Young activists start new club

by Sarah Cohen ’14

A new endangered species club has transformed an eager group of Lower School students into a band of wildlife preservationists.

Student interest first cropped up last year when Hailey Smith ’20 organized an after-school event devoted to the red panda, a small Himalayan cat classified by the IUCN as “Vulnerable.” About sixty kids showed up to the event, which included an information session about endangered species, and various fundraising opportunities.

Inspired by the program’s success, the student attendees hungered for more and, soon after, they expressed interest in forming a club.

The club currently has around 15 Lower School students. So far, the students have been working on their club’s Wiki page, each of them researching and writing about an endangered animal of their choosing. “The kids are really doing this on their own, and I think that’s great,” said Lower School librarian Twig George, one of the club’s faculty advisors.

Looking ahead, she’s enthusiastic about the future of the club—potential endeavors include organizing a Lower School assembly focused on endangered species, taking a trip to the Baltimore zoo, and working on a project with the Upper School CCCP. “I think it’s a great example of how one kid’s idea can turn into a huge thing,” George said. “And the kids are all so gung-ho about it. It’s really just a great group.”

School launches search to replace three teachers

by Hannah Sibel ’13

It is not uncommon for a teacher to leave a school to pursue other endeavors, but this year three female teachers—Catherine Ambler (history), Lindsey Hendricks (science), and Angela Doyle (math)—have decided not to return.

Each department has initiated searches for replacements; candidates began appearing on campus starting March 6 to meet with various administrators, teach a short lesson to a class, and talk with students.

To maintain the existing ratio of males to females, each department is placing a high priority on hiring female candidates. “While it would be preferable to hire a female, our first priority is finding a qualified candidate who satisfies our needs,” said Elliot Huntsman, the science Department Chair.

“We are placing a greater emphasis on gender in the hiring process in the Upper School given the departure of three stellar female teachers,” Associate Head of School Betsy Leighton said.

Leighton coordinates hiring with principals and department chairs school-wide. Catherine Ambler will be leaving after her fifth year of teaching history at Park. “My fiancée Tyler [Brown], will be finished with medical school in December of this year and so I always knew that the year after this one he would be looking at residency programs and that we might have to move,” Ambler said.

The couple has decided to make the move this summer because Ambler’s fiancée would like the opportunity to work abroad for six months before he starts his residency program.

As of now Ambler and her fiancée are deciding between moving to either Thailand or Switzerland. “We both have work we could do in Thailand,” Ambler said, who has also spent a total of six months there over the course of three summers. Their plans for Geneva are not as concrete and Ambler is unsure about what she would be doing if they were to move there. They are waiting to hear back from a few places in relation to Brown’s job prospects before they decide.

After they return, Ambler will apply to graduate schools in the same cities where Brown applies for residency programs. “I am really excited about going back to school,” she said. “I feel like I have learned a lot teaching at Park but there’s something to be said for being a student again.”

Although Ambler is excited about moving abroad she is sentimental about what she will leave behind. “I knew I would love learning while teaching, but I didn’t anticipate how much I would love the students and the people that I work with,” she said. “At Park I constantly want to do my best and I really care about the people here.”

“She [Amler] has been incredible,” said history Department Chair John Kesinger. “She has so much energy, connects really well with the students, and is extremely smart.”

A newcomer to Park, Lindsey Hendricks, has also decided not to return next year.

Hendricks joined the community when the last-minute departure of science teacher Dr. Hadinya Woodham left a vacancy in the department. Hendricks had studied at Goucher College and was familiar with the area, and she’d previously taught with Teach For America in Harford, CT.

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Pairing with Dulaney High School, the Bruins’ Robotics team experiences its most successful season yet.
Gender matters

It was only a few weeks ago when word first got out that three Upper School teachers would be leaving Park in June. News traveled fast and by the end of first period, everyone was talking about it. Further, with our wonderfully perceptive students, it wasn’t long before everyone noticed a common thread among the teachers choosing to leave. Female and young. The three women departing, one each from history, science, and math, are all under the age of 30. And if you’re reading this and don’t really think this is a big deal, you should.

If you look at the numbers and the ratio, however, it may not seem critical, but at worst, we could end up with an Upper School with eight more male full time teachers than female...

And that’s significant. A faculty with eight more males than females isn’t balanced. Still, it really becomes about more than merely the number breakdown—it comes down to students’ opinions and many students feel it is important to not only have a balanced faculty, but to have teachers that all students of different genders and races can identify with.

“I think that [the void positions] should be replaced with females that are more diverse,” said Kyree Jones ’12. “I think the Upper School is pretty dominated by white male faculty. It would be good to have more female teachers around that would keep the ratio the same but also provide students with a female to talk to or just have a bond or connection with.”

With the loss of three young female teachers, the fact of the matter is the opportunity for students, and particularly girls, to have female role models is actively diminishing. It’s important in a high school or any school to have teachers that students can relate to and feel comfortable talking to.

Often times, although not always, females feel more comfortable confiding in females because there are just some things that only women can understand. The same goes for men, yet there is no shortage of males in the Upper School. The demand is for female teachers and especially young ones.

Many students had extremely tight bonds and almost “big sister” relations with some of the teachers leaving and it is a shame the girls are losing teachers with whom they feel so at ease. “I think we should replace [the female teachers leaving] with females because the teachers leaving are some of my favorite female teachers,” said Maddie Tracey ’14. “I don’t know. I think that having really smart and fun female teachers is an important thing for our school.”

To be clear, this isn’t a critique of the hiring process currently under way and we wholeheartedly acknowledge that the departments are looking at both male and female teachers for the positions. Further, departments should not hire females for the sake of hiring females if there is a more qualified male candidate. The quality of our education always comes first; but to those of you in the position to hire teachers, you should know that gender really matters to us.
**Time to talk: lessons from Immersion Week**

We need to take two weeks each year to engage social and pedagogical issues through open dialogue

by Jack Califano ’12

I will be the first to admit that, like many Park students, I find it very difficult to slow down and listen to my peers—to take the time to put down whatever it is I am working on and engage them in an authentic way that leads to genuine understanding and empathy. Between essays, tests, college apps, clubs, sports, homework, and breathing, expending time and energy to engage my friends beyond the point of “How was your weekend?” simply hasn’t been possible.

There are more important things to be done, says Park, and it makes that clear by valuing almost exclusively (through the use of grades and required assignments) the ability to produce and engage with intellectual materials of the timeless variety—to write essays and take tests about Shakespeare, Calculus, Biochemistry, and Colonialism. These things are undoubtedly valuable, but our curriculum’s focus is too narrow—in our desperate rush to do what’s been done, says Park, and it makes that clear by being way is a HUGE problem.

If we as a community do not demand that students and faculty deal with issues of sexism, racism, homophobia, self-segregation, and other problems now or once they have left the school?

The obvious answer is that they will not be able to, and it is for this reason that we, as a school, must open up a genuine and sustained dialogue about this community.

My image for this dialogue is simple: two weeks where students and faculty gather together to discuss their experiences at Park, and in the world at large; no writing assignments, no projects, no tests, no distractions of any kind—just a physical and mental space where all members of our community have a chance to slow down, listen, and reflect upon their experiences and their community; a time to acknowledge the complexities and tensions present here at Park and to deal with the real, honest issues—both social and pedagogical—which affect our community and our lives more difficult and unpleasant than they have to be. The particulars of how to conduct this process successfully are by no means a secret: Park’s Diversity Night, and the national and state level Student Diversity Leadership Conferences (SDLC), serve as excellent examples of how to create direct and meaningful dialogue between community members that might not otherwise have the opportunity to listen to one another.

I had the pleasure of experiencing such an activity a few weeks ago in the SDLC Immersion Week activity. For six hours a day, over the course of four days, I gathered in a room with 14 students and two faculty members and discussed everything from gender dynamics in the faculty to parental attitudes towards sex to episodes of racism. Through a combination of open ended, organic group discussion and more structured activities like speed dating and stoop stories, our group became engaged to the point where everyone was skipping lunch in order to stay in the conversation.

What’s more, the conversation was not only engaging—it created change. Over the course of those four days, I saw students of wildly different backgrounds and experiences open up about their experiences and actually change the way the other saw the world, something which I have never seen in a classroom before.

I can honestly say that the four days I spent in that room were the most valuable and inspiring days I have ever spent at the Park School. The value of what happened cannot be ignored.

This is why I am writing here. As a student who has truly come to love this place and the people I have met here, it pains me to see us dismissing serious problems as if they were necessary and untouchable parts of our lives.

I believe it imperative to the success of the school as a social institution that time be set aside each year to open up a school wide dialogue where we can listen to and acknowledge the tensions and anxieties that each of us face, and take meaningful steps towards understanding and changing our systems and behaviors so that we might make this school an even better place for everyone. Let’s start the conversation.

**Kinigopoulos delivers dynamic presentation to US assembly**

by Jack Feldman ’15

Stephen Kinigopoulos, a Baltimore local and the second speaker in the Helenistic Speaker series started by Niko Argeropulos ’13, gave a speech that brought light to a sometimes-dim assembly room on February 15.

As a recently-out-of-high school filmmaker—with both a Greek and Jewish heritage, and experience as a former captain of the Pikesville High basketball team—Kinigopoulos certainly wasn’t lacking in personality.

Not only did Kinigopoulos have a strong presence, but his talk was also filled with interesting content. He spoke about his current documentary on Matisyahu—naming he didn’t have the warmest feelings towards the Israeli singer—and showed us one of the music videos that he’d directed. Still, I believe what made Kinigopoulos’ assembly truly interesting was the way he presented: his style was certainly a refreshing change from the typical speaker.

Kinigopoulos was easy to connect with. Normally at assemblies, we have very intelligent speakers who bring up brilliant points. And as rewarding as that is, such dense and intellectual content can become boring after a while. As a speaker, Kinigopoulos was able to stimulate Upper School students’ attention in a way that many past assembly speakers have failed to stimulate it.

The atmosphere that Kinigopoulos created was one in which high school students could have fun and laugh—one that I hadn’t seen before. He was willing to answer questions about his career, but also able to respond, with a smile, to a question about how much he could bend press. (The answer to the latter question, if you’re curious, is 420 pounds). Yes, it is true that our other speakers have spoken about intriguing material, but many of them presented without much emotion or energy.

We are a school with smart teachers and students, as well as many opportunities for incredible scholars and speakers to come and present at our assemblies. However, I think it can all get a little bit stale.

Kinigopoulos’ speech at assembly was a refreshing break from our ordinary assembly rut. From calling on students by addressing them as “my man,” to telling us about his college partying experiences, Kinigopoulos gave us a break from the same old routine, and instead gave a talk that was relaxed and fun to engage. For that, I was very appreciative.
Club faces off in weekend robotics competition

Robotics Club pairs with students from Dulaney High to form full team

by Melanie Weiskopf '15 and Jeremy Cohen '12

The Robotics Team advanced to the semifinal round of the Chesapeake Regional Competition last weekend. Each year, the team’s objective is to build a robot that can play a specific game. In this year’s game, “Rebound Rumble,” Team 1719’s robot needed to accurately shoot basketballs into hoops and balance on a see-saw. After spending Thursday practicing and fine-tuning their robot, teams play “qualification matches” Friday and early Saturday to establish their ranking in the tournament. After qualification matches, the eight top-ranked teams at the competition each selected two other teams to join their three-team “alliance” for the elimination round.

The goal of Park’s Robotics Team was, at a minimum, to be selected for an alliance. The team had been picked two years ago, but not last year. “We’re definitely hoping to make it past the qualifications,” team member Hannah Block ’15 said before the tournament.

After performing well in the qualification matches with their top-notch basketball shooter, the team was selected to join an alliance with nearby Boys’ Latin. The alliance won its quarterfinal round and advanced to the semifinals, where it lost. Still, Team 1719 was ecstatic, as this was the first time that it had ever made it to the semifinal round.

“The competition is tremendously rewarding for the students at many levels,” said Mike Dennis, the team’s adult leader. “Beyond the fun and challenge, we hope that the students gain an appreciation of their ability to solve technical challenges that will inspire them to seriously consider technical fields for their educational and career options.”

Arts department hires new part-time replacements

by Julia Gross '14

While three other Upper School departments are currently in their hiring processes for next fall, the arts has already welcomed new faculty into the classroom this semester. Collin Lidston will take over for Upper School art teacher Christine Tillman when she goes on maternity leave and Janna Rice is the spring semester new Photo One instructor.

Rice replaces Lansburgh

According to Director of Arts and Upper School arts teacher Carolyn Sutton, Upper School art teacher Terry Lansburgh announced at the end of the 2010-2011 school year that he wanted to retire.

“He said it with a tear in his eye and a sadness on his face that made us all understand that he did not really want to retire, he just did not want to work all year,” said Sutton. “So we asked him if he would be interested in teaching just the first semester and we could find a good teacher to teach the second semester who would be able to come back year after year.”

Lansburgh agreed to this and, at the start of the 2011-2012 school year, a faculty committee, made up of all members of the visual arts department, narrowed down the potential candidates for the second semester. Photography I teaching position and brought two finalists onto campus where each met with a student committee and participated in a teaching demonstration.

Before Winter Break, Sutton offered the position to Rice, an applicant with years of university-level teaching experience: “I think she is terrific,” Sutton said. “She has tons of experience both as a darkroom teacher and as a digital photography teacher. She really understands the darkroom. It’s unusual to get somebody with her degree of experience who is flexible enough to teach the course one semester at a time and who is flexible enough to come in second semester.”

“Terry’s plan is to come back each semester in the fall and then Rice will teach second semester every year from now on,” Sutton added. “We are really lucky.”

“I like [Rice’s Photography I class],” Kelsey Parks-Smith ’13, a student currently enrolled in Rice’s class, said. “Janna’s ways of teaching photography are a lot different from Terry’s: test sheets have turned into test strips—and that saves paper—and we have switched to a different brand of paper and film that saves money for other needs in the darkroom. Overall, I think Janna is a wonderful addition to the arts department.”

According to Rice the semester has been going well so far. “It has been really nice and everyone has been very welcoming,” Rice said. “Park reminds me a lot of the college experience because its really up to the student but I’m here as a mentor and to encourage the students in their Lidston fills in for Tillman photography and in their art.”

The second newcomer to the arts department is Lidston. Lidston fills the void left by Upper School arts teacher Christine Tillman—Tillman is currently on maternity leave which began March 10—and his hiring came as a result of a search led by Tillman and Sutton.

“I was looking for someone who was not only strong in observational painting and drawing, but would also work with kids around ideas, and jump between media, helping kids think and brainstorm,” Tillman said. “Junior Portfolio and Illustration are much more thinking-oriented classes, and so we needed someone who could do both.”

The three final candidates for Tillman’s position then spent half a day at Park where they did a teaching demonstration, had lunch with students, and met with both the arts department and Upper School Principal Daniel Bergman.

“[Looking for a temporary replacement for Tillman] was really different from looking for a long-term sub—and we’d expected it to be different,” Sutton said.

“What happened was we found candidates who had great academic training, really great studio practice, but not a lot of teaching experience; they were fairly recent out of graduate school. We knew the minute we looked at Collin’s portfolio that he could cover the classes that Christine teaches with no problem in terms of knowing the content of the material; he was also the oldest of the candidates we brought in and he really understands the culture of independent schools.”

In preparation for his stint, Lidston started shadowing Tillman at the end of February to ensure a smooth transition into her classes once she goes on maternity leave.

In addition, Lidston has also been teaching some of the after school figure drawing classes. “It became clear that I could not teach my after school figure drawing class,” Tillman said.

“Being on my feet for five and a half hours a day was becoming a problem, and my doctor said that a substitute teacher for my class would be very good idea. So, Carolyn and I agreed that we should bring Collin in.”

“One of my primary goals is to make sure that the direction of the classes take make sense with what Christine did while she was here,” Lidston said. “There might be some things that I want to do in the course, but, for the students, I really want to make sure that the semester as a whole makes sense.”

Seniors earn art and writing awards from national contest

Three seniors have been recognized by the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers. Maddi Wyda '12 earned a Gold Key—the organization’s highest regional honor—for her art portfolio. Daniel Stern ’12 earned two Gold Keys, one for a dramatic script that he’d written in Howard Berkowitz’s Playwriting course and one for a personal poem that he’d written in Kevin Coll’s Writing Life Stories course. Jack Cali-fano '12, finally, was awarded an Honorable Mention for his art portfolio.

Gold Keys are awarded to approximately seven to 10 percent of the applicants from a region, while about 15 to 20 percent earn honorable mentions. Gold Key portfolios and pieces are forwarded onto the national competition, and winners of national recognitions may have pieces published or included in the Al-liance’s exhibitions.

“I’m just amazed that I won the award,” said Wyda. “To me it just meant that no matter how crazy what I’ve been working on can seem, it made a difference to someone. It gives me a lot more confidence in myself and my ideas.”
After 25 years, Keith decides to call it quits

Helen Keith has announced her retirement from running the School Store

Helen Keith, who has been operating the bookstore and school store since 1987, will retire at the end of this school year.

Keith joined the Park community in 1983 when she enrolled her daughter Kara Keith Hickok '95 in first grade. Hickock is now a physical education teacher and coach of JV Lacrosse and Varsity Field Hockey teams.

Keith chose Park because she thought the environment “was the kindest sweetest way for kids to adapt to school,” she said. “They were so happy.” By 1987, after involvement in the Parents’ Association, Keith was being offered jobs at school, and agreed to work in the school bookstore, then a small closet.

Keith has been close by her daughter since her fifth grade year. “I love her being around,” Keith said, “and that’s one of the true gifts of being in this school, I got to watch her grow up.”

Having her mother around has “always been part of my life, so I’ve never thought much about it,” Hickok said. “I still love being able to pop in and see her every so often; it was fun. She got to know my friends really well.”

“It’s not going to make a big difference at this point,” she said. “I very rarely see her [Keith] at school, but it is nice to now she’s here, I’ll miss having her around.” Now, Hickok said, she’ll have to make a few more trips to Keith’s house.

Keith has been contemplating retirement for the past few years and thought now was the right time.

“I think I have places to go and people to visit,” she said. Keith hopes to visit Europe, but also added that she’d like to see the states as well. She’ll spend time in her garden and doing projects around the house.

Though Keith is looking forward to retirement, she will also miss Park. Some of Keith’s closest friends are on campus, and she has loved watching students grow up through Park. “I really stayed much longer than I intended and the biggest reason is because of the kids,” she said. “I will miss them terribly.”

“I wouldn’t have been on this campus for almost 30 years if the ride wasn’t worth it,” said Keith.

Students React:

“Her husband, who is a teacher at Loch Raven Technical Academy, has not left his job yet and doesn’t plan to do so until Doyle has secured one for herself elsewhere.

“It just felt like it was time for a change,” Doyle said. “I didn’t come to Baltimore to settle. We are both just ready to live somewhere different and do different things.”

From Pennsylvania and Minnesota respectively, Doyle and her husband are hoping to move to a city that excites both of them. They don’t know where they will end up but California or somewhere in the South are their top prospects right now.

Doyle is not even sure she will continue teaching although another profession could require additional schooling. “I would love to try something other than teaching and maybe even go back to school,” she said. Doyle, additionally, expressed interest in working on curricula within schools but not necessarily in being a teacher. “I am really going to miss the laid back atmosphere and the relationships I have with students,” she said. “Park students are really up for anything which allows me to constantly try new things in the classroom as a teacher.”

And, certainly, Doyle’s departure will be felt: “Angela really has the ability to connect with every student that she teaches and she brings an awareness of class and gender issues for the department to focus on,” Math Department Chair Mimi Cukier said.
Commentary
The Postscript, March 14, 2012

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Google makes vague promises to protect privacy

by Christopher Mergen ’14

This past Thursday, Google updated its privacy policy. For many, privacy policies are a nuisance, something that, along with the Terms of Use and License Agreement have to be scrolled through to get to the “I Agree” button. They can seem as helpful as reading the bottom of a Medicine bottle.

Privacy policies initially don’t appear to have any bearing on how the service that they apply to works. If you’re not doing anything scandalous, how much could any privacy policy ever affect you?

But, privacy policies really do matter. Ironically, most privacy policies aren’t in defense of users’ rights. Instead, they’re documents that companies (ofentimes grudgingly) produce that explain the data about users that they collect, and what they do with it. Unless you live in a bubble, this does indeed matter.

Google’s new policy seems at first to be a revelation of simplicity — according to their website, the new policy replaces 60+ separate policies that applied to different Google services and is “a lot shorter and easier to read.”

The language of the actual policy is conversational, but the policy is almost deliberately vague. For instance, in one section it states that “when you use a location-enabling Google service, [Google] may collect and process information about your actual location, like GPS signals sent by a mobile device.”

Besides not being particularly clear about when the information is being collected (for there is no mention of which of its services are “location-enabled,” which is more of them than you’d think), lines like this don’t explain what Google is going to do with that data — it claims it will use the information it collects to do everything from “…figuring out basic stuff like which language you speak, to... [learning about] which ads you’ll find most useful or the people who matter most to you online.”

Since Google makes its money by selling advertisements, having information like this on file is a potential goldmine, allowing them to deliver advertisements of eerie relevancy.

But the location collection alone isn’t the most worrisome thing about Google — it’s the sheer amount of information that they retain. Google’s main “privacy tool,” called the Google Dashboard, displays almost all of the data associated with your Google account in one place, and looking at it is not for the faint of heart:

Google knows who knows who I contact the most (because of Gmail), my calling and texting history (because of Google Voice), what my friends look like (because of Picasa Web Albums), what I’ve written in my term papers on (because of Google Books), what videos I’ve watched (because of YouTube), and every search that I’ve made (because of Google Search History) among many other, equally stalker-ish things.

Regardless of valuing privacy, it’s creepy that any company can know so much about you and be so vague about what it does with that knowledge. People get nervous when I tell them I’ve found their address on Veracross or have been reading their Twitter, the Dashboard should give them a severe panic attack, or at least make them want to delete their Google account.

We’re living in an age when the line between our real lives and the lives we live on the internet is being erased. More and more often, we’re being asked to trade our privacy, ostensibly for the ability to share more information with our friends — information that we probably wouldn’t have shared 150 years ago. The information that we share sticks around for a lot longer, too, and everyone knows juicier bits of it have a strange tendency of turning up at inopportune moments.

Right now, the companies holding that information seem benevolent, but if the number of times Facebook has been in the news because of privacy infringement is any indicator, that’s changing. Google’s privacy policy is striking — not because it’s different from other companies, but because it’s so similar. As much as I would love to assume that Google has my best interest at heart, I don’t feel comfortable enough to do that. At this point, though, I’m in too deep. In fact, all of us are. Luckily, it’s within our power to prevent it in the future: if we take an interest in how our data is used, (and yes, actually read privacy policies), perhaps things will begin to change. I’m moving off of Google this month — it’s something I’ve been meaning to do for a long time — and I plan on finding someplace that won’t make me pay for the use of its services with my privacy.

It’s time for Obama to gear up to get re-elected

by Andrew Bahl ’14

While the Republican race has been getting the lion’s share of election coverage in recent months, there is a guy currently sitting in the White House who is gearing up in order to get re-elected. While things have been rocky at times for President Obama, I think he has had a fairly successful first term.

He wound up delivering on many of his campaign promises; passing health care reform, pulling out of Iraq and doing his part to reform unethical practices on Wall Street. While Obama seems to be in the driver’s seat in the race to get re-elected, there are actions he should take in order to strengthen both his and his party’s chances for November and beyond.

One of the first things Obama should do is jettison Joe Biden and make Hillary Clinton his Vice President. Doing this would strengthen Obama’s campaign, as Clinton has a mass appeal (she is, after all, the most admired women in America) and would help bring back some much needed energy.

Perhaps more importantly, it would help avoid the power vacuum in the Democratic Party after Obama leaves office.

Clinton would also be a more competitive contender. Biden’s tenure as Vice President has been more than held her own as Secretary of State, was a formidable candidate for President in 2008 and has developed politically since then. The only danger in making her VP would be the awkward dumping of Biden, a process that, if botched, could be a nightmare that would do more harm than good.

But the rewards of such a move would be great. Campaign funding is obviously a necessity and Obama needs to start ramping up his fundraising efforts in order to compete with the seemingly bottomless Republican super PAC’s. Obama has a well documented need for cash (he shattered the previous record for campaign spending in 2008) and it’s time for his re-election team to get serious about the fundraising side of things.

Obama 2012 also needs to get creative about ways to reach the public with his message. The majority of TV has a relatively low reach, which is why the candidates that are most effective at best. Using things like social media will allow Obama to tap into his base of youth supporters while expanding his audience at the same time.

Obama should also spend time preparing himself for the sure barrage of Republican attacks that will certainly be arriving on August 31, the day after the Republican Convention, if not sooner. Obama needs to show the country he is a strong and forceful leader, but he should take the high road and keep the overall message of his campaign positive and not engage in a back and forth firefight that he is sure to lose.

He has shown that he is more powerful and engaging when he is delivering a message of hope and inspiration than one of anger and criticism. Since he is the incumbent favorite, he needs to avoid saying anything that could be embarrassing or harmful, though the Republicans will go all out to bait him into doing just that.

A positive message is also what our country needs. Obama was so good at rallying us around a common ideal: that with the right guidance and policy, America could be great again. Part of what attracted us to him was his youthful energy and his dynamic personality.

Through the everyday grind of being president, he has lost some of this. If he wants to be re-elected, he must do before hitting the campaign trail, it is regaining the things that we loved about him the first time around.
There’s no such thing as ‘separate but equal’

by Daniel Moskowitz ’15

Tania Rosenblit boarded a bus in Israel, from Ashdod to Jerusalem, and sat in the seat right behind the driver. Soon after, she was told by an ultra-Orthodox Jewish man that she had to move to the back because Jewish men cannot sit behind a woman. An argument ensued, forcing the bus driver to call the police.

Does this story sound familiar? Rosa Parks, maybe? Yes, except that this occurred in December of 2011, not December of 1955. This is just a part of a dangerous precedent being set by some Jews.

On our latest trip to Israel, this past December, my dad, tour guide, and I went to the Kotel (Western Wall—one of the holiest places for Jews) on Friday night for a service to welcome the Jewish Sabbath.

For me, this was a particularly interesting experience for many reasons. First off, I am an atheist. I didn’t want to pray so instead I looked through the prayer book published by the Kotel called The Kotel Siddur.

On the back cover I found something that struck me. It said, “All stand equal in front of God by the wall.”

I looked up and to my right, and gazed in awe at the wall dividing the men and women’s side of the prayer area an evil stare.

Ever since I started at Krieger Schechter, the place I looked forward to visiting most in Israel was the Western Wall. But what I have found is with each visit I notice, and I am angered more and more by the separation of men and women. As a result of this, the excitement of returning becomes less and less.

Orthodox Jews believe that in times of prayer, men and women should be separated. Fine, except that the women’s side of the Western Wall is about a quarter of the size of the men’s, and unlike the men, they have no indoor area.

Stephanie Summerville ’15, who visited Israel on Krieger Schechter’s eighth grade class trip, said, “Because it’s [the women’s side of the prayer area] so small, it’s really crowded and there are too many people trying to get close to the wall. So you end up being pushed around.”

As a male, my experience was different; there was no pushing to get close to the wall; I even had choices as to which piece of the wall to walk up to.

The origin of gender separation in Judaism comes from two main ideas. First being that keeping men and women together while praying could cause distractions. The second reason is to prevent arousal by the opposite sex.

These two reasons are understandable because they are true. But nowhere does it suggest that this separation should be unequal. In fact, the separation is intended to be “separate, not equal.” Does this phrase sound familiar? It was a phrase used in the U.S. prior to the civil rights era to write off racial segregation as constitutional.

As a conservative Jew I believe that much of the separation that occurs today is more like segregation; why should women be treated as less than men? A woman is not re-fusing to sit near a man, it’s just the opposite. If the man has a problem sitting near a woman then he is the one that should move. According to an article from 2009 in the Jerusalem Post, El Al, Israel’s national airline, considered going to the extreme of separating men and women on some flights due to requests by ultra-Orthodox Jews.

It would be one thing if men and women were to be equally separated, but is a whole different story when men treat women as inferior to them. We all know how “separate, but equal” turned into something closer to “separate, but not equal” prior to the civil rights era.

The separation of men and women in the ultra-Orthodox community in Judaism is headed on the same path as the racial segregation that occurred in the U.S., but on a much smaller scale. This is history repeating itself.

Rush Limbaugh’s hateful attack on Fluke goes beyond words

by Sophie Neiman ’13

On February 23, Sandra Fluke, a third year law student at Georgetown University, came before the Senate to testify in favor of President Obama’s plan, making it mandatory for employers and insurance companies to provide contraceptive coverage. Only Catholic agencies are exempt, but their employees can still access contraceptives, at no added cost, from separate insurance companies.

Fluke, who actively supports women’s initiatives on campus, had been barred from testifying in front of an all-male committee, lead by Republican Congressman Darrell Issa of California.

Fluke explained how difficult it is to attend a Jesuit school with an insurance plan that does not cover contraceptives. The added cost of coverage is about $1,000. This should shock you. It’s 2012 and not 1950; contraceptive health care is a basic benefit, no different from any other type, to which all women are entitled. College students should not have to pay $1,000 out of pocket to protect themselves.

“It’s a sad time for our nation when political and/or religious ideology are allowed to trump access to health care services and erode women’s reproductive health rights.” Said Elizabeth Lichnowsky, a Park Parent and Maternal and Child Health Specialist with the Infectious Disease and Environmental Health Administration at the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Plenty of people don’t see it this way though. Conservative talk show host Rush Limbaugh immediately fired back, with an abhorrent response to Fluke’s comments. “What does it say about the college co-ed Susan Fluke (he didn’t bother to learn her name), who goes before a congressional committee and essentially says that she must be paid to have sex, what does that make her? It makes her a slut, right? It makes her a prostitute,” said Limbaugh. “What does that make us? We’re the pimps.”

You should be appalled. Limbaugh also said that if Fluke was asking taxpayers to cover the cost of birth control, she should pay them back, by posting videos of herself having sex. Now you should be really appalled.

Limbaugh’s second comment probably constitutes sexual harassment and defamation of character. The first one is just inaccurate. Under the proposed plan, companies, not taxpayers, would have to cover the cost of birth control. He also creates a ridiculous double standard. “Rush and Newt Gingrich can play the studs, marrying again and again until they find the perfect, adoring, young wife,” wrote op-ed columnist Maureen Dowd in the March 3 edition of the New York Times. President Bill Clinton had an affair with an intern and John Kennedy had many mistresses. Of course, it’s fine for men to have multiple partners, but heaven forbid a woman ask for the right to protect herself.

The main issue, however, is that a woman who wants to practice safe sex, or even just access birth control for other medical reasons, is now branded as slut. Yes, Limbaugh may lean to the far right, but that doesn’t make his words, or the lack of a legitimate response from the Republican Party any less terrifying. What it signifies is war on women’s most basic rights and dignity as well as step back for the feminist movement.

“People are decriing the language he used, but I don’t hear people decrieing the concept of ‘slut’ itself,” said Debbie Roffman, who teaches sex education courses at Park, and at other independent schools. “The fact that that concept is still a part of our culture, and that many people don’t grasp how it automatically makes girls and women second class sexual citizens, is the bigger and more powerful story.”

It’s hard to swallow the fact that hateful comments, such as Limbaugh’s, can be made so cavalierly. Limbaugh’s comments don’t seem like something that should be said at all, and particularly not in this day and age. Any woman—no any person, should be absolutely livid.
Catching Up With:

Mike McGill

Former US Principal Mike McGill left last year to take a job as Head of School at The Northwest School in Seattle, WA. McGill talked with The Postscript about his and his family’s transition to Seattle.

Q: How was your move and transition to Seattle life? Both for yourself and your family?
A: In most ways, it’s gone really smoothly. We’re still adjusting to a house that’s about half the size of the one we had in Baltimore, but we love our neighborhood—we can walk to Lake Washington and half a dozen restaurants, and we’re less than 10 minutes’ drive to school.

I’m especially proud of how well Gabriel (my ninth grade son) has negotiated all of the change. He’s doing well academically, has played JV Ultimate and our Community Meetings (the equivalent to faculty death and half a dozen restaurants, and we’re of restaurants in the time it used to take a dormitory across the street; we’re 30 years old (in fact, I took a dormitory across the street; we’re 30 years old (in fact, I took

We had a housewarming party for the keynote speaker, Bill Gates. It was founded here: people are really crazy about their coffee.

Q: What do you miss most about Baltimore?
A: Lots! First and foremost, though, we miss our friends and the deep sense of belonging. It’s hard to imagine I’ll ever be more fortunate in this regard.

There are a buttoned-for-longgings, too, like knowing how to get everywhere, a house with closets, The Ambassador Restaurant, Hampden, the city’s proximity to D.C., the Preakness, blue crabs (or the ritual of eating them, anyway), the absence of Wire jokes/assumptions, AVAM, The Charles Theater, and earthquakes (just kidding).

Q: What’s the atmosphere like at your new school?
A: In the important ways, The Northwest School feels like it could be Park’s satellite campus in Seattle: it’s a warm, friendly, informal place with a reputation for being an intellectual, artful, and (politically) liberal school… Sound familiar?! When students here ask me to compare the two schools, I tell them that if they were to move to Baltimore, they would end up choosing Park and being really happy there.

If you were to wander into Northwest on a school day, you’d notice students sprawled on the floors in the halls (often playing music…or cards), the absence of bells, and obviously comfortable, natural conversations occurring between students and faculty.

There are some pretty important differences, though, too. Like many other independent schools in the Seattle area, Northwest has no lower school, just grades 6-12; we have an international population of 75 students, 40 of whom live in a dormitory across the street; we’re 30 years old (in fact, I took from one of the three found-ers; a second is the science department chair!), so we don’t have the kinds of resources that Park does, especially in terms of endowment. Perhaps most obviously, instead of a 90-acre campus of woods, playing fields, multiple gyms, two theaters, and a pond, we occupy a single large historic building in the middle of the city. We sit (all 500 hundred of us) on the Commons floor for our Community Meetings (the equivalent of Park’s assemblies) and most faculty don’t have offices.

On the other hand, I can walk to three coffee shops, a yoga studio, and a handful of restaurants in the time it used to take me to get from my office at Park to my car in the back lot… which is kinda cool. Oh yeah, one more very important observation about the culture or atmosphere here: we all get to eat an awesome hot lunch together every day.

Q: What’s the best/most rewarding part about your new job?
A: I love the diversity of my days—it feels as if there haven’t been two alike since I started. Two highlights come to mind. First, I’ve already traveled to Korea, China, and Taiwan to visit our sister schools and meet with the Parents’ Associations in those countries.

Closer to home, I’m really excited about a new building we’re designing that will include a black box theater, a gym, a kitchen/dining hall, and a rooftop turf playing field.

Q: How are your new students/the student body? Do you have a lot of interactions with them?
A: Aside from the fact that many of them come from abroad and that they play Ultimate Frisbee instead of lacrosse, the kids here are very much like you. I try really hard to be present and engaged with them, especially this first year while I’m learning about the school.

I’ve been visiting classes pretty regularly, closer to three or four a week (instead of my one-a-day regimen at Park), attending theater performances and concerts, and going to as many games as I can. I’m also a member of an “Environment Team,” a group of seven or eight students (and one faculty), led by a senior, that’s responsible for cleaning a part of the school every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday when, for 20 minutes or so, the whole school stops what it’s doing and cleans (and recycles and composts). I help my team vacuum, dust, and sweep the “South Stairway.”

And finally, you’ll be relieved to know that we miss our friends and the deep sense of belonging. It’s hard to imagine I’ll ever be more fortunate in this regard.

Q: What’s the best thing about Seattle? (As a whole, not just your campus.)
A: Without a doubt, the physical beauty of the area. On clear days—and there are many more of them than the natives want you to know—I can see the sun rising over the Cascades and the Olympic Mountains.

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Q: How was the transition from principal to head of school? Is it what you expected?
A: Actually, there haven’t been that many surprises, which I guess makes sense since I’d watched three heads at Park pretty closely for over a dozen years. I am slowly getting used to the fact that I have to be very careful what I say—as head, I can’t necessarily toss out an idea or a tentative, unformed thought because people hear things much more acutely when they come out of my mouth.

I’ve also learned that there are certain decisions—even seemingly insignificant ones—for which no one wants to take responsibility: choosing the color to paint the dorm, for example, or which advertising slogan will play on the radio. And of course, there’s the dreaded snow day call. I used to be able to blame that on Dr. Jackson or Dan Paradis, but now it’s all up to me. There’s nowhere to hide.

On the eve of what the meteorologists promised would be Seattle’s first storm, my son Gabe got dozens of texts and Facebook posts urging him to persuade me to move to the right call. Unfortunately, I’m afraid he let folks down since Northwest was the only school to open on time and stay open all day… By 1:00 that afternoon, there was a petition circulating to help me, um, better understand the dangers of keeping the school open any longer. It made me feel right at home!”

Q: Anything you’d like to say to Park students?
A: Yes: don’t take the faculty for granted! Park is blessed, really, with a spectacular collection of superbly talented teachers. You’ll certainly realize this when you get to college, but why wait until then to appreciate and take advantage of their wisdom and passion? I miss you all—even the lax sticks in the halls and the occasional awkward (i.e., taunt-challenged) assembly.
Tech Crew plays critical role in productions

by Baylor Knobloch ’14

They are the unsung heroes of our school, the artists whose work doesn’t have a plaque, and the performers who don’t have their own time in the spotlight—perhaps because they are too busy actually positioning that spotlight. They are the Upper School tech crew.

On the technical level, theater productions are almost entirely designed and run by students themselves. A core group of tech crew members, which comprises eight students and is led by set design teacher John Trout, meets every Saturday for a four-hour work session.

In addition to this, the members come to the Macks-Fidler Black Box theater during lunches when they are available, and work on props, set design, lighting, and sound.

If you can’t name the members of the crew off of the top of your head, maybe that’s a good thing. “In many ways, when people don’t notice we’re there, it’s the best compliment we can get,” crew member Ryan Lessing ’13 said.

Running a show is much like administrative work; its facilitators are concerned with events going smoothly, but receive very little face time. “‘Techies’ are backstage for a reason,” crew member Drew Himmelrich ’14 said, “but it wouldn’t hurt, however, for people to know just how much work and time we put into these shows.”

This group is not exactly a club, but more like a following of extremely dedicated students who love their work. The members of tech crew put in anywhere from four to 10 hours of work per week, although these hours can easily double or triple when a show is fast approaching or is in production. “The week of a show, with rehearsals, it can easily be over 30 hours,” Lessing said.

But for them, it’s all worth it. “A lot of the work I do at tech is as much for myself as it is for others,” Eli Block ’12 said.

And although it can be hard to work so tirelessly and never get to take your own bow, crew members find gratification in other ways: “The reward is when the lights come up and the audience enjoys a fabulous show, and everything goes off without a hitch,” Emily King ’12 said. This sentiment of selfless devotion to the production is echoed unanimously by other members of the crew.

Jesse Berns-Zieve ’15, the group’s newest member, found his way into this niche with this fall’s musical production. “During the wild rush before Oliver!, Drew [Himmelrich] Facebook chatted me and asked if I would be interested in helping out,” Berns-Zieve said. “I was a little tentative because I already had more things going on in my life than I could easily handle, but I decided to at least help out. As we finished up Oliver!, I was already hooked.”

There seems to be a no-looking-back attitude amongst the die-hard members of tech crew. “I’m in too deep to get out of it at this point,” Andrew Bahl ’14 said, “and I love it.”

“The real thing that compels me most is that it is fun for me—it’s addicting,” Himmelrich said.

Some have found themselves involved with this work through their interest in acting. Among the members who are actors-turned-techies are Josie Verchomin ’12, Block, and Berns-Zieve.

“Because I love theater so much, I eventually got involved behind the scenes,” Verchomin said. Being involved in both major aspects of the theater gives students a broader perspective of the art form.

“There was a pretty good relationship between people backstage and people on stage when I first came here, but I knew that it was good when actors and stage crew could mix because they are really working on the same project,” Peter King, head of the Upper School theater program, said. “John Trout and I encourage the kids to do both acting and stage crew, and it creates a wonderful environment.”

Now, cast members must attend a number of Saturday hours to help the stage crew with the shows in which the actors will be performing.

Of course, not all techies have found their way through the path of acting. Some have been involved in stage crew since Middle School.

“Most kids come into sixth grade just dying to see the backstage,” Middle School Drama Chair Gina Braden said.

Block, R. Lessing, and Adam Lessing ’15 were all active in this group during their Middle School days, and then made the transition into Upper School stage crew.

Then, there is the type of detail-oriented person whom tech crew attracts: “I have always been intrigued by how things work,” Himmelrich said. “Whenever I would go to a show with my parents, I would always be looking up at the lights to see what was happening with them instead of watching the actors.”

Himmelrich, who attended Middle School at Krieger Schechter, found his way into the tech crew through Trout, who also happens to be his adviser. Trout knows better than anyone that tech crew requires a certain personality. “It attracts the type of person who, when the curtain goes up, says, ‘What, I want to do that,’” he said.

“I’m really interested in using technical elements, like set design, sound effects, and lighting schemes, to help tell a story or to affect a person in a certain way,” Block said. And with this artistic and emotional process, Trout really gives his students the freedom to create their own work, as well as develop and adapt their ideas to overcome obstacles.

“Unlike in many of our classes, where everything we’re doing could be done by the teacher, at tech we really need to figure out how to do it ourselves,” Block said. “We all collectively think about ways to do different effects,” Himmelrich said.

“We have to design them and engineer them ourselves. There is a lot of brainstorming involved, and John really lets us think and create as we come up with our own ideas instead of just having us do mindless work.”

P. King too, spoke very highly about the amount of freedom and autonomy that Trout gives the group: “I think John Trout has done a really wonderful job letting the kids own their work,” he said. “By owning it, they learn more and gain more. The kids love going there because he lets them work through the problems, come up with answers, and really just take over.”

As a product of this freedom and the ownership that Trout grants his crew members, he finds himself with a surplus of innovative ideas on their part, and he marvels at their abilities. “A lot of these kids can come up with really amazing solutions to these things,” Trout said.

Along with being passionate about their work, the crew members feel a bond to one another and share a sense of pride among the group. “Being a part of the team is an incredible feeling,” said Berns-Zieve. “Seeing the throngs of people [in the audience] and knowing that, without tech crew, that really wouldn’t happen—it’s an incredible feeling.”

Tech crew members, with the guidance of set design teacher John Trout, meet every Saturday for four hours, as well as during various X blocks, to work on props, set design, lighting and sound for upcoming shows.

“I’m really interested in using technical elements, like set design, sound effects, and lighting schemes, to help tell a story or to affect a person in a certain way.”

—Eli Block ’12

photo courtesy Brownie

photo by S. Weintraub

A. Bahl ’14 and A. Lessing ’15 work together on the scaffolding to hang lights.
Immersion Week 2012
The Upper School participates in a week of outside-the-classroom experiences

Learning to shoot guns, kindle fires
by Victoria Brown ’14

There’s something completely mesmerizing about staring into a roaring fire—a roaring fire started with only one match, a roaring fire that you helped kindle to life. In the class entitled “How to Be Badass Girl,” there was never a dull moment. I got into a fight with Bob Peck, learned how to wrestle out of a bear hug, and had a great time swapping gory first-aid disasters with school nurse Jan Brant. Later in the week, we shuttled up to John Roemer’s house in Monkton and learned how to properly shoot some firearms. I had a great time aiming at Arizona Iced Tea cans, which all bore the marks of our group’s good aim afterwards. We had the most gorgeous weather that you could ask for; it was truly an amazing experience.

Female students had the opportunity to learn life skills like self-defense, how to properly shoot a gun, tie knots, and do first-aid.

Making progress on the yearbook
by Mollie Selmanoff ’13

As a co-section head of the clubs section of Brownie, I dedicated my time during Immersion week to working on the yearbook, which included figuring out which clubs and activities are still active.

I sent out numerous emails, and then began to lay out the spreads.

I wasn’t sure what kind of experience to expect given that this is my first official year on the Brownie staff, but it was incredibly fun. We blasted music and worked on the pages while sporting Snuggies because the basement office is so freezing.

We made a lot of headway after spending the first day working on a page of the yearbook. By some meteorological fluke, I had signed up for the winter backpacking trip and ended up instead on a summer excursion. It was the afternoon of the third day, and our group (seven students and two teachers) was perched on Duncan’s Knob, a high rock that loomed over the Shenandoah Valley. My overcoat and gloves I had left in our camp 50 feet below—there was no need for heavy clothing.

Today was the hottest yet of three beautiful warm days. Several boys and I were stripped from our waists up working on our tans.

In front of us, the sun was sinking behind the ridgeline of the Massanutten trail, miles of a serrated stone edge flanked by tall oaks. The Shenandoah Valley spread before me its Arcadian splendor. This time of day, and our group ended up instead on a summer excursion. It was the afternoon of the third day, and our group (seven students and two teachers) was perched on Duncan’s Knob, a high rock that loomed over the Shenandoah Valley. My overcoat and gloves I had left in our camp 50 feet below—there was no need for heavy clothing. Today was the hottest yet of three beautiful warm days. Several boys and I were stripped from our waists up working on our tans.

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Enduring hardship to survive in a nail-biting variation of the CBS reality show
by Ian Simon ’15

For my Immersion Week activity, I chose Survivor led by Jessie Lamworth ’14, Ellie Stern ’14, and math teacher Angela Doyle. We tried to make our activity as much like the CBS reality show as possible—with all the drama, character clashes, and hardship. We participated in a wide variety of challenges—ranging from cooking food with nothing but scraps, to petitioning Inner Harbor visitors for signatures and endorsements, to competing in an intense game of laser tag. My favorite challenge—the final challenge—began with running around the school and ended at the Quarry’s Subway. This particular challenge involved a series of hints and clues hidden around the school, the last of which directed us to the Quarry. We were instructed to buy—and eat—a Footlong from Subway. Jake Abrams ’12 swooped in to claim the title of the ultimate Survivor in this thrilling and suspenseful competition. The entire activity was filmed in the style of the reality show, and the footage is currently being edited to produce one coherent, engaging episode of Park School-style Survivor.

Students competed for the title of the ultimate Survivor in a series of tests of physical and mental strength.

Backpacking through the Shenandoah Valley
by Nikku Chatha ’12

By some meteorological fluke, I had signed up for the winter backpacking trip and ended up instead on a summer excursion. It was the afternoon of the third day, and our group (seven students and two teachers) was perched on Duncan’s Knob, a high rock that loomed over the Shenandoah Valley. My overcoat and gloves I had left in our camp 50 feet below—there was no need for heavy clothing.

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In front of us, the sun was sinking behind the ridgeline of the Massanutten trail, miles of a serrated stone edge flanked by tall oaks. The Shenandoah Valley spread before me its Arcadian splendor. This time of day, and in between the hypnotic morning hiking and the communal banter around the campfire, and the view it brought put me in a transcendental state of mind. I was in the Great American Outdoors, a world away from Park School, free from smart phones and shampoo bottles. I wanted to stay up on the Knob forever with the company of my fellow hikers, cracking jokes and admiring the balmy winter sunset.

A group of nine set out to explore the Great American Outdoors.
Alumni pursue art in college

Olivia Chalkley ’13 checks in with arts majors Lindsey Moskowitz ’11 (Syracuse University) and Blake Pruitt ’11 (NYU) about their current projects, and what they’ve grown to miss about Park

What’s your favorite thing about college?
LM: Living in the same place as all my friends. Where I live right now, we’re all on the same floor. Also, being an art major I’m always with a lot of people who share my interests and focuses.
BP: This may be specific to art school but I love liking all the work I’m doing. Last semester I enjoyed the work I did for all my classes. I also like that my professors know me for my film work.

What’s your major? What are you being trained for?
LM: My major is industrial and interaction design, which is designing objects with functions. Everything functional has to be designed by somebody: chairs, cars, table objects, shoes, packaging.
BP: My major is film and television production.

What do you love most about your major?
LM: Right now I haven’t really started my major yet. All art majors have to take foundations, like general art and design classes. I have 4 required studios so I literally spend all my time in the studio. The flexibility of studio electives is also great. I just took a screen printing studio elective that was awesome.
BP: It’s great being with professors working in the film industry and coming from a place of experience. It’s great being with hundreds of other kids who love film as much as I do. I was afraid at first that this would make the atmosphere competitive, but it’s actually much more supportive. I’ve realized how many areas of film and television there are, and that no one wants to do exactly what I want to do.

What are some of your most recent projects?
LM: For my 2D design class, I had an assignment that involved using only natural materials so I did a photo series with tons of flowers covering different parts of peoples’ bodies, like faces and arms. I was thinking of the idea of natural beauty, and how people tend to cover themselves up with makeup etc. In my 3D class, I had an assignment to design a box of chocolates made out of plaster, which I love. We had to base the chocolates off the style of a specific designer, so I chose Karim Rashid, who’s a pretty successful industrial designer. Oh, and my weaving class is doing projects with recycled materials so I’m weaving with bubble tea straws.
BP: I’ve been a production assistant on a couple up-perclassmen films, along with script supervising. I’m also working on a Medicaid documentary. I also had a two-minute short film in the Tisch 48-hour film festival. They gave us a prop and a line of dialogue and we had 48 hours to make a film in less than three minutes. It’s called Farm House, and it actually won first place, which is pretty amazing because everyone working on it was a freshman. We were in no way expecting that.

What’s something you think you’re getting out of art school, besides just skills in your art, that you didn’t get at Park?
LM: I go to an art school within a university. So there are 2000 people all interested in art. It’s a big community of artists and designers, which is different from Park.
BP: The networking aspect, which is important in film and television. There’s a balance between studying and worrying about the business side of things. People you meet -- classmates or professors -- are half the battle. It’s part of the education.

What do you think the “cutting edge” is in your particular art form and are you on it?
LM: The thing about industrial design is that we’re constantly surrounded by it. There really are so many applications to it. We design everything from cars to shoes... it’s such a broad field. So what I’ll be doing is designing the world around us.
BP: My professors have been talking about the power of television and, in the last fifteen years, the blow up of cable TV—HBO, Starz, Showtime, AMC. Some of the best writing period is on TV. If I had to pick one thing to do right now, it would be writing or producing television.

What’s it like living in NYC/Syracuse?
LM: Honestly, the area of Syracuse isn’t that great. The one cool thing is that all the design buildings are downtown, and I have to take a bus there. There’s an Urban Outfitters and some cool restaurants in the center of town, so that’s nice. Also it’s not too hot, and there’s usually snow.
BP: I love not having to drive everywhere. I had a really long drive to Park, and I was so sick of it by the end of my senior year. I can walk anywhere, or take a 30-minute subway ride at most. Being able to go out and get food whenever I want is great. Also, the people. I feel like a lot of New Yorkers have this particular mindset, and it’s hard to describe, but I feel like it’s something we all have in common.

What is your favorite thing you’ve done this year?
LM: I just bought two fish named Renoir and Monet. They’re beta fish, so I can’t put them in the same bowls. Sometimes I put their tanks together and they try to attack each other through the glass.
BP: My intro to animation class. It’s not something I necessarily want to pursue, or something that I’ll ever do again, but learning the basics of that and working in those styles was great. Besides that, Farm House.

What do you miss most about Park?
LM: I miss Park all the time! I miss the art department a lot. I always brag to my friends about how great the art department at my high school was. It’s also been harder to develop the student teacher relationships I had at Park. I’m pretty close with my 3D teacher because she brings her dogs to class, and I used to do that all the time. But it’s not really the same. I also miss having a studio full of free supplies. Now, if I don’t have something I have to go out and buy it.
BP: I miss the teachers. I definitely haven’t formed the relationships here yet like the ones I had at Park. That’s just starting to happen.

What was it like to come back and visit?
LM: It’s weird to realize you don’t go there anymore. It was also weird to realize that my whole grade will probably never be together in one place again. It was great to see all my teachers, and my little brother in high school.
BP: I’ve been back three or four times, and each time it felt a little less weird. I know it’s cliché, but I realized that Park goes on without us.

Do you miss The Postscript?
LM: Of course. I haven’t even seen the student paper here yet. But now I have the Postscript app on my phone!
BP: Yes! I miss doing the paper. We have two papers here and I just don’t have the time for them. I miss sitting in the pub, and I miss the environment and sense of community.
Goldsoundz produces electric energy

by Mai Asmerom ’13

From Monday to Thursday, you can count on students hanging around the school until four or even five in the evening, doing homework with friends, attending sports practice, or involved in some other after school extracurricular.

Fridays, however, are completely different. By 3:40, Park school hallways become a ghost town, and by 6:00, the upper and lower lots are almost vacant. This phenomenon repeats itself week in and week out – one notable exception.

Last Friday, crowds of students were gathered in clumps in the Commons, the library, and the Arts Center, all waiting for one uniquely Park event: Goldsoundz.

It was my first time at the off-lauded musical night, and I wasn’t sure what to expect. During the three years I’ve been a part of the Upper School, I’ve always brushed off Goldsoundz announcements, promising myself I’d go to the next one, but never actually following through. This time I bought my ticket well in advance and came, promptly, at 7:30, after cringing at hearing the show would last a full three hours, running until 10:30. How can three hours of music by high school students be any good? I wondered.

I was completely wrong. As an actor, I’ve been in the black box many times for rehearsals and plays, but that Friday night, I was treated to a completely different, and in some ways superior, experience. Part of the allure of watching a Park play is how perfectly polished all of the players are. The scene changes are sharp, the actors are poised and ready, the audience is silent.

At Goldsoundz, the performers were sometimes poised, sometimes nervous, sometimes both. The audience was loud, raucous, and chatty. The crowd, which must be seated during a performance, was scattered around the ground, leaning on top of each other, backpacks strewn here and there. The black box was filled to capacity and then some. People who couldn’t find seats on the floor stood on the sidelines and spilled out onto the corners of the stage.

The energy was electric. When Danny O’Rourke ’15 dedicated his song to “the beautiful Miss Danielle del Rosario,” the audience cheered for a solid five minutes before letting him begin the performance. When freshman, Micah Saltzberg ’15 and his friend, Nathan Block from Pikesville High, announced their instruments, saxophones, and their band name, Casual Sax, the laughter was immediate and noisy. And after hosts Lindsay Baer ’12 and Noble Ingram ’12 announced the upcoming acts in the style of the Oscar-winning film, The Artist, by acting them out silently, the audience played along, guessing, with catcalls, each of the names.

There were many stand-out performances.

A light-hearted rendition of “Cough Syrup” by Young the Giant, sung by Ellie Cody ’15 was quickly followed by Vocal Chords member Alex Kalvar ’15 in a duet with Ben Miller ’13, doing “Your Body is a Wonderland” by John Mayer. Hilde Wulf ’13, supported by the full band behind her, sang a selection, among which was “The World Has Turned and Left Me Here” by the Slim Kiwis and “Islands” by the XX.

Jake Max ’12, one of the final acts, performed “Where Is the Love?” by the Black Eyed Peas, supported by his younger sister Samanth Max ’14. The last act, Nikku Chatha ’12, closed out the show with some original rap, bringing the remaining members of Goldsoundz to their feet at the foot of the stage.

Goldsoundz is messy. It flies by the seat of its pants and counts on performers who readily admit to forgetting the lines of their songs and forgetting the chords of their songs. But what it lacks in technical precision, it more than makes up for in heart.

The energy of the room, the appreciation of students for their fellow peers, and the infectious attitude that everyone present is fully engaged with what is happening on stage is hard to overlook.

For those, like me, who have never taken the time to attend a Goldsoundz, try one. For everyone who performed at the last Goldsoundz, well done, and to those who plan to appear in future ones, thanks in advance.

Vocal Chords seeks new management

by David Agronin ’13

Next year, with the departure of Paul Hulleberg, Middle School music teacher, the Vocal Chords face an uncertain future. Adele Dinerstein, music department chair, wouldn’t yet disclose formal plans for next year’s all-male a cappella club without addressing the group first, but said, “The goal is to keep up the integrity and talent of the group with as smooth a transition as possible.” Dinerstein will make an announcement just prior to or following spring break.

Hulleberg founded Vocal Chords in 1994 after Dinerstein and another faculty member suggested he form a male version of the Eightnotes, the female a cappella group.

Without knowing what will happen next year, members of the group are considering several options.

“I’m anticipating increased student leadership,” Ben Miller ’13 said. “I think the students could manage it, but the amount of work needed to make the group function is largely understated.”

Miller proposed that rather than a teacher leading the group, there would be a faculty sponsor. “Arranging the songs,” (the transcription of pop or other songs into an a cappella format) he said, “[would be] a large part of the job, but also handling all the ‘class’ related aspects.”

Miller’s response brings up another concern regarding the group’s future: Vocal Chords is a class. Members of the group receive grades for each semester of work, grades that appear on a college transcript, and earn an arts credit for each year of participation.

If the group were entirely student led—another idea proposed—the members would face a different set of challenges. “Currently, most of the student arrangements end up being edited [or] enhanced heavily,” Miller said. “There aren’t many students capable of doing a performance quality arrangement. It would probably require a smaller group of more active members.”

“The resource of having a teacher with a room is huge,” Vocal Chords leader Gabe Acheson ’12 said. “We use the projector, the speaker, and the computer every practice.”

Acheson also noted the experience of being in the group as whole, and possible consequences of losing faculty leadership.

“We get opportunities to perform that we otherwise wouldn’t. We have a teacher who’s committed to putting in work for the group, who works for hours and hours in preparation for each rehearsal.”
**Student Directed Plays light up the black box**

This season, instead of a winter production, three seniors directed plays that debuted in the Macks-Fidler Blackbox February 22 to 24. Evan Semenza ’14 and Emma Krasnopoler ’15 checked them out.

**Ordinary Days**

The musical *Ordinary Days* by Adam Gwon, directed by Josie Vercocini ’12, and musically directed by Becca Lane ’12, provides an interesting and comical look into the parallels and contrasts between the lives of two pairs of young people – one couple, and one set of acquaintances united by chance – trying to make their way and struggling to find their ‘big picture’ in a big city.

The play begins with the character Warren (Noble Ingram ’12), a publicist for an unknown and, at the time of the play, jailed artist. He seems content with the presumably low-paying job of handing out flyers with sayings whipped up by the artist to people on the streets of New York City and taking care of the artist’s cat and apartment.

He’s content, that is, until he meets Deb (Leah Shapiro ’12), a quirky friendship that builds over time. Deb and Warren grows throughout the play, another couple works to maintain their relationship. Claire (Lindsay Baer ’12) and Jason (Ben Levitsky ’13) struggle to find common interests and opinions in a seemingly loving relationship.

Being a musical, the soundtrack and voices of the actors were obviously an extremely important part of the play, and neither disappointed. The musical accompaniment was surprisingly full-voiced considering it was played on only a piano.

The music paralleled the emotions of each scene very well, with themes varying from upbeat, blocky pop tunes that sounded like they came straight out of a ’90s sitcom to dark, sustain-rich abstract pieces that gave the theater and the performance a sort of spacey ambiance.

In addition to the quality of the soundtrack, each actor’s voice seemed to match the personality of his or her character very nicely.

The actors occasionally fell off pitch while singing, but this did not take away from the musical atmosphere of the play. Overall, the cast performed well both vocally and with their actions on stage.

The only major issue with the play was a technical one: many times, the piano was too loud and drowned out the vocals to the point where they couldn’t be heard.

All small critiques aside, the performance offered an extraordinary take on what is for so many in the Big Apple, just another ordinary day.

**Apocalyptic Butterflies**

*Apostolic Butterflies* by Wendy MacLeod and directed by Tess Langrill-Miles ’12, focused on the struggles of a lower-class couple dealing with the burdens of the early stages of marriage and life with a newborn child in late twentieth century Maine. The play, which deals with conflicts of adultery, parenting, and other familial issues, took a comedic angle in shedding light on such sensitive topics.

The actors did a fine job playing the roles of characters much more mature in years and experiences, especially Sean Simon ’13 and Sophie Neiman ’13 who portrayed an older couple very realistically with their quirky actions, wilted posture, and the delivery of their lines.

The main focus of the play was on Hank (Noah Sakin ’12) and Muriel (Ellie Cody ’15), who attempt to make their way through the ups and downs of a marital relationship hanging by a thread. While the couple at times cherish their relationship with each other, it seems to be broken beyond all repair when Hank is caught cheating with another woman named Trudy (Read Cullen ’13), until he ultimately begs forgiveness by cutting off his toe.

This brings the play to a satisfying end when Muriel accepts the gesture of repentance, and the couple finally finds a way to live happily together.

The means by which this peace is achieved, however, are somewhat predictable, and sickeningly sweet in a childish manner.

However, the actors did a superb job delivering lines intended to be funny in a lightheartedly comedic, yet not forced way and, on the other hand, acting out more serious parts of the play with genuine emotion.

The play was crisp and flowed well from start to finish, with the actors and stage crew making smooth and quick transitions between scenes to the tune of cheerful bluegrass and country music.

Well-rehearsed and tightly run, the play was completed without any major slip-ups, only the occasional stumble in a line here or some lighting glitches there, none of which took away from the overall enjoyment of the performance.

**The Clean House**

*The Clean House* by Sarah Ruhl and directed by Ellie Kahn ’12, was as funny and witty as it was emotional and intense. The play focused on the struggles within an affluent American household, from the maid’s hatred of cleaning to the homeowner’s faltering relationship with her husband, and even to deeper issues such as adultery, illness, forgiveness, and loss.

The main character, Matilde (Zoe Feldman ’13), came to work in America after both of her parents died in Brazil. She is employed to clean the house of the couple very busy and often absent married doctors. Matilde comports herself by telling jokes but this distracts her from cleaning which Lane, the woman of the house (Stefania Viscocchi ’13), complains about to her sister, Virginia (Emma Saltzberg’12).

To relieve her own boredom, Virginia comes to Matilde and insists on cleaning Lane’s house for her in secret. They then discover that Charles, Lane’s husband (Danny O’Rourke ’15), who we have yet to see, is cheating on her with another woman. From here, the play focuses on Charles’s spontaneous relationship with his mistress and patient Ana (Mai Asmerom ’13). In the last scenes of the play, Lane forgives Ana and offers to treat her breast cancer, which Ana refuses and instead asks Matilde to kill her by telling her the funniest joke in the world.

The play is consistently powerful and intriguing and leaves the audience waiting to see what will happen next. It is admirable how Kahn and the actors took on such a difficult and elaborate play and yet played their parts convincingly. The contemporary style of the play was hard to follow at times with its complicated plot and fast-paced scenes, however it was executed impressive and was entertaining to watch.

The main character, Matilde, insists on cleaning Lane’s house the only major issue with the play was a technical one: many times, the piano was too loud and drowned out the vocals to the point where they couldn’t be heard.

All small critiques aside, the performance offered an extraordinary take on what is for so many in the Big Apple, just another ordinary day.

In Sarah Ruhl’s *The Clean House*, sisters Virginia and Lane realize that the best cure for familial struggles, heartache, and loss, is a really good joke.
**Boys’ Varsity bows out in semi-finals against St. John’s**

By Nick Rickman ’15

Varsity Basketball’s last three seasons have formed an unfortunate trilogy of near-misses. The playoff struggles began two years ago during the winter of 2009-2010 with an intense loss to Chapelgate in the semifinals. This loss was particularly devastating due to the fact that the team put up such a huge fight for three-and-a-half quarters, and even took the lead once in the fourth quarter.

The trend continued the following year when the team made its second consecutive appearance in the semifinals—this time against Beth Tfiloh. “We kept it pretty close,” said graduate Daniil Llalko ’11, “but we just couldn’t break their press, which really took a toll on us, and in the long run cost us the game.”

But some would say that this year was different, when the Varsity team finally made it past the semifinal game. Many people had reason to believe the team stood a chance since it was, in fact, a weathered playoff team consisting of seniors who won the B conference championship during their freshman season.

By Zach Wetzler ’14

One year after winning the MIAA B Conference, the Varsity Baseball team desperately scrambled to field enough players to defend its title. This year, however, there was no need to race around; the freshman class alone provided the team with 11 new players. “We have a great group of freshman this year,” Drew Himmelrich ’14 said. “And most are really experienced.” There are high hopes that the added depth and talent can help the Varsity team improve and build upon last year’s 1-14 season.

“I really like our team this year,” Captain Jake Abrams ’12 said. “So obviously I’m hoping that we can win a championship. That said, though we’re really talented, we’re also really raw.”

“Last year” was a difficult time, but it gave the underclassmen a chance to get some good reps in and the upperclassmen were endowed with a sense of urgency,” Captain Max Berner ’12 said. “We know nothing is going to be handed to us this year; we’re going to need to work hard to get to where we want to be.”

The rejuvenated team will now have the luxury to play on an NCAA caliber field. Park and Stevenson University have formed a partnership to share the baseball diamond on Sugar Campus for the next 99 years.

“The new field is incredible,” said Berner. “We’re all excited about it. It’s a little more difficult now that we have to split time with Stevenson, but it’s all worth it to play on a field this nice.”

Abrams worries that the split might be unequal. “Sharing the field has its pros and cons,” he said, “but it feels like Stevenson is getting it more than us.”

Other members of the team feel that the new field will not only improve the atmosphere of home games, but also will help to draw larger crowds.

With several new beginnings highlighting the start of this year’s baseball season, the team is excited to start conference play.
Sports Commentary: Middle and Lower School students need opportunities to play softball

by Sophie Bailowitz ‘15

This past season, the Bruins’ Squash team returned to the U.S. High School Squash National Championships at Yale University in New Haven, CT, for the second straight year.

Last year, the Squash team won the nationals in the sixth division. This year, the team played in the fifth division and did not have as much success. The team went 1-3 overall and finished in eighth place out of 16 teams.

Despite not winning the championship, it was still a great experience for the team. “We had a lot of fun,” said Captain Andrew Katz ‘13. “We won our first match against Darien, and then lost to Malvern Prep, Milburn, and Packer. This year we played better competition and had a hard-fought battle in every match.”

“I thought the experience was great—actually going somewhere and competing as a team,” A.J. Kohn ‘14 said. “When we were in Baltimore, I always felt more like an individual sport, but when we were at the tournament—actually competing together against other schools, it felt more like a team experience.

One of the more exciting parts of the trip was the fact that last year’s team was featured on the cover of Squash Magazine, and that picture was posted everywhere; even on the main entrance to the tournament, the picture featuring a few Park Squash athletes was enlarged for everyone to see.

The players that attended this year’s tournament were Katz, Kohn, Nick Halle ‘12, Alex Kowen-hoven’s ‘13, Max Buchholz ‘13, Matt Stefanak ‘15, Zach Wetzler ‘14 and Mike Tipper ‘13. Of all of those players, only Halle is graduating this year. In that sense, the youth of the team really makes the future look promising.

Katz is, himself, optimistic about the season to come: “Our team’s goal [next year] is to make the playoffs for the first time in Park Squash history,” added Katz.

Squash team competes at Nationals

by Reid Daniels ‘13

This past season, the Bruins’ Squash team returned to the U.S. High School Squash National Championships at Yale University in New Haven, CT, for the second straight year.

In second grade, I discovered how much I enjoyed playing softball as soon as I picked up my first glove and bat. Just weeks later, I decided to join my local recreational team.

Two years later, when I reached fourth grade—the first year that sports were offered to Lower School students after school—I was disappointed to learn that softball was not offered as an after-school option. While my friends engaged in their favorite sports like soccer and lacrosse, the sport to which I was most dedicated was not an option for me.

Regardless, I continued with softball outside of school all throughout Middle School and I excitedly awaited the day when I could finally play in Upper School. Still, I was confused and annoyed as to why there was no opportunity for me to play earlier.

Since many other girls’ sports were offered and the boys’ baseball program was successful, I saw no reason that softball couldn’t receive the same treatment. When I was in seventh grade, I, along with several other girls who played softball elsewhere, started a petition saying that we would be committed to a softball team at school.

However, when the document was handed to the athletic department, nothing was done. Two girls in my grade even decided to play on the boys’ baseball team because they wanted the chance to be engaged in the sport they loved.

This year, as a ninth grader, I couldn’t wait to finally begin softball at school. I soon found out, however, that there was a large possibility that the team wouldn’t exist at all. The number of girls interested in playing was barely enough to make up a suitable team.

Many of the new players had either never tried softball before or, like me, had never before had the chance to play at a more competitive level than in a rec league. Fortunately, the juniors and seniors, who had been dedicated members of the team for years, were ultimately able to find enough girls so that the team could survive. In my opinion, however, the whole situation could have been easily avoided in the first place if certain changes were made to the sports programs in Lower and Middle School.

As of right now, there is talk of an after-school softball clinic for Middle School students to stir interest and give girls some experience before they head to Upper School, which is definitely a step in the right direction. However, I don’t see why softball shouldn’t get the same treatment as other sports.

Girls should get the chance to start playing as early as fourth grade, just as they can in field hockey or lacrosse or basketball. Instead of just a clinic, a real team with practices multiple times a week and games against other schools led by experienced coaches should be formed. This way, girls wouldn’t have to seek out rec teams in order to play, and the option of softball would be as available and convenient as any other sport at school.

With these opportunities accessible to girls earlier, they would have much more experience and skill heading into Upper School softball. This way, they would be able to support the program by ensuring that there were always prospects for the team, both interested in and with more background in softball.

Varsity Tennis team makes cuts; not enough players for JV

by Eric Sussman ’13

While others pick up their bats, sticks, and racquets this spring, there are a select few who have been denied the opportunity to participate in interscholastic athletics.

In light of limited participation and strict roster regulations, three players were cut from the Boys’ Varsity Tennis team this season, with no JV option available.

With only 11 players trying out for eight open spots, cuts had to be made. “We were ready for a JV team,” Athletic Director Ridge Diven said, “but the numbers just didn’t pan out.” According to Diven, 14 students would have needed to try out for a JV team to have been an option.

For Niko Argeroplos ‘13, the dissolution of the JV team was a disappointment. Over the years, Argeroplos had moved up the ranks of the tennis program, progress that he attributes to the preparation he gained while on the JV team.

During his freshman year—he first time playing tennis competitively—he honed his skills as part of the number one doubles team on JV. Since then, he has joined Varsity, playing doubles for each of the past two seasons.

The JV team is “beneficial because tennis is all about repetition and form,” Argeroplos said. “And that’s what the system gives you, and that’s what you need to compete at the varsity level.”

The team currently consists of three returning varsity players—four freshmen and one JV call-up, none of whom are seniors.

“So I don’t have as much practice this year,” said Graeme Frost ‘13, who was one of the members cut this season, “it will be way more difficult next year to challenge players who have been competing at a varsity level.”

Although number one singles player Sam Sugarman ‘13 has never been part of the JV team, he still understands the importance of practice. Playing around 20 hours a week, Sugarman has mastered his skills from practice both on the team and outside of school.

With no JV team there is “less of an opportunity for kids who don’t train outside of school to make the varsity program,” Sugarman said.

With an inadequate number of players trying out for the team, it was obvious that changes had to be made—appealing or not. “We simply made the best of an unfortunate situation,” said Diven.

Last year’s sixth division U.S. High School Squash National Champions traveled to Yale University, and competed in the fifth division, finishing eighth.
Offense lags behind defense on Boys’ Lacrosse

by Eric Sussman ’13

Generally, heading into a Boys’ Varsity Lacrosse season, there’s some uncertainty about the talent of the defensive unit. This year, there’s no such uncertainty; the defense returns three quality upperclassmen starters—Drew Goldfarb ’12 and Randy Conney ’13, as well as all-MIAA goalie Ham Sonnenfeld ’12. This year, because the defense is largely returning, the biggest question marks arise from the youth and inexperience of the offensive group.

Even though only four seniors graduated from last year’s team, younger players must fill a huge offensive void for this year to be successful.

“We lost our first and third leading scorers,” Seth Daniels ’13 said, referring to Brandon Keiser ’11 and Emmett Freedman ’11, respectively.

In addition to losing their most potent offensive weapons, the team also must learn a new system from a new coach. “We scrapped all of our old plays and started with a basic dodge and dish system,” Francesco Porcarelli ’14 said. “[The new offensive coach John Ciccarone] is very smart and already knows each player’s strengths even after a few weeks.”

For Daniels, the new system isn’t that much different from the old one: “We do the same things; it’s just a lot less structured,” he said. “It gives us more freedom to dodge and other guys to cut off of him and score. It’s creative and fun.”

He later added the new system is also easier for younger players to learn.

“As with practice this should happen. We have a good young team, and it gets better every day,” Daniels said.

Faces in the Crowd

Ian Simon ’15

During the spring, many students at Park play sports such as Frisbee, lacrosse, baseball, and tennis; but not Ian Simon ’15. Ian plays golf outside of school in the spring. “I’ve been playing for five years,” said Simon. “I play at Hayfields Country Club and I also take lessons at Woodholme with Bernie Najjar,” he said.

Simon has become a great talent by dedicating as much time to his sport as spring students at Park do to their sports. “In the summer I play every day for about six hours, and during the school year it’s about two to three hours daily,” he said.

With a large commitment invested, Ian attempted to bring back the golf team, which last existed three years ago. “I talked with Mr. Diven, and offered up my mental coach as a coach for the team,” said Simon, “Mr. Diven said that he was totally behind it as long as I found the people for the team.”

With only six students necessary to field a golf team, Simon did whatever he could to reinstate a sport he loves. “I put an announcement in, and a signup sheet on Mr. Diven’s door, and we got four people.” While the deadline for an MIAA registered team has passed, Ian Simon has not stopped working. “I’m about to email Tracey B and ask her to do another announcement,” he said. If a squad were to be formed they would still be able to get valuable practice and repetition.

Sports to the Max

by Jake Max ’12

Since I first started playing tee-ball at the age of four, I’ve spent countless hours on the baseball diamond. I never even considered playing another sport in the spring. Many of my friends tried lacrosse or tennis, but I stuck with baseball, and I loved it.

Don’t get me wrong, I still love baseball, but I’d like to humor myself with a what-if that I certainly will never know the answer to. As I begin my final season as a high school baseball player, I’m left wondering what would have happened if I hadn’t decided to play baseball freshman year.

What if I had decided to play golf? Unfortunately, Park no longer has a golf team, but back then they did. I’m not exactly a great golfer; I struggle to break 100 even on a good day, but that’s not the point.

I started playing golf when I was 11 or 12. My dad got me a kids’ set for my birthday and he took me out a few times that spring to hit balls or play nine holes. At that point I didn’t really care for golf. In fact, my favorite part of playing was when we stopped to get pretzels and soda after the fifth hole.

As I got older and started to hit the ball farther, I began to appreciate the game more.

While I was away at summer camp I’d bring my clubs and I’d go out with my friends to the local course to play. I will always cherish these midsummer memories, when we’d venture to “Tee’s Golf” and hit balls off of the cliff at the end of the seventh hole.

Nevertheless, golf remained a casual hobby for me. I never spent much time practicing or had much ambition to improve my game.

So in ninth grade I didn’t think twice about what spring sport I would play. I picked baseball and spent two years doing book before I got a chance to step out on the field.

My dad always tells me the story about how he started playing golf. When he was in high school he got cut from the JV baseball team (he swears he should’ve made it), so he decided to join the golf team. It was there that he made some of his best friends in high school and learned how to play a sport that he still enjoys today.

Now, as winter turns to spring and the days become more and more beautiful, I can’t help but wish I had given golf a chance. Maybe it’s just me, but there’s something about getting out of school at 1:00 to play nine holes of golf that sounds extremely appealing.