac prepared me well for the experience of eating in my residential college's dining hall: you sit with your best friends and it takes forever to get food because you keep running into people you know on your way from the grill to the salad bar. Last Sunday, I ate brunch with a bunch of other sophomores in the Master's house, in my pajamas. Imagine Sunday morning waffles with David Rost. And I thought college would leave me adrift.

Eliza Brooke is a sophomore at Yale University and the former Executive Editor of the Centipede.



Eliza Brooke '09 outgrows her environment. Photo courtesy of facebook.com.

Horoscopes

by Nick Phillips '11

Aries (March 21 – April 19)

Mercury and Mars are aligned in your favor. Sadly, they are the two smallest planets, so you should keep your ambitions to a minimum today.

Taurus (April 20 – May 20)

Work jobs are no fun, but they may provide an unexpected, romantic experience with that Scorpio you noticed sitting in the Stu-Fac. Make sure not to volunteer to lift awkwardly sized packages – grunting and groaning is not as sexy as you think.

Gemini (May 21 – June 20)

You will pass a cute upperclassman today. If you look him or her in the eyes but say nothing he or she will think you're weird, if you look at your feet he or she will think you're boring, and if you say hello your voice might crack. But it's not a big deal because he or she probably isn't interested anyway.

Cancer (June 21 – July 22)

You will receive an unexpected compliment today. Do not allow it to make you conceited. Your talents are worth more when you are modest.

Leo (July 23 – August 22)

Originality is good – to an extent. When you speak up in class today your teacher will reply, "Hmm, that's interesting, I've never heard anyone interpret it like that before." There is probably a good reason that nobody has made that interpretation.

Virgo (August 23 – September 22)

If at first you fail, try again. If you fail again, you should probably quit before you make a fool of yourself. Unfortunately, the drop/add period is already over, so you might as well just keep on trying no matter how futile it seems.

Libra (September 23 – October 22)

Today, you will be approached by a mature-looking student who claims to be recruiting new members for the CA boy band. It is a trap. As you know, the boy band recently filled their final spot. The student is actually working undercover for the Skin Tones; the naked a cappella group is looking to fill its vacant spot after Jordan Beard deserted to join the boy band.

Advice from Beyond the Bubble

Advice is not hard to come by at CA. Seniors offer it in their chapels, advisors dispense it at weekly meetings, and the Centipede's own "Rhonda" will happily dole it out to any one brave enough to submit his or her questions. But the one thing none of these people has is the perspective that comes from breaking out of the CA bubble and moving on. The Centipede caught up with some recent alums, who responded to the question below. Check back next issue for some more of their thoughts from the great beyond.

Now that you're in college, what's one thing you regret not doing at CA?



"Now that I'm in college, I regret not taking Intro Guitar. Silly, I know, but it's a great way to meet people." – Louisa Smythe '10



"I wish I had taken more art classes. And a Sandy Stott class." – Katie Surrey-Bergman '10



I regret not taking more time to absolutely relax and get to know the people around me at CA. I appreciate all of the friends I did make at CA, but there were also a lot of really great people in my class and other classes, that I wish I'd known better. So take advantage of the lovely people around you ...no, not in that way!" – Amara Frumkin '09

"...To finish, I'll list some of the things I don't regret doing while at CA.

Taking four years of French. Now I kind of speak another language and I passed out of my foreign language requirement!

Taking Advanced Physics with Brian. He's still the best teacher I've ever had, and, if you have any interest in math or physics, then you have to take a class with him at some point. He's also the coolest.

Going to Walden Pond. People think I'm so cool because I went swimming at Walden after school.

Being at school from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day senior year. Get used to school being your life, because it literally will be for four years." – Jake Dockterman '09

Photos courtesy of facebook.com.

Scorpio (October 23 – November 21)

Your birthday is fast-approaching. Do not guilt trip your friends into planning a party for you. At the end of the day, they will have the last laugh. You do not want to discover at the last minute that the "surprise party that you made us plan for you" is actually a trip to McDonald's.

Sagittarius (November 22 – December 21)

Today, as you walk through the SHAC, you will encounter a buff-looking male pumping iron in the weight room. You're first instinct will be: he must be on the lacrosse team! False – it is Mike Bouzan.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)

Your teacher will do a quick poll on the time it takes to complete daily homework: "Too much? Too little? Just right?" They will ask. Do not be lured into this trap! If you say too little you'll sound like a suck-up, if you say just right you just don't care, and if you say too much you'll just sound lazy. Probably a good time to take a bathroom break.

"I regret not hanging out with Chris Rowe more. I feel like he really could have given me insight into life." – Kendall Tucker '10



"I regret not restarting the tradition of a senior prank. (Sorry faculty.) But someone should do it this year." – Sarah Thornton '09



Aquarius (January 20 – February 18)

You'll find yourself watching an episode of *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*. You may want to share the jokes with all of your friends, but remember that most of the humor stems from the fact that Charlie Day is extremely dim-witted. You'll want to give plenty of context before you launch into an impersonation.

Pisces (February 19 – March 20)

You'll buy a new cell phone today and realize that it's a great excuse to make a Facebook group where all your friends can post their phone numbers and publicly demonstrate your immense popularity. Know that you'll also publicly demonstrate your annoyingness. Probably better to just have the phone salesperson transfer your contacts like everyone else did.

No School For Weak Men: The Need for Self-Defense

by Alex Milona '11

First, I want to take this opportunity to thank the new Chemistry teacher Zhe Lu for offering aikido lessons to the Concord Academy community. He is filling a void that our academy has heretofore left gaping.

If you are a new student, or a male, you may not be aware of the existence of a self-defense class offered during the spring semester. I recall asking my mother if I too could attend this self-defense class; alas, she informed me that the class was open only to females. She referred me to the e-mail invitation, which stated that there was a lack of interest among boys in a self-defense class at CA. This struck me as odd, for as I could indeed envision a lack of interest in the sexual-assault-prevention aspect of self-defense that the ladies' course focuses upon, I saw a need for self-defense classes geared towards CA boys as well.

If the male students of any other school in the United States set upon the boys of CA, I sincerely doubt that we would hold our own in a standing bout. The calm and poise with which we face down a Home-Fun assignment or an in-class essay is ill matched to our response to the spectacle of physical violence. We would be like minnows facing a pack of frenzied and determined sharks. We possess monkish qualities and attributes. The masochistic daily torture of homework and extracurricular activities is a terrible sight to behold; we prostrate ourselves before the altar of college acceptance. We all go on to attend university, but the drawback to our monkish zealotry in the pursuit of academic credentials is a certain lack of physical cultivation.

The Buddhist monks of Shao Lin developed a means of defense without compromising their beliefs and goal, the all-important quest for nirvana. They created Kung-Fu. Now, when I ask friends and acquaintances the reasons for a lack of martial spirit at CA, I usually get an earful about how CA's rejection of the chauvinistic spirit of violence and domination, and the resulting lack of football team, all lead to little need for a martial spirit. In the words of Philip Stephani '13, "It's just not CA."

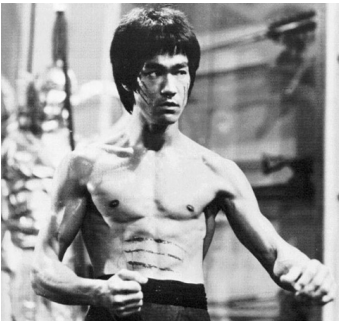


Photo courtesy of stuffasian-peoplelike.com.

Yet I remain unconvinced. It seems to me that many proponents of nonviolence have fallen in love with the examples of Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., whose pacifistic philosophies in the face of oppression changed the world. Indeed, the value of turning the other cheek has been a favorite

subject of sermons since the founding of Christianity. Yet the early Christians were hounded like foxes, driven underground by the Romans (literally into caves), just as many people today are oppressed. Tolerance of religion is widespread in the Western world, but tolerance of sexual orientation and love of learning remains threadbare, at least in the culture of most high

schools.

CA is a haven for "eccentric" people, and yet in a perfect world eventually CA would not be needed in its current mission. Allow me to elaborate. In this perfect world, there would be acceptance of any and all ideas, rendering unnecessary the haven CA has become. In my opinion, students who are graduated bear the responsibility of trying to change the world in a way that renders their alma mater superfluous.

Yet, until that day, CA will exist, and it is unfair to ask male CA students to graduate defenseless into what can often be a very dangerous world. For the success of Gandhi and Dr. King's nonviolent movements did not simply hinge upon the fact that their movements were nonviolent, no; rather it was their choice of nonviolence. Indians in the British colony and oppressed African-Americans in America both had the numbers and organization to wage a violent uprising. Yet they chose nonviolence. In a similar vein, our campus will never truly exist in a state of pure common trust until lockers are offered for every student, but sit idle for want of thievery.

And so, ignorance of the martial arts is no way to foster a nonviolent spirit; rather it is the choice to not use them that shows the way. I suspect that, if the majority of CA boys found themselves in a scrape, their fighting styles would range from shrieking terror to the fetal position. We must teach the men and women of this fine institution the martial arts, if only to avoid the necessity of their use.



Trees on CA's Campus. Photo by Henry Kim '11.

Fall Running

by Kate Nussenbaum '11

"The cross-country teams at CA welcome runners of all abilities, including those who have never raced before, and are open to anyone who likes to run and wants to improve." So begins the description of the cross-country teams in the course catalog. Whether or not this text has changed from previous years, as I sat in the gym on the first day of pre-season and thought about a new course, Fall Running, I felt a shift, a growing focus on improvement that threatened to leave runners of lesser abilities feeling less welcome than in years past.

Though perhaps not an intended consequence, the creation of the Fall Running PE class made some returners question whether or not they belonged on the cross-country team. Indeed, at our first team meeting, when our coach started explaining the differences between the class and the team, I looked around nervously. "Crap," I thought. "I should probably switch into the PE class." Then I remembered that I was one of two captains, and abandoning the team was clearly not an option.

The differences between the class and the team were explicitly outlined. The class met three days a week for an hour, and focused on running for the sake of exercise. The team met five days a week for two hours, and focused on running competitively. Although these two groups were separate, the line between them was not hard and fast; runners who did not train over the summer, or who were recovering from injury, could join fall running until they were ready to return to the team.

Even if I had not been a team captain, switching into the PE class was not an option I would have considered. I didn't care that I hadn't trained as much as I should have over the summer, I didn't care that my life would be a lot less hectic without the extra time commitment of the team, and I didn't care that I hated the feeling of racing. Over the course of my first three CA falls, being a member of the team had proven to be incredibly enriching and fun.

On the surface, the addition of the PE course sounds like a good idea. But when I think back to my freshman self and try to imagine whether I would have taken the course instead of joining the team had it been an option, I worry that I might have. And although fall runners are encouraged to become part of the team when they feel ready, I can't imagine many choosing this route. I know my freshman and sophomore years I looked forward to coming to practice every day because of the fantastic team dynamic, and I pushed myself to improve so I'd be able to run alongside my older and faster teammates, converse more easily, and maybe eventually, even contribute to the team's success. The actual experience of running was not what

drove me on initially, and I worry that that is all the young fall runners are getting to know. The truth is, most people don't feel fantastic when they first start to run, so being offered the option to run longer distances more frequently is not particularly enticing.

The number of cross-country runners who end up in the training room after a few days of practice was the main impetus for the creation of the class. The Athletic Department thought (with reason) that many new runners' bodies were strained by the demands of traveling miles over hard pavement. It is true that if beginners are pushed, or perhaps push themselves beyond a reasonable point, to keep up with faster, experienced runners, they will likely get hurt.

But the great joy of cross-country is that not everyone needs to run at the same level. Unlike other sports, say soccer, where one weak player on the field can impede the star player's ability to shine and the team's ability to win, cross-country allows the top runners to remain unaffected by weak performances from the bottom half of the team. Since only the top seven runners contribute to the team's score, the slower runners on the team can improve at their own pace, without the pressure of potentially hurting their teammates. Some argue that inexperienced runners take away too much of the coach's attention; after all, cross-country is a varsity team and the top runners deserve to have that competitive, varsity experience. But I think even the best runners on the team would say that having a young crop of inexperienced runners is exciting, not to mention necessary for the team's sustainability over the years. And, though it sounds bad when put in words, having a larger group of slow runners gives everyone a boost of self-confidence; faster runners get to outpace more people, and those of us on the other end of the spectrum find comfort in a crowd.

Perhaps for the boys' team, the PE course was beneficial; it had grown to such an enormous size that the coach couldn't give each runner the attention he wanted to. But for the first time since I joined the team freshman year, the girls' team has shrunk to a size that feels small. With only two freshmen, we're missing that new burst of energy; with such a small number of runners, we no longer have the same sense of empowerment or spirit. That's not to say the team dynamic isn't as wonderful as it has ever been; it is, and for that reason the size of the team makes me sad. I know that there are runners out there missing out on a fantastic team experience, the same way I might have had Fall Running been an option my freshman year. I urge the Athletic Department to reconsider the course next year or at least how it is presented; high school is the last chance most students have to be a member of a sports team, an experience valuable even for non-competitive, sub-par student-athletes.

Roving Reporter

compiled by Steff Spies '12

Question: If you could dress any teacher up for Halloween, who would it be and what would you dress them up as?

Alistair Wilson '11: Brendan Shepard as Mr. Clean.

Bruce Duggan '12: Selim Tezel as MC Hammer because when doing an indirect proof he always reminds us that we "can't touch this" given.

Sarah Bennet '11: I would dress up Jamie with Devil Horns.

Lillian Xie '12: Frau Adams as a mouse.

Andy Eaton '11: Selim Tezel as a cat.

Ashley Brock '12: Laura Twichell as a Jersey Shore character

Max Samels '12: Selim Tezel as an oompa loompa.

Emmie Hoffman '14: Martha Kennedy as Posh Spice, David Rost as Baby Spice, Jeff as Scary Spice, Rick Hardy as Ginger Spice, and Jenny Brennan as Sporty Spice.

David Rost: Peter Laipson as Frankenfurter again.

Jamie Morris-Klement: Tonhu as a candystriper.

Have something to say? Write for the Opinions section of *The Centipede*! Email Pauly Daniel or Scott Berkley.

Waiting for Superman: Two Educators Respond

An Honest Documentary

Biased Negativity

by Laura Twichell

After weeks of anticipation on my part, the film “Waiting for Superman” finally arrived in Boston, promising to ignite the debate on American public education. Directed by Davis Guggenheim of “An Inconvenient Truth”, this film aspires to be the catalyst for education that Guggenheim’s previous effort has been for the environment. Even before it was released publicly, the film began to generate controversy, especially from teachers’ unions who decried the film’s portrayal of public school teachers.

So what is all the buzz about? “Waiting for Superman” weaves together two perspectives, those of children and families seeking a quality education and those of adults, mostly educational reformers. From the children and families, we see the human side of a system that sometimes seems to forget that its reason for being is educating children. From the adults, we understand the complexity of the system and some of the reasons behind our current situation. The film suggests that over time our educational system has become less an institution serving children and more one serving adults.

The stories of the children are heart-rending, as several families, mostly urban and living in low-performing school districts, attempt to rescue their kids from the default option of the neighborhood public school. The analogy of the charter school lottery, where children’s futures are determined by a bingo ball or by a slip of paper pulled from a box, suggests the lottery into which we are all born. Educationally speaking, some of us “get lucky” and are born into high-achieving school districts or the resources to choose an alternative education. Some of us are unlucky and are born into communities where the likelihood of an education that prepares us for college or even teaches us to read beyond an elementary level is low. Beyond the random circumstances of birth, the lottery also shows the futility of this system, where character, work ethic, potential or ambition has no bearing on the probability of acceptance into a school that can help us succeed.

On the adult side, the movie showcases some of the most interesting figures in school reform. Geoffrey Canada, the founder of a revolutionary social experiment called the Harlem Children’s Zone, discusses his work in New York and his disaffection with the educational system in general. Michelle

Rhee, the superintendent of the Washington D.C. school system, talks about her challenges changing a system that she “knows” is terrible. Randi Weingarten, the head of the American Federation of Teachers, is, well, good at her job. And therein lies much of the film’s tension. Her job is to protect adults, while the other reformers in the film ostensibly work for children.

With this dichotomy in place, the reformers certainly come off as the good guys—the frustrated adults working for children and against adult interests—while the union and the public schools serve as antagonists. The message in this film, however, is not that public schools are bad or even that the union is evil (although Guggenheim certainly portrays it as outdated). The message I took home is that we are lost. Somehow, across years of change and cultural shifts, our schools have stopped working for children’s futures and have started working for adults’ presents. The blame lies in our fear of change. Guggenheim shows us some of the changes currently under consideration, minimizing their scariness and mocking our fear. While bad teachers have something to lose as schools change for the better, the rest of us stand to gain—as teachers, as students and as citizens. We can’t afford not to change. We can’t afford to leave so much to chance.

Laura Twichell teaches English and French at CA.

by Ben Stumpf

In 2006, Davis Guggenheim directed what I consider the most important film in history - An Inconvenient Truth. His current hit, Waiting for Superman, is also impressive, but this time it carries a message I’m tired of hearing: public schools are broken, unions are impediments to progress, privatization begets innovation, and so on. Many of our public schools need help, no doubt, but the film misses an opportunity to celebrate some of the best examples of successful teaching here and abroad, deciding instead to focus primarily on a few charter schools in the United States. It looks only at the most broken public schools, and the most deviant teachers, while failing to

interview successful and innovative public school teachers about the actual pressures of their jobs, where their bottlenecks are, and what their greatest successes have been. It pins too much blame on teachers rather than communities, health, poverty, inequality, and other systemic issues. It offers too much prescription, not enough diagnosis, and the film points to the charter school as a magic pill.

For the most part I like the idea of charter schools. I spent many months at the Parker School in Devens, a famous example of Ted Sizer’s Essential Schools, and



Photo courtesy of IMDB.com.

I saw some of the best educational models in my career. But a number of studies, such as Stanford’s 2009 CREDO study, have concluded that most charter schools fare no better than public schools, and many fare worse. Often their models are unsustainable and limited in scope, and many have been forced to close their doors. I would prefer to see charter schools as laboratories for educational innovation, with the hope of passing the best ideas back to the public system.

I will not argue that teachers’ unions are perfect. But the film fails to recognize the value that unions have brought to teachers and students over the years, such as smaller class sizes, better facilities, individualized learning plans, and gender equity. The list of causes the National Education Association has thrown significant weight behind over the past century is momentous: women’s suffrage, the G.I. Bill, the Civil Rights Act, the Bilingual Education Act, and a resolution opposing discrimination of same-sex couples, just to name a few. Blaming the unions seems unfair here—even Arne Duncan has pointed out that many of the problems in the film exist in states without teachers’ unions. And in the Finnish education system, often touted as one of the best in the world, teachers are unionized and granted tenure.

I’d say much more if space permitted - the film leaves so many unanswered questions. Who is behind the funding of the film, and the expansion of charter schools? How can we re-energize and retrain teachers in challenging classrooms, rather than simply axe them? Might there be more valuable assessments than standardized testing, such as those described at fairest.org? And most importantly, what examples can we draw upon here and abroad to guide us towards schools and communities that support learning? Rick Ayers does a good job summarizing my concerns in his September 27th column in the Washington Post - worth the read - as does Diane Ravitch in her speech to the UTLA on Sept 24th - worth the YouTube!

Ben Stumpf teaches computer courses at CA.

**Interested in writing for
The Centipede? Email Kate
Nussenbaum.**

When The CA Bubble Pops: Gay Issues in the News

by Rebecca Colson ’11

Compared to other high schools, it is easy to be openly gay at Concord Academy. No one will beat you up for your sexuality; no one will harass you. It is possible to hear a few gay jokes walking through the halls, but often those are easier to shrug off than bruises and direct verbal attacks. Our school boasts of founding the first Gay-Straight Alliance, and it is one of the reasons why people feel so safe at CA. Still, CA students can’t forget that the outside world exists, and that there are ignorant and bigoted people out there.

When we elected President Obama, this country took a big step towards acceptance and rights for gay people. Then again, this country also regressed by passing Proposition 8 in California, which defined marriage in the traditional way: as a union between one man and one woman. The California Supreme Court had previously decided that it was unconstitutional to dis-

criminate between same-sex couples and heterosexual couples, so same-sex marriages had been allowed. Since then Proposition 8 has gone to the courts, and most recently an appeals court judge ruled that Proposition 8 was unconstitutional. The verdict states that Proposition 8 “places the force of law behind stigmas against gays and lesbians, including: gays and lesbians do not have intimate relationships similar to heterosexual couples; gays and lesbians are not as good as heterosexuals; and gay and lesbian relationships do not deserve the full recognition of society.” Massachusetts took a similar step forward in July when a federal judge ruled that its Defense of Marriage Act was unconstitutional.

Another major gay-rights issue was resolved on October 12, when a federal judge ordered the military to stop enforcing “don’t ask, don’t tell.” The 17-year-old policy essentially prevents members of the military from serving while openly gay or lesbian. While it was put in place to protect service members from being investigated for

potential homosexual activities, it has had the effect of closeting those who are gay or lesbian. And still the military has pursued and sought to determine the sexuality of service members, ignoring the “don’t ask” part of the law. The policy is still in effect according to the Service Members Legal Defense Network website, and service members identified as gay or lesbian are still allowed to be dishonorably discharged. To quote the website, “A service member can still be fired if outed by his or her parents; a service member can still be fired for revealing his or her sexual orientation while making a statement to the police that would prevent or help solve a crime; a service member’s middle school teacher can still out the service member ten years after he came out to her in social studies class; a service member can still be discharged if he reports that someone has threatened to kill him for being gay; a service member can still be fired for hugging someone of the same sex; a service member can still be fired for getting married; and a

service member can still be fired for saying she would like to return from Iraq to care for her dying girlfriend.” The country has taken a step forward, but there is still work to do.

Homophobia and hate seems to have been on the rise recently, with a number of recent teen suicides because of anti-gay bullying. There is a Facebook group that has been set up to remember these boys on October 20th by wearing purple to raise awareness in an effort to stop the harmful bullying. On the Facebook page organizers recognize: “Tyler Clementi, Seth Walsh, Justin Aaberg, Raymond Chase, Asher Brown, Cody J. Barker, Harrison Chase Brown, Caleb Nolt, Billy Lucas, Jeanine Blanchette, and Chantal Dube.” The “It Gets Better Project” has also been quite active on YouTube in response to the recent suicides. These responses suggest that, while such bullying is more of a non-issue at CA, it is still important to remember that the fight for equal rights is not over, and that anyone can make a difference.

Breakin’ News

by Josh Suneby ’11

“Anything you want to do, anything you want to become, you can make it happen,” advised Brandon “Peace” Albright during CA’s assembly block on September 30th. And, after watching his dance troupe, Illstyle & Peace Dance Company, perform Albright’s words almost seem believable. Students and teachers alike were transfixed as three members of the dance group from Philadelphia locked, popped and broke. Albright, Illstyle & Peace’s artistic director, began the assembly by giving students a brief introduction to the history of hip-hop, debunking the common misconception that “pop-locking” is a style of dance. After describing different types of dance, he and two members of his troupe demonstrated them with vibrant, seamless performances. For many students, the highlight of the program was when Albright introduced his friend, beat-boxer Anointed S, who perfectly replicated not only the sounds of different drums, but also the noise one might hear while standing outside a club, and the “Transformers” sounds. Christine Wu ’11 couldn’t believe her eyes and her ears. “Throughout his whole act, I was just hysterically laughing because Anointed was just incredible. I guess it didn’t register in my mind that a human being could make sounds come out sounding so real,” she said. Hannah Therrien ’12 said her favorite part of the performance was the breaking at the end with the dancers and members of the CA community. “The moves required so much strength and stamina, yet they still appeared very graceful and fluid,” she said. Sam Miller ’12 whose break-dancing routine

started with a full flip particularly impressed both the audience and the performers. CA dance teacher, Richard Colton, commented on the magic of Illstyle & Peace’s performance: “I knew everything was meshing, as in the best performances, between audience and dancer. I loved how quiet the audience got when Brandon moved into slow motion the first time. And, of course, Anointed, the beat-boxer is a superstar, like an original Greek actor where the voice and the body are one, a total performer!” After the assembly, Illstyle & Peace dancers led a master class at CA’s dance studio. Close to 30 students attended. Many of Colton’s students participated and he noticed how the performance and the class seemed to give his students a different sense of internal rhythm. Colton said, “A great dancer is a convergence of different dance techniques in one individual.” Therrien loved both seeing and learning the different techniques the dance troupe used. She said, “I thought it was amazing that the dancers could isolate and move parts of their bodies in so many different ways, rather than moving the entire body smoothly as a whole, which is often done in ballet. Also, the dancers could tense and un-tense their bodies to create a jerking movement. This is something I would like to learn more about and apply in class because it strengthens muscles and opens up more opportunities for dancing.” Jessica Franks ’12 also enjoyed both the performance and the master class. “The passion all three dancers had for dance was truly amazing. They were creative, enthusiastic, and great teachers. It was amazing to see them dance and work.”



Illstyle & Peace Dance Company with student volunteers.
Photo by Gail Friedman.

Sam Miller: Not a Dancer?

by Abby Brooke ’13

Sam Miller ’12 claims he can’t dance. “I can do some cool tricks, but really, I’m not a dancer!” insists Miller, with an overwhelmed smile on his face. But after a recent break dancing performance during September 30th assembly, some students find that a little hard to believe. Jaws dropped and many walked out of the PAC wondering, where did he learn those moves and what else can he do? Miller’s ability to move in ways that seem to defy the laws of physics began with gymnastics when he was nine. “I took classes for a couple years and I learned a lot, but I learned the most after I stopped taking lessons,” he recalls. Even after he had left the gymnastics classes, Miller would return to the gym on his own time. Simple tumbling was never enough for Miller, whose personal motto is, “Hey, that looks like fun, I think I’ll try it.” It was this attitude that drew him to break dancing and helped him learn many of the moves that stunned even professional dancer Brandon “Peace” Albright. In 2008 and again in 2009, Miller’s innate eagerness next led him to circus camp where he learned how to perform more advanced acrobatics and how to juggle objects like knives and flaming batons. “Everyone thinks fire must be

harder,” Miller explains, “but actually it’s knives. If you catch fire the wrong way you usually have time to drop it before the burn is too bad; if you catch a knife the wrong way, you’re going to get cut!” Miller is no stranger to injury. Being a wrestler, he has seen his share of bruises, but he has acquired many of his injuries in more interesting ways. Last year Miller held a handstand for so long that when he stood up, the rush of blood to his head caused him to pass out. “I remember waking up on the lawn with the dog sniffing my face,” he said. But he experienced his worst injury while dirt biking, a passion that he inherited from his father. “I took a turn badly and I was sliding like crazy,” Miller says, using his hands to demonstrate the steep angle of the fall. “I actually broke my finger when I crashed, but I was so embarrassed at the skid I didn’t even notice.” With gymnastics, wrestling, dirt biking, and break dancing, Miller needs to have a lot of strength and stamina, so he works out two hours a day, mainly doing basic exercises that use his body weight as resistance including running, chin-ups, and push-ups. But despite his many accomplishments and seemingly odd talents, Miller is always looking for a new challenge. “I’m hoping one day I’ll be able to juggle something really hard. Maybe chickens,” he said.

Ceramics Reshaped

by Burgess Powell ’13

Although Ben Eberle ’99 is only beginning his third year as CA’s ceramics teacher, he has already instituted many changes to the program, including a revamp of the studio, the creation of a different Ceramics 3 course, and the development of new, creative assignments for all of his courses, but particularly for Ceramics 1. Anyone new to CA cannot appreciate the major changes in the layout of the ceramics studio, but three years ago, the wheels were divided on either side of the studio and the tables were separated, creating two disconnected groups of people. But Eberle decided to change the set-up. “The whole point of ceramics is that it’s an extremely social art form,” he explained. Moving all the wheels to one end of the room and pushing the tables together “created a much more dynamic studio.” Other physical changes include a new slab roller and pug mixer so students no longer have to “reclaim,” that is, make usable again, already-handled clay, by hand. Eberle has also changed aspects of the ceramics courses, both altering and building upon their old forms. Ceramics 1 continues to have the same objectives. Eberle said, “Ceramics 1 is a nice broad foundation overview where we look at different handbuilding techniques, try to introduce conceptual ways of working, and then of course, get on the wheel.” But while keeping the objectives the same, he has added three new projects including the module project, the round-square challenge and the making of ceramic stools. Introduced last spring in Ceramics 1, the module project was a big success. Eberle describes it as a “nice blend of the relatively simple idea of making little modules, but also complicated by having to make a big vessel.” Izzy Mattoon ’13 commented, “I found the process of creating large scale art out of smaller components both interesting and fun.” The round-square challenge is a Ceramics 1 project added this fall. Students divide into teams, with one creating a large

square structure, and the second making a large round structure. Both are created from individual parts. After completion, each team must figure out a way to transform their structure into the opposite shape using all the clay. After that, Ceramics 1 students will also make ceramic stools for the first time ever. Ceramics 2 remains similar to the original program of “a total intensive course on the wheel.” In contrast, however, Eberle has completely reworked Ceramics 3 over the past two years and now divides it into two classes: a handbuilding and sculptural ceramics course in the fall and an advanced wheel-throwing course in the spring. Though always interesting, introducing new projects is not always easy. “These projects require students to corral themselves a little bit,” Eberle explained. The average CA student doesn’t have much time for studio work outside of the two 80-minute blocks a week devoted to the class. Firing schedules are also an important consideration for the ceramics curriculum. Projects such as ceramic stools can be difficult unless there is a strict schedule for pieces to dry and be ready for bisking, the first round of firing, since kiln space is limited. Visual Arts Department Head Cynthia Katz also said, “The flow of firing [is important] so student work can become a part of the hallway shows.” Another challenge is modifying the fall semester schedule since it’s much shorter than the spring semester. Eberle said that in the end, he hopes to “have projects that are creative and keep people’s attention, but can be completed in the allotted amount of time.” So how are CA students responding to the changes in the ceramics program? Katz commented, “If enrollments are any indication, the ceramics program is booming.” Last spring two sections of Ceramics 1 were necessary to accommodate the number of requests. With the prospect of former Ceramics 1 students continuing their ceramics careers at CA, Eberle also looks forward to an increase in Ceramics 2 enrollment. Both Katz and Eberle think the new program’s shape is good.

Stay Tuned for the Concert G’s

by Ryan Hussey ’13

You may have heard the name, “The Concert Gs,” floating around the Stu-Fac, and you may have been wondering what it refers to. The Concert Gs is the new, all-male acapella group on campus. Though it sounds as if it may well be, the group’s name is not a musical reference; Co-head and founder Andrew Murray ’11 explained, “Since we’re such “total g’s,” the name just made sense for our group.” Murray is leading the group with Nick Mirin ’11. Both are excited about the potential of Concord Academy’s first all-male acapella group. They hope an all-male group will allow more men more singing opportunities, since the existence of all-female and coed groups means that in the past CA women have had more chances to sing in a group. Mirin also notes that all-male acapella is the “most traditional form.”



Nick Mirin ’11 and Andrew Murray ’11.
Photo by Therese Ronco ’11.

The Concert Gs plan to perform a blend of music, including pop and R&B. Mirin says they hope to sing “lots of popular songs that people like, but that other groups don’t typically perform.” The group looks forward to participating in all the events that the other CA acapella groups sing at; however since The Concert G’s are new this year, it has been difficult to get

on some programs. Murray explains that despite this, “The administration has been quite cooperative. They have given us the okay to perform at Grandparent’s Day.” The group has found popularity right away; Murray and Mirin have had twenty people audition for the group’s ten slots. Mirin also explained, “There wasn’t much competition between acappella groups for members; the amount of overlap is pretty small.” The Concert Gs have members from all four grades. When auditioning for other singing groups, freshmen often compete for only a few slots since so many spaces are filled by returning students, but because the Concert G’s had no existing members, more new students had the chance to join. But a single-sex acapella group has its challenges as well as benefits. So say Murray and Mirin as well as Grace Blewer ’11, a co-head of The Pitches, the all-female acapella group. All three students comment that certain songs simply don’t sound good with only one gender singing. On the flip side, however, some songs or genres sound much better with a singular sound. Murray points to 80’s rock music as an example of a genre that sounds better sung by only lower-octave males. You can listen to the Concert G’s at its first performance on Grandparent’s Day.

The Loss of Moss: Reactions from a Perplexed CA Football Community

by Eitan Tye '12

The most touchdown receptions ever recorded in a single season; the second most touchdowns all-time by a wide receiver; fifth most yards all-time by a wideout; the most feared deep-threat receiver in the history of the National Football League. These are just a few of Randy Moss's accomplishments over his thirteen year career in the NFL. Most recently, Moss enjoyed three productive seasons and part of a fourth with the New England Patriots, leading the league with fifty touchdowns from 2007 to 2010. Yet, despite being the most electrifying receiver in Patriots' history, Moss was traded to the Minnesota Vikings for a third-round draft pick on October 6.

Although tight-lipped head coach Bill Belichick will hide the real reasoning behind the trade, many Patriots fans sensed a strained relationship between Moss and the team. Moss began to indicate that 2010 would be his last season with the team as early as last February, stating, "I don't think they're going to re-sign me back. So, after this season, if there is not a lockout, I'll be looking for a new team." Moss signed a three-year contract with the Patriots after his spectacular 2007 season, but was later adamant that the organization would be unwilling to extend the deal after it expired. He reiterated this opinion in a post-game press conference on September 12, also highlighting his self-perceived lack of respect from the media: "I really don't think, me personally, that I'm appreciated...I just think from a business standpoint this probably will be my last year here as a Patriot, and I'm not retiring."

Numerous fans and reporters criticized the timing of Moss' comments, maintaining that the superstar receiver was paving his way out of New England by making

self-centered remarks instead of focusing the team's first win of the season. Moss's alleged misbehavior during a win at Miami, including a dispute with Quarterbacks' coach Bill O'Brien at halftime and anti-social behavior on the plane ride home, may have also hastened Moss' departure. Neither side, however, acknowledged the validity of the reports.

Even after the trade, both Moss and the Patriots were civil in their separation. Quarterback Tom Brady recognized that Moss "did a lot of great things for this team," while Coach Belichick described the receiver as "a pleasure to coach." Similarly, Moss commented, "Me being in New England, that was something special, I'd never been part of a team, and they're a team."

Nonetheless, Patriots' fans at Concord Academy expressed mixed reactions to the trade. Football Club member Gaurav Verma '13 strongly opposed the deal, declaring, "I don't see why the Pats are insisting on throwing the season. Knowing Belichick we'll probably end up trading the pick for some of 7th round draft picks." Ceramics teacher Ben Eberle also voiced his frustration: "This trade makes serving deep-fried Twinkies at a Weight Watchers conference look like a good idea."

However, not all the response was negative. Jack Anderson '13 supported the Patriots' decision, explaining, "The Patriots will be just as good without Randy Moss."

Patriots fans can only hope that the acquisition of new wide-receiver and former Super-Bowl MVP Deion Branch will make them forget about the loss of their future Hall of Famer. Even if Branch recreates some of his Super Bowl magic, the Patriots will undoubtedly be a less flashy team without Moss and will have to go back to a more physical and deliberate game-plan if they expect to compete with the elite in the NFL.

The Quest for the Chandler Bowl and Athletic Council's Revival

by Eitan Tye '12

"It's been awhile since we've won," lamented Acting Director of Athletics Athletic Jenny Brennan, referring to the twenty-year-old Chandler Bowl competition between Concord Academy and the Pingree School of South Hamilton, MA. On the weekend of Friday, October 22, CA will compete against its rival in golf, soccer, field hockey, and cross-country. The winner of the most games is awarded the Chandler Bowl, a trophy named by former Head of School Tom Wilcox in honor of John Chandler, a former head of school at Pingree. Even veteran faculty members struggle to recall when CA last emerged victorious, and students long for the day when they can hoist the bowl, in pride. Brennan, however, is quick to point out that CA "is not getting destroyed" year after year; over the last five years the schools have tied twice. It is only because the defending champion retains the bowl in the event of a draw that Pingree has had the honor of keeping the trophy.

Brennan said she is aware that in years past, Pingree used the Chandler Bowl to showcase their athletic prowess to prospective families by placing their admissions open house on the very weekend of the

competition. This act makes Brennan and CA students even more eager to finally defeat their rival and to prove that they can compete with such an athletic powerhouse.

This year, the newly-active Athletic Council has worked to raise spirit for the Bowl, holding a T-shirt design contest for a new CA Athletics shirt. After a year-long hiatus, Brennan revived the group, hoping it will discuss ways in which the department can be improved and techniques for raising school spirit for events like the Chandler Bowl. The council is headed by Andrew Lavrennikov '11 and Brennan said anyone who is interested should sign up. She said she hopes that Athletic Council will work to "erase the perceptions of losing" at CA and "see if there are ways to create excitement" around athletics. Brennan recalls that past Athletic Councils had instituted a student-faculty basketball game and dodgeball games; she hopes that the group can imagine similar events to foster school spirit.

Note: As we go to press, the Chandler Bowl competition nears; by the time you read this the year's result will be in—are CA chameleons dancing in the streets, or are the Pingree Highlanders chowing down from the Bowl again?

Girls Fall Sports Teams Suffer from Low Enrollment

by Kevin Cho '12

The Concord Academy girls' field hockey and soccer teams are struggling to field enough players for every game. "The total number of girls we have is enough for one full varsity team and about half of a junior varsity team," Christine Wu '11, co-captain of the varsity field hockey team, explained. She said that the numbers create a difficult situation for some players who are on the varsity team, but who play in JV games as well. The Girls varsity soccer team, according to co-captain Dani Girdwood '11, is struggling with a similar situation. "Girls varsity soccer only has 14 girls and it's been a real challenge," Girdwood said. "Most games we ask a few players from JV to join us, but it has been tough."

When asked about these enrollments, Acting Director of Athletics Jenny Brennan wrote in an email, "Overall the numbers in our girls' soccer and field hockey programs have stayed pretty solid over the last few years, but this year fewer girls did come out for the soccer team." Only 29 girls tried out this year, compared to 40 in the 2006 season. She added, "I think this year feels different because the girls' soccer program also saw a number of injuries. I believe at one point ten girls were out."

With low numbers of players, often it is unclear whether one or two teams will best serve the program. Brennan explained, "There is a no magic number for deciding how many teams we will field. But I discuss it with the rest of the athletic department to decide the best number of teams for each sport." Brennan said she prefers carrying two teams for each sport because many players suffer injury, and having two full teams usually ensures that there will be enough players for every varsity game. She recalled a season

when approximately one third of the varsity and junior varsity girls' soccer players were injured, and the teams had great difficulties maintaining the number of players necessary to field a team. This season, girls' soccer has two small, but full teams, while field hockey has a team and a half, with some players necessarily competing in both varsity and JV games.

Brennan also said she supports two levels of teams because this allows JV players sufficient time to gain experience before making the leap to the varsity level. "Having two teams is ideal," Wu explained. "I myself was on JV before Varsity, and I can say that it was one of the best experiences I've had, both as a player and as a student at CA. That was really when I improved as a player."

While Girdwood and Wu believe that a two-level system is preferable, field hockey co-captain Alex Cheney '11 pointed out that the current "team-and-a-half" situation ensures the strength of the varsity team in the future. "If the team were split up into JV and Varsity entirely," she said, "then those who move up move to varsity next year would take longer to acclimate to the new environment."

Brennan also wrote in an email, "Girls have several strong programs to choose from in the fall," including PE classes, dance, the mainstage production, and a new intramural volleyball program. "The overall number of girls participating in Athletics has not decreased significantly in the last few years, however, CA, like several other schools, has seen smaller numbers in girls soccer and field hockey. This may represent a trend that is bigger than just what we see here," she explained, adding, "I believe everything tends to even out over time so I predict the numbers will begin to grow again during the next five years."



Girls Varsity Soccer competes. Photo by Kevin Cho '12.

Specialization in High School Athletics

...continued from page 1

plays on the varsity soccer, squash, and tennis teams, said, "I play sports just because I enjoy them, whereas [others] specialize because they want to become the best they can be." But it's also true that not every student who specializes loses Martin's love of sport. Alistair Wilson '11, who was a talented cross-country runner before he started rowing competitively last summer, quit the cross-country team to focus on training for 2011 regattas. He explained that after his rowing coach said some college scouts were interested in him, he started thinking more seriously about specialization. All the same, it's Wilson's love of the sport, particularly the "tight connection" between rowers in the same boat, that drives him.

The question of specialization is not clear-cut. When asked about the possibility of overuse injuries, athletic trainer Reid Young said that he doesn't discourage specialization from an injury standpoint, but from an athletic standpoint, there are better options. For example, Young said, "I would push a basketball player towards soccer instead of just basketball...[the player can] improve his speed, footwork, hand-eye coordination, which are key." But from a practical standpoint, Eberle said, "If I knew that [a player's] ticket to college was soccer, I'd encourage him to play on a club team." In the end, as Young puts it, the ultimate decision should be on a "case by case" basis.

The Centipede

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Editorial: Donuts for All

by Dan Weiner ’11

Though perhaps slightly less promoted than common trust and academia, unity within its student body is a quality Concord Academy emphasizes. CA is fortunate to attract individuals from all around the world, and the community benefits from the resulting diversity. From the moment we step on to campus, CA imparts the importance of collaboration and camaraderie among students from a range of backgrounds.

One of the challenges to our exceptional community, however, is the divide between day students and boarders. While day students scatter to the suburbs in the evening, boarders collect in their houses. While some close friendships are indeed formed between day students and boarders, the hours boarders spend together create an environment conducive for strong relationships. Day students too form strong bonds, as it is relatively easy for them to gather outside of school. For boarders to join their peers off campus, however, they must get numerous signatures from various adults on campus.

The administration is cognizant of the intrinsic divide between the two groups of students, and it has taken appropriate steps to mitigate its effects. We have community weekends so day students do not always run home early Friday afternoons. The houses are locked during the school day so boarders cannot spend time hidden away in their rooms. Day students are not allowed to drive off campus at every burrito-related whim.

But in apparent contradiction to these efforts, our community allows what amounts to a public display of day student supremacy: donut days. A few mornings each year, the head of day students fulfills his traditional campaign promise by purchasing hundreds of treats from the local Dunkin Donuts for his constituents. We day students do not isolate

ourselves in a room to devour these goodies; no, we gorge ourselves in front of the rest of the school in the most public gathering space. As day students jostle like rowdy pigs at the trough for second and third donuts, boarders watch in mildly disgusted jealousy.

This is an absurd tradition. Few acts provoke more animosity than the flaunting of food. I’m sure that boarders indulge in their share of treats as well. But does the boarding community enjoy muffins from Main Street Café during breakfast? Do they sip Starbucks’ Frappuchinos en masse at break? Do they devour boarders-only Sorrento’s pizza during lunch in the Stu-Fac?

To be clear, I enjoy a fresh donut every so often.

The irrationality of this pastry is a valuable foil to the sometimes overly efficient nature that characterizes CA. There is something refreshing about arriving at break in the Stu-Fac and seeing those white and orange Dunkin Donuts boxes strewn across the tables instead of the usual snacks. But such pleasures must not be reserved for day students. Instead, we should institute school-wide donut days: on a given day, the day students will buy donuts for the boarders, and in return, on some other day, the boarders will purchase pastries for the day students.

To some day students, my qualms with donut days may seem frivolous at best, heresy at worst. And I too understand the importance of retaining tradition, especially in an era when the administration takes substantial liberties in altering seemingly well-established customs like Senior Coffee House and Junior ring-begs. I am not proposing the elimination of day student donuts. But we have the opportunity to reform a tradition to everyone’s benefit. The failure to act would not be seen as an expression of day student solidarity; it would only preserve one of the traditions most hostile to the day-boarder unity we strive to promote.



Photo courtesy of <http://vittlesvap.typepad.com>

Help Me Rhonda!

The Centipede advice columnist “Rhonda” helps students navigate the rocky waters of high school. If you need her help, please drop your question in the “Help Me Rhonda” box in the Upper Stu-Fac.

Q: Rhonda, I think this one senior is pretty cool, but I’m not sure she knows who I am. Can I hug her at her chapel? - A huggable Froshie

Rhonda: Froshie, If you give a senior a hug when she doesn’t know your name, she will forever place you in that category of underclassmen who are in awe of the seniors’ beauty, style, and general awesomeness, but too shy to actually introduce themselves. If this senior really is nice and you want to be friends, you should make sure she knows who you are first. That said, everyone wants more chapel hugs and giving one just might jump-start a lifelong relationship, but chances are an awkward embrace with someone whose name you don’t know probably won’t develop into anything.

Q: Rhonda, I don’t know what to do now that no one is sitting by the compost to direct me. Where do metal forks go? - Lost and confused

Rhonda: Lost, Depending on the materials used in the making of the fork, as well as what leftover food products may be on it, the utensil might belong in one of several receptacles in the Stu-Fac dish room area. Probably the best way to make sure is to plan your meals ahead of time and send the Environmental Co-heads multiple emails each day inquiring what you should do with your fork. Or you could just put it in the soaking bin like everyone else.

Q: Rhonda, I want to play both volleyball and basketball this winter. How do I pick which team to join? - A lover of two balls

Rhonda: LTB, If you really love both basketball and volleyball, then you simply can’t choose one over the other. If you pick volleyball, then you’ll always be thinking of basketball; if you take basketball, you’ll miss the sweet feeling of spiking one over the net. The only solution is to join the ski team. Since you’re more of an indoor winter athlete, you’ll probably suffer at least mild frostbite most afternoons, but you’ll never miss basketball or volleyball because the only thing on your mind will be the wonderful warm shower you can take when you get back from practice. But be forewarned, the ski team frequently gets back to campus on the late side, when selfish basketball and volleyball players may have used up all the hot water for themselves.

Q: Rhonda, I’m a lax bro, but I don’t really get what we’re supposed to do in the winter. How can I show off my laxing skills when there’s snow on the ground? - Lax 4 Life

Rhonda: LB, Obviously, the first mistake you made was coming to a school without a hockey team, which is the traditional winter pursuit for lax bros. Since you’re here, however, you might as well make the most of it. First, you’ll want to stock up on apparel from Polo Ralph Lauren, LaCoste, and Vineyard Vines. You can and should carry around lanyards from various lacrosse companies (it doesn’t matter that you don’t actually have a car and therefore have no keys to put on the lanyard; that’s not the point). The most important thing is to start growing your hair out so that, when spring rolls around, you’ll have

some nice lettuce flowing out the back of your helmet. As for actual laxing skills—any real lax bro knows that being a bro is more about being obnoxiously self-confident than about having real talent, so there’s no need to worry about your skills just yet.

Q: Rhonda, My friends from public school keep talking about these “parties” they go to. I don’t really know what to say when they reference different types of alcohol. Deep down, I don’t approve of their behavior, but I don’t want them to think I’m lame. How can I be myself but still participate in their conversations? - Need a handle in on this situation

Rhonda: No Handle, You might be tempted to open up about your feelings, thinking that your friends will just embrace your law-abiding personality. Wrong. Remember that these are public school kids – a race that lives and breathes to scorn prep-school kids like you. Your only hope is to do some solid analytical research on the subject and get yourself up to date on public-school alcohol vocab. Although this will take time, resist the urge to ask your advisor for help. Instead, you just need to explain the situation to your parents and have them take you a liquor store and show you around. While at the store you can say things like, “Who would ever want to drink that stuff?” But secretly remember all the names of the drinks and look them up on urbandictionary.com when you get home.

Q: Rhonda, I’m trying to find the college that will provide the best dating scene for me. Ideally, I want all the people of my gender to be unattractive, and all the people of the opposite gender to be super, super attractive. But, I’m worried that if all the people of my gender are unattractive, when I hang out with them, I will seem ugly too. Do you think hanging out with people uglier than you makes you seem hotter in comparison? Or do you just start to blend in to the ugly mass? When choosing a college, what’s the ideal level of attractiveness for the people around me? -About a six, (but an eight at CA).

Rhonda: Six (or Eight?), You need a school where you will stand out from the crowd. Although you might not have noticed amid the notoriously hot students at CA, many students at schools with sub-par levels of attractiveness develop “goggles” that make them blind to the fact that their companions are way below (or above) average. These goggles are a great coping mechanism to help people become blissfully ignorant of the fact that all of their friends are ugly, or that they’re all hot beyond belief. Members of the opposite sex will experience these goggles as well, but they will not fail to discern between the merely pretty and the absolutely gorgeous. If you go to a school like Florida State, (where the admissions process may or may not include attractiveness as one of its main criteria), all potential suitors will just develop a serious case of FSU-goggles in which they don’t even bother to acknowledge average bachelor(ette)s like you. If, however, you try your luck at MIT or another technical institution, you’re likely to be seen as a “diamond in the rough.” But if you’re like most CA grads, it won’t matter anyway because you’ll enter college lacking the necessary social skills to introduce yourself to anyone who might want to date you.

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