FRIENDS' CENTRAL

FORUM

SPRING/SUMMER 2008

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Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them.
—James Baldwin

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FORUM

Forum is our community's educational journal. Faculty, alumni, board members, parents and students are encouraged to contribute opinions, ideas, innovations and observations about any aspect of their lives relating to educational experiences.

Marilyn Lager
Editor, *Forum*

Making the Renaissance Real

By Janet Bowker and Susan Clough

The fall season in Lower School is the time for a thematic project that every class participates in. For the 2007-2008 year, the theme chosen was the Renaissance. Two teachers, Janet Bowker, who has been at the Lower School for nine years, mostly teaching first grade, and Sue Clough, who has been at the Lower School for twenty years and who now teaches third grade, were both awarded Clayton Farraday summer stipends to expand their knowledge of the Italian Renaissance. What follows are two very different experiences as they made their way around Italy.

Janet……

The stars must have been in alignment. The Lower School faculty decided to study the Renaissance as its fall project, and, at the same time, the Overbrook Presbyterian Church Choir was invited to participate in a chorale festival in Tuscany, Italy. For years I had not taken advantage of the summer stipend program, but now my husband Jeff,

The stars must have been in alignment.

a member of the choir, (who taught math in the Upper School from 1972 to 1979) was going to Italy! When I received the stipend, I could accompany the church choir to Montecatini Terme and also tour Florence, Lucca, San Gimignano and Rome and bring back knowledge about Renaissance history.

The chorale festival in Montecatini hosted choirs from around the world: a children's choir from South Africa; a girls' choir from Hong Kong; choirs from France and Switzerland; a praise choir from Wilmington. Countries and choirs came together to raise their voices in song.

The second day in Italy, the choir toured Florence before their evening performance. I had read about the Duomo, that iconic cathedral, in Ross King's book, *Brunelleschi's Dome: How a Renaissance Genius Reinvented Architecture,* but I was not prepared for the sheer scope of the real thing. Built by Filippo Brunelleschi in the middle of

the 15th century, the Duomo dominates the landscape of the city even today. I knew then that 1A should have a similar prominent structure!

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As part of the previous year's "Into the Woods" thematic unit, 1A explored Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House on the Prairie.* Glen Gale, FCS carpenter, and his crew constructed the framework for the log cabin housed in our classroom. I wondered if by placing some sort of a large umbrella onto the frame of the cabin, we could change it into the Duomo! Fortunately, once again the stars were in alignment, saving us from my primitive idea. Two parents of children in my class, Matthew Levitties '84, a talented carpenter, spent several weekends building a Duomo for 1A, and Meg Saligman, a well-known muralist, helped the children to paint it authentically. The excitement heightened each week as the children returned to school to see what had been added to the Duomo. Upon its completion, 1A invited other Lower School classes into our classroom to share their knowledge of the Duomo and to lead "tours."

While that day in Florence was a whirlwind, I could not leave without seeing Michelangelo's *David* at the Academie. Standing before it actually brought me to tears. Towering over the onlookers, David gazes intently looking for Goliath. I could not imagine how something so beautiful could come from human hands freeing a form from a block of marble. When I returned to 1A, I thought that the children might share the same experience of releasing their inner sculpture. 1A students did not meet with quite as much success, as their blocks of Ivory soap became progressively smaller and not always clearly identifiable, but they had great fun trying.

1A's Duomo.

Janet and Jeff Bowker in Florence.

Throughout the rest of my trip I viewed many Italian churches whose walls were covered in frescos, with our final destination, the Sistine Chapel in Rome. Meg Saligman again led 1A students in an

Standing before [the sculpture of David] actually brought me to tears.

incredible activity when I returned, in the fall. While the students did not actually get to paint on wet plaster, they embellished large printed Florentine panels with paint and markers, and Meg installed them on the ceiling of our room. Later, assistant teacher Jane Pompetti and I taped large sheets of brown paper on the underside of our tables, and the children lay on their backs to draw their favorite figures taken from nature. The finished panels were used to adorn the inside of the Duomo.

No matter how many books one reads or pictures one looks at, there is a vitality to a real masterpiece of art that can only be appreciated in its presence. Without my trip to Italy, I could have taught

Looking back on the experience, I thank my lucky stars!

about the Italian Renaissance, but I would not have brought the same level of excitement. Looking back on the experience, I thank my lucky stars!

Sue……

How does one make the Renaissance concrete enough for Lower School students? Or, more to the point, what on earth was I going to teach for three months to third graders when there is very little reading material set during the Renaissance times? This was the question that I wrestled with for quite awhile last spring when the Renaissance was chosen as our fall thematic project. How could eight-year-olds appreciate the spirit of the Renaissance without a sense of ancient history on which many of the ideas were based?

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During an informal conversation in the hall with another third grade teacher, Jack Briggs, who often helps me clarify my muddy thoughts, an idea began to form. Why not start the year studying ancient Greece and Rome so that the students could then appreciate the mythological connections that were so apparent centuries later?

With this in mind, and with the help of a stipend, my family and I planned a two-and-a-half week trip to Rome, Tuscany, Florence, Athens, Crete and Santorini. We toured the Coliseum, the Forum (with my fifteen-year-old Latin student Jamie '10 as our guide), the Vatican Museum, St. Peter's Cathedral and the Sistine Chapel. We took pictures of columns, ancient sculptures and saw first hand the works of the great Italian masters. Then we drove through Tuscany, stopping along the way at the church in Montepulciano to view a Michelangelo fresco. We were alone in the church with the masterpiece, and it was there that I truly appreciated his talent.

Time in Florence at the Uffizi gallery seeing the paintings of Rembrandt, daVinci, Michelangelo, Botticelli and other masters followed. *The Birth of Venus* by Botticelli and Michelangelo's paintings of ancient mythological creatures began to excite me as I realized the immediate connections. All of the sculpture in the Uffizi corridors were busts of ancient Greek and Roman figures, many of whom I knew, but all of whom my daughter recognized. She insisted on taking pictures next to Caligula and Julius Caesar. What fifteen-year-old gets excited translating Pliny in Rome and taking pictures with ancient dead guys? Friends' Central teachers had inspired her in the classroom, and seeing the actual art and archaeological sites that she had only known through pictures made history come alive. I only hoped I could do the same thing for my students.

We left Florence and made our way to Athens, (minus all of our luggage which decided to spend two more days in Florence without us). Staying in the shadow of the Acropolis and touring the Parthenon

What fifteen-year-old gets excited translating Pliny in Rome and taking pictures with ancient dead guys?

in 95° heat without a change of clothes was quite an experience. Going to a concert in the Acropolis amphitheatre of ancient Buddhist chants and modern American gospel seemed surreal at the time, but the blending of two very distinct cultures and time periods was representative of what I hoped to do in the classroom that fall.

As part of our time in Athens, we also took a day trip to Delphi to visit the famous oracle. And while in Athens, my family read St. Paul's

The Clough family in Santorini.

accounts in the *Book of Acts* of his time in both Rome and Athens. I also re-read *The Odyssey* in preparation for the fall. A visit to the Archaeological Museum in Athens to view multiple sculptures and frescoes of the Greek deities was great fodder for my classroom.

It was then on to Crete and some much needed down time as well as a look at the Palace of Knossos and the period of Greek history known as the Minoan period, immortalized in the version of *The Odyssey* that the class and I were going to read. The Minotaur and the myths of Daedulus, Icarus, Perseus and the Gorgons were all colorfully highlighted. By the time we reached Santorini, we had been immersed in a multitude of archaeological museums, digs and history lessons around every bend. Our few days in Santorini allowed us to catch our breath and absorb Greek culture in a beautiful setting.

Coming home, I viewed our photographic memories excitedly and chose many to enlarge for an art collage that consumed an entire wall in my classroom. And last fall, the class did recognize the Greek myths portrayed in the Renaissance masters' paintings and sculptures and saw the similarities in form and style in many of the art examples.

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Having visited the ancient sites in person, I was able to create pictures for Odysseus' journeys. Our study of the Renaissance masters was greatly enhanced because the students understood the stories and places depicted in much of the artwork, and because I had been there!

Long Nights and the Northern Lights

By Sara Callaghan and Deborah Goldader

Sara and Deb, who have both been teaching in Upper School for six years, teach Foundations of Scientific Knowledge. In addition, Sara has taught chemistry, while Deb has taught physics.

On Halloween Day in 2006, we, two science teachers from different disciplines, attended a Plasma Conference for high school science instructors, given by the American Physical Society. Plasma is the fourth state of matter, and the one least commonly observed on earth, but more than 99% of the universe is in the plasma state. Examples of plasma in nature include stars, lightning, and the Aurora Borealis and Aurora Australis (Northern and Southern Lights). Following the conference, we were inspired to apply for a Fannie Cox Hendrie stipend so that we could observe the amazing phenomenon of the aurora firsthand.

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Hendrie stipends are typically used for summer activities, but the best chance of observing an aurora is near one of the poles during the winter when the nights are longest. We decided to go for the Northern Lights, which meant a visit to Alaska in December! Fortunately for us, it was not as cold or as dark as we had imagined (a balmy 0°F and four whole hours of daylight!), and we had a wonderful time learning some new science to share with our students.

The main goal of our trip was to observe and photograph the Northern Lights. Leading up to our trip, the sun was relatively inactive, and we were nervous that we might not have an opportunity to see the aurora. Luckily the sun cooperated, and there was a coronal mass ejection on Friday, the day before we left. Due to fluctuations in the sun's magnetic field, charged particles are sometimes able to escape if they have enough energy; these particles are referred to as the solar wind.

Aurora Borealis.

Generally the solar wind can only penetrate the earth's atmosphere at the poles, because the earth's magnetic field deflects charged particles. These particles travel at speeds of approximately 500 kilometers per second, (over one million miles per hour!). Even at this incredible speed, it ought to take about 3.5 days for the solar particles to travel the 93 million miles to earth—and to our delight, the aurora appeared Monday night, precisely as we had calculated!

The aurora was first visible around 9:30 pm, and we spent about three hours outside on a mountaintop watching the aurora and taking long-exposure photographs. We were surprised by how bright it was and how quickly it rippled across the sky. The aurora was mostly a minty green color, although it was tinged with pink briefly, as the

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solar wind made it into the lower part of the atmosphere. Sometimes it looked like a ribbon, and other times like flames (see photo). Because we were so far away from any city lights, we were also able to observe a lot of stars at the same time.

We spent four nights and three days in Alaska, and only saw the aurora for about three hours, but we managed to keep ourselves quite busy nevertheless. We were staying at Chena Hot Springs Resort, about 65 miles east of Fairbanks (www.chenahotsprings.com). We chose Chena not only because they advertised aurora-viewing, but

also because they have the hot springs which they use to generate all of their own electricity and to heat the buildings. What we learned is that the Chena scientists are the first to generate electricity from geothermal water that is below boiling (in this case, only about 165°F). Normally when you generate electricity with hot water, you use steam to turn the turbines, but these ingenious people use the hot water to boil a refrigerant at a much lower temperature, and the gaseous refrigerant turns the turbine instead of steam. We were able to get a private tour of the power plant (impressively small!) from one of the engineers. We were excited to discover on returning that the February 2008 issue of *Popular Mechanics* featured an article on Chena's energy innovation. (Prior to the development of their geothermal process, the resort would go through $1000 of diesel fuel per day to power their generators.)

The water from the hot springs is also used to run a chiller that keeps an ice museum frozen year-round, despite the warm summers (90°F). We were amazed by the sculptures—many life-size—and they even serve drinks in glasses carved from ice at the "ice-bar."

Perhaps the biggest surprise for us was the greenhouses. The folks at Chena are growing tomatoes and lettuce year-round in their geothermally heated greenhouses and serving the vegetables in their

Deb, left and Sara, right.

restaurant. The plants are grown hydroponically, so there's no dirt to wash off—they're harvested and put on your plate. They were the freshest, best tasting vegetables we'd ever eaten (in Alaska in December—who'd have thought?)

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Chena Hot Springs was discovered about 100 years ago by gold miners, and people have been coming there to soak in the springs ever since. We ended up soaking ourselves every evening, which was a strange experience, because the air was so cold, but the water was so warm. We had to walk outside in our bathing suits to get into the water, but once we were in, it was wonderful. (Bathing in hot springs may sound relaxing, but our work as science teachers is never done: we felt obligated to perform some gas law experiments with an empty water bottle while we were soaking.)

We also had the opportunity to go dog sledding on our last day. We toured the kennels and learned a little about racing from Mason, who takes care of the Chena dogs. We only went about nine miles per hour on our ride, but good racers can go about eighteen mph. Mason also showed us several different kinds of sleds and allowed us to harness the dogs ourselves. One of the dogs we harnessed was 75% wolf.

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We learned so much on this trip that fits in with the Foundations curriculum we both teach: we were in the middle of our unit on heat when we left for Alaska, so when we returned we discussed geothermal heating. Our next unit was states of matter, so we talked about the evaporation of the refrigerant in the power plant and about the aurora being an example of plasma. Next we studied electricity and magnetism, so we looked at how the spinning turbine in the power plant generates alternating current and how the charged particles from the sun get drawn in at the poles by the Earth's magnetic field to create the aurora. The auroral colors that we observe are due to the collision of these particles with the gases in our atmosphere; different substances give off different wavelengths of light, which ties in perfectly with our unit on atomic spectra. The specific knowledge that we gained during our trip helps to give some of our science lessons a real-world context, but more importantly, we are modeling a life-long love of learning for our students, and we hope our enthusiasm is contagious.

Chautauqua: The Best Camp for Adults

By Phyllis Gallagher

Phyllis has taught chemistry to Upper Schoolers for seven years and Environmental Science for two.

I keep asking myself, *"What is it about the Chautauqua Institution that made such a deep impression upon me and continues to suggest themes for me to ponder months after my departure?"* Why was this small, auto-restricted village, thirty miles east of Lake Erie, in upstate New York, with 12,000 religiously diverse summer residents such an enigma? Was it the open dialogue on timely social, economic and political topics? Was it the great music and art being studied and performed by all ages? Was it the Summer School with its wide-ranging offerings? Or was it the tranquility of the crystal clear lake just waiting for your sailboat? Of course, the Chautauqua experience is all the above, presenting an unusually inclusive environment where the only expectation is to question and explore new ideas and revisit the old views. As one

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of the speakers so eloquentlysaid, "Wouldn't it be marvelous if each day we simply expand the grounds a foot in all directions to allow the world to fully experience true freedom of speech and expression?"

I have known about Chautauqua for more than twenty years as my husband, Bob, was a resident music student for seven summers, beginning in 1977. Over the years, he has spoken of the Institution as a profound place of personal growth and emotional warmth where the ages mix freely and support each other. I must admit, I didn't fully get it. I listened politely and said, "Well, maybe we will go there someday," not really understanding the power housed within the freedom to learn. Then, at the opening ceremonies of the 134th year of the Chautauqua Institution, with our family in attendance, Tom Becker, President, said:

We must be willing to open ourselves to the unknown; to take risks; to acknowledge that despite all of our applied energies, we do not know all of our inner and outer worlds. And so we come to Chautauqua. In 1874, two fabulously accomplished people – Lewis Miller and John Heyl Vincent – came together to form this endeavor. They were men of faith whose commitment to lifelong learning was driven primarily by a reverence for the mystery of life and a sincere sense of obligation to make the world a better, more just place. They never declared this place nirvana or trumpeted its perfection. Instead they honored the effort. The annual trek to this lovely grove is about that effort to at once examine the conditions of our politics, economics, science, technologies, humanities, arts and theology, and to speak to one another of our lives; to relate our stories.

I leaned over to Bob and said, "I think I'm beginning to get it."

Bob and I both received stipends, mine a Fannie Cox Hendrie stipend, Bob, through St. David's Church in Radnor, to spend two weeks at Chautauqua with our two boys, John '16 and Paul '10. Each week of the Chautauqua summer (nine weeks total) presents a series of lectures and discussion opportunities that revolve around a core topic. Throughout the day, exploration of the topic includes lectures by renowned writers and/or specialists who present varying opinions and ideologies, book discussions and signings, panel discussions with the experts and interdenominational devotional services. The evening events are no less varied and include symphony concerts with world-class performers, ballet and choral performances, operas, movies and other special-interest performances by various entertainers (e.g., Smothers Brothers). Many of the lectures and special events are held in the 5,000-seat amphitheater—often with standing room only.

But Chautauqua is not all serious study.

But Chautauqua is not all serious study. For a little relief from the intense intellectual stimulation, one can attend a lecture on raising purple martens, walk the mock Holy Land topography of Palestine Park, meditate with a Zen teacher, stroll through the small but intriguing book store or simply walk the shores of the beautiful lake.

The Chautauqua Institution offers programs for children also, so that the adult community can fully participate in the many daytime activities. John attended the day camp where he had his first sailing and kayaking experiences. Paul practiced each day with the Motet Choir, maintained his swimming with a coach and attended piano master classes with world renowned musicians. He even had the opportunity to play trumpet with the Chautauqua Band for the 4th of

John Gallagher at the edge of Chautauqua's lake.

July festivities. Like John, he quickly met some other students and found time to socialize.

After a few days of trying to do everything, I soon learned that there was no way to participate in all the activities that Chautauqua had to offer. I, therefore, carefully planned each day with the help of

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the published schedule, thereby maximizing my exposure to the best of Chautauqua while still carving out a bit of time for personal reflection and conversation with the many new acquaintances. Consultation with the Chautauquan Daily was essential. This newspaper is the staple of the Chautauqua experience in that it provides an accurate update of the daily schedule and analyzes the lectures from the previous day. In addition, interviews with the conductors and musicians who performed in the evening concerts are printed, and lifestyle pieces celebrating the resident life within the grounds have a place. Bob was even interviewed, and a full page article was written about his celebrating his twenty-fifth reunion with Chautauqua.

The average Chautauqua day begins with the devotional service at 9:00 am in the amphitheater led by the chaplain-of-the-week. I soon coveted this quiet time and gathered a sense of complete anony-

mity, surrounded by thoughts of the coming day. During choral responses, however, I could look up at the stage/pulpit area and see Paul and Bob participating in the service together with the raised voices of the Chautauqua Motet choir. The pointed and timely messages delivered by exceptional spiritual teachers from many different faiths from around the country quickly redirected my attention to the very real questions that were to be discussed in lecture sessions throughout the day.

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The 10:45 a.m. morning lecture would attract a full house in the amphitheater. "Ethics in the Media" was the topic for Week 1, and Week 2, the subject was "Ethics in Technology." I will talk about the first session fully, as an example of the level of immersion in a topic the Institution provides. The five speakers invited to present their thoughts on the ethics topic included John Harwood (CNBC), David Westin (President, ABC News), Arianna Huffington (co-founder of a successful news blog site), Juan Williams (senior correspondent, NPR), and Dave Marash (Washington anchor, Al Jazeera English).

As intended, each speaker had his or her own "take" on who ought to be held accountable for so much of the perceived, inaccurate and/or biased distribution of information, categorized under the broad term, "news." There was general agreement that the fragmentation of our society was in large part to blame for lack of integrity in news dissemination. According to these speakers, the population at

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large is unwilling to expand beyond a chosen news niche and generally disinterested in exploring other perspectives. Early in the history of television, the population obtained its news from only the three major networks. The differentiation between networks was more personality-driven than content-driven: different anchor, same exact news. As a result, people within a given neighborhood could discuss news items and have opinion-based conversations because, in

essence, all saw the same newscast. As the number of news sources continued to grow—cable stations, radio talks shows, Internet and satellite radio—the opportunities for the population to fragment intellectually rose, causing cultural isolation.

Furthermore, as the opportunities to present the news to the public expanded, the demand to hold viewership placed immense pressure on news journalists to "give the viewers what they wanted" and caused an even greater need to sensationalize news and stories. Harwood summed up the situation as follows: "The television networks have to propel discussion toward more bombastic argument and sensationalism. Everyone is scrambling for the same audience."

"The television networks have to propel discussion toward more bombastic argument and sensationalism." —*John Harwood*

The need for viewership, David Westin pointed out in his talk titled "What's Right and What's Wrong with Journalism?," forces networks to focus on something other than reporting the news, and that is what gets news people into trouble. So, the stations fold under pressure, report before accurate data is available just to be first with a story, and the result is "...we missed the story, and we lost some of our credibility."

I believe Juan Williams summed up the problem most succinctly in his talk "News and Views: Media in the New Age." Narrowcasting versus broadcasting was at the heart of his thesis. The fracturing of the American people was also demographic, as immigrants continue to pour into the country. The new immigrants, he suggested, were not as willing to integrate into the new culture as they were in the early 20th century. The "so-called hyphenated Americans often retain their national identity and are not intent on assimilation." On the topic of sensational news coverage, Williams said, "Rather than informing and challenging its audience, today's media simply gives viewers what they want and, in so doing, reinforces existing preconceptions

The line between news and entertainment is now fuzzy, and the audiences have to decide what they want.

and ideologies." The line between news and entertainment is now fuzzy, and the audiences have to decide what they want. During the week that the discussion of media ethics was presented, Paris Hilton was emerging from jail, and all of America seemed to be following this

story more than the news of the Iraq War. Williams said, "I don't think there's any way to excuse the audience."

Dave Marash was arguably the most vocal about the issues surrounding the "ignorance of Iraq" and made the clear point that our problem is that what the American people perceive as international news is, in fact, news through the American filter of acceptable evening viewing. "The primary experience here at Chautauqua is listening, ruminating and interacting. All this takes time. In contrast, the media pay no more attention to the tempo of cognition than they do reality."

"The primary experience here at Chautauqua is listening, ruminating and interacting. All this takes time." —*Dave Marash*

Marash discussed the decrease of 10-15% in the story length accepted by the *New York Times* and reiterated the fact that the less detail, the less information is conveyed. "The less they (journalists) tell, the more they betray the facts. More detail means richer ruminationations and broader intercommunication." The Internet fared no better than written or spoken news sources. Marash said, "The Internet becomes a weapon against thought." Individuals can intellectually isolate themselves just as effectively on the Internet as they would on cable TV in that people find reiterations of their own ideas, which they find comforting." Marash used much of his lecture time outlining the ideologies of Al Jazeera English, highlighting it as a "possible antidote to the disease of global ignorance." This news source was to spend 70% of its reporting globally, whereas other western news agencies spend 80% of its reporting in North America, Europe, Japan and Israel. He felt that the problem was that Americans wanted news that directly related to Americans, and they did not want to spend much time figuring out the world. I did begin to become lost and bleary-eyed in his repetitive self-praise especially after the following strong statement: "Ignorance is killing us, and the media are leading us in ignorance about the world. Al Jazeera is trying to eradicate

Such personally strong statements are what Chautauqua is all about...

that ignorance and also give an existential expression of what they think matters." Such personally strong statements are what Chautauqua is all about, however, and I can tell you the place was

buzzing after such a personally rich and harsh description of his view of American intellectual life.

The Chautauqua experience allowed me time to think, read and meet new people. The "no-car" atmosphere created a space for people to slowly walk and contemplate all that moves too quickly outside the main gate. The days, although full, seemed tranquil next to the rush of our usual everyday life. After the day's events, the family met back at the apartment each evening for a meal and talked about our different experiences. Yes, we all sat down together for fourteen dinners. That may never happen again, and I am grateful to have had this extraordinary opportunity.

Peace Through Understanding

By Leslie Marie Grace and Dyann Connor

Leslie began teaching art to sixth through eighth graders in the Middle School this year. She taught art in high school from 2004-2006 at North Springs High School in Atlanta. Dyann has taught science to sixth graders at FCS for seven years and will be working at the Tower Hill School in Wilmington, Delaware in the fall.

Leslie: Last summer, I was one of 200 teachers chosen to travel to Japan as a Japan Fulbright Memorial Fund Scholar. All teachers involved made an agreement to implement Japanese culture into our lesson plans. I knew I wanted to include an element of peace education in my lesson, so I decided that having the children make origami cranes, as part of a world-wide peace project, would work well in an art classroom. As I wrote out my lesson plans, I started to think about the possibility of a trip with students and parents to Japan to actually hand deliver the cranes to Hiroshima, where there is a peace memorial. I have led student trips before, so once I got the idea, I started planning. The journey to Japan would be a sort of pilgrimage to our final destination of Hiroshima, and I had hopes for it to be a deeply meaningful experience. And so, this past spring vacation, a Friends' Central group, consisting of about ten students and parents, myself and Middle School science teacher Dyann Connor, left for Tokyo.

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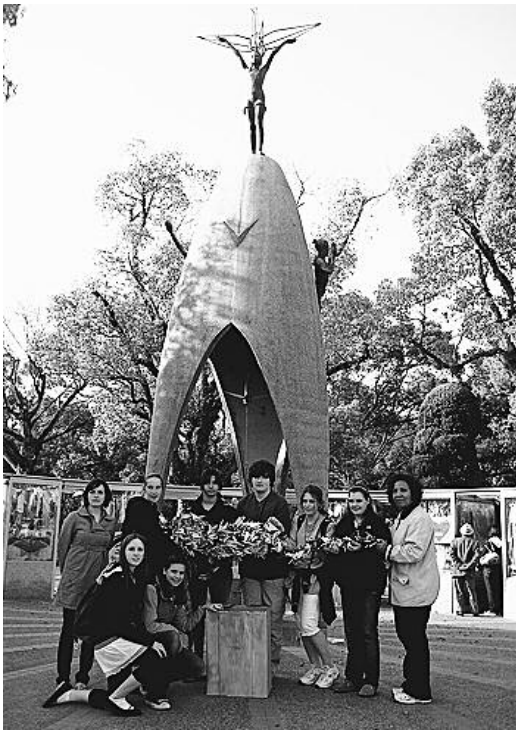
In my classes this year, I have been showing a video about the lives of victims who were affected by the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. I am not an expert in this area, by any means, but I have been trying these past few years to learn more and better understand what happened. I explain the occurrences to the best of my knowledge, as I find many students have questions about the horror of what happened. At the end of the video, there is a lesson on folding peace cranes.



FCS students at Sasaki Memorial.
Leslie, left and Dyann, right.

Dyann: Creating paper cranes for peace began when a young girl, Sadako Sasaki, died at age twelve from leukemia, as a probable result of her radiation exposure to the atomic bomb explosion when she was two years old. While in the hospital, Sadako learned of a Japanese legend that folding Senbazuru (1000 cranes) would so please the gods that the folder would be granted one wish. Sadako folded origami paper cranes during the last years of her illness, in hopes of getting well. When she died, her friends were so inspired by her courage and struggle to live, that in 1958, a peace statue of Sadako holding a golden crane was erected in the Hiroshima Peace Park. Since then, people

...people world-wide have constructed paper cranes and dedicated them to all child victims of the atomic bomb.

world-wide have constructed paper cranes and dedicated them to all child victims of the atomic bomb. The cranes are displayed in glass cases around the Sadako statue.

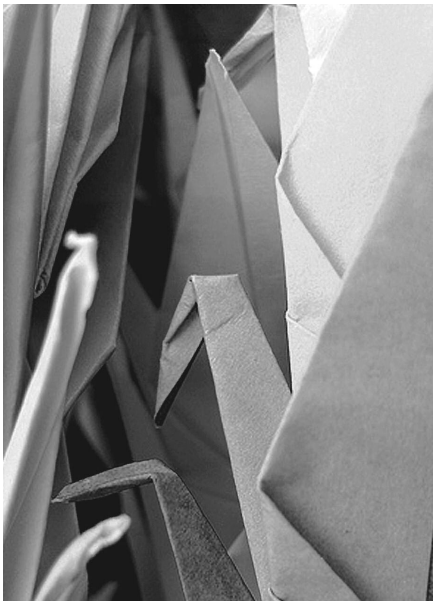
Leslie: We traveled from Tokyo to Hakone, Kyoto, Nara and Osaka. We visited shrines, temples, castles, an *animé* studio and markets and did plenty of shopping. On the second to last day of the trip, we traveled to Hiroshima. We arrived by bullet train, dropped our stuff off at the hotel, and then left for sightseeing at Miyajima Shrine, which is an hour away from Hiroshima by public transportation. Because of time and distance issues, we had to carry the large, blue box of "cranes" around with us during sightseeing, and by this point, it was no big deal for me, because I had already been hauling the box from automobile, plane, train and bus to hotel destinations across Japan. I intended to carry the box and not place the burden on others, but everyone offered to help, and it became a sort of "right of passage," an honor, to carry the cranes to their new home. After visiting the shrine, we took the one-hour journey back to Hiroshima, to the Peace Memorial Park. Early on in the trip, a parent asked if there was a ceremony to deliver and accept the cranes. I replied that to my knowledge, I did not know of any formal reception for accepting the cranes, and so we were all wondering how the actual delivery would happen.

Dyann: The crisp morning air embraced us as we set off for the Hiroshima Peace Museum. Following a pedestrian path that hugged the Aioi River, we walked around a bend, where suddenly standing before us was the Genbaku Domu (Atomic Bomb Dome). Tall, fragmented walls of a once large brick and stone building loomed before us. Window frames were hollowed, and blue skies appeared through spaces where the roof should have been. In spite of its skeletal remains, it was not difficult to see that this was once a magnificent building. A stone plaque informed visitors that the building was constructed in 1915, as a center for trade and commerce. However, the building was located only a few hundred meters beneath the hypocenter of the atomic bomb explosion in 1945. The building remained

Our lively chatter faded to an awed silence as the magnitude of our surroundings engulfed us.

as a memorial to those who died on that fateful day. Our lively chatter faded to an awed silence as the magnitude of our surroundings engulfed us.

My heart ached as I watched an elderly couple approach the memorial and place a bouquet of fresh flowers near the plaque. As I turned away, I bumped into one of our students, who wrapped her arm around mine and sighed, "This is so sad." I squeezed her hand in mutual agreement, and we walked on together, arm-in-arm, along the river path. We talked of war and alternatives to war. We talked of



Origami peace cranes.

people who committed their lives to peaceful resolution of conflict, and we walked in silence, eyes glued on Middle School student, Lydia Lobb '12, who was in the lead, carrying our bright blue box, which contained our paper cranes.

Leslie: The cranes were 75% ready to be presented to the monument. At school I had strung twenty-five to fifty cranes in a row on string. I still had to loop all the cranes together on one piece of string to be hung on one hook. Originally I thought I could do this at the hotel right before we departed for the Peace Memorial Park; however, I hadn't known that we would only be at the hotel early on and then out all day, not returning until dinner time. So I told myself I would find a spot at the park and quickly string them together, but I still had no idea for the "ceremony." When we arrived at the park, I sat on a bench and started pulling the cranes out of the box, while, on their own accord, the students gathered around in a semicircle and offered to help hold them up. Seven students were holding up about two or three strings of cranes each. A crowd of Japanese people and other tourists gathered around to watch us and took pictures of our "ceremony." I was so moved by the students and the whole process that was transpiring, that the only way I could prevent myself from bursting out in tears, was to keep my head down and continue pulling the cranes out. One by one, I took out each string of cranes, and then, one by one, I gathered the cranes back from each student and looped them together on one string. When all the cranes were unified, every student helped to pick up the bundle of cranes and carefully carry them to the monument, their new home.

...the only way I could prevent myself from bursting out in tears, was to keep my head down and continue pulling the cranes out.

A non-English speaking Japanese couple helped direct us to where we could fill out a form which would let the city know where the cranes were coming from, how many there were and what our message was. After that we took pictures with the cranes to commemorate the event, and then hung them in a clear case designated for cranes delivered that day. "It felt important," said Mary Chawaga '13. "I wish we could make and deliver cranes every year. Knowing that we contributed something toward world peace was inspirational."

After starting out on the trip oblivious to how the cranes were to be presented, I ended the trip realizing we had created our own special ceremony for doing so. I believe that if we had planned this out, it would not have been as meaningful and moving an experience as it was. It felt as though the ritual, the ceremony, was meant to find us

It felt as though the ritual, the ceremony, was meant to find us the way it did.

the way it did. I have always believed travel changes lives and helps us understand differences so that we can make greater strides toward peace, and on this trip, I was able to see that in action.

Dyann: Taking the children on this journey was life changing for me in that the Quaker values of Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community and Equality helped me through the emotional turmoil of facing some of the long-term impacts of war and destruction. Delivering and hanging the Friends' Central peace cranes with our students was one of the most profound life experiences I have ever had. I remain forever mindful of the poet Maya Angelou's words, "History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again."

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cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage,
need not be lived again."
—Maya Angelou

Pig Iron* Theatre: Where Playing is the Thing

By Terry Guerin

Terry has been the drama teacher in Middle and Upper School for twenty years.

In 2000, some FCS students and I were preparing to perform *Fires in the Mirror,* a theatre piece by Anna Deveare Smith, at the Church Street Theatre in Edinburgh, Scotland, as part of the International Fringe Festival for Performing Arts. I thought I would seek out a recommendation on shows to see during our two-week stay. There are literally thousands of theatre experiences available for festival attendees. Choosing what to see can be daunting, so seeking some advice allows you to be discriminating and is a sure conversation starter in pubs or cafes.

Our technical director suggested a show called *Gentlemen Volunteers;* he hadn't seen it yet but assured me that it was high on the "buzzometer," getting raves from papers and spectators alike. I trusted him, mostly because he was thoroughly captivated with our students and their provocative treatment of Smith's play. He was clearly a man of discerning taste! The next day, upon trying to score a ticket, I was told the show had long been sold out. Wendy Steiner, mother of Emma '00, happened to be waiting in line to see the show and took my arm and said "Stick with me." In we went. To my surprise, the show was being performed by Philadelphia's own Pig Iron Theatre Company. Here was one of the hottest tickets at the Festival, and I

So began my gratifying relationship with the company that bills itself as a "dance-clown-theatre ensemble."

could have seen the show in my very own home town. So began my gratifying relationship with the company that bills itself as a "dance-clown-theatre ensemble."

**The term "pig iron" was first coined in 1665 as a reference to crude iron waiting to be refined into steel. Philadelphia's Pig Iron Theatre Company took the name to signify the raw materials, the actors and the narrative, that become theatre.*

Pig Iron director, Quinn Baureidel, rear, works with
FCS students on a scene for *The Tempest.*

The following fall, I noticed that Pig Iron was presenting a new work called *Shut-Eye.* As soon as possible I secured tickets; it so happened the only available ones were for Tuesday, September 11. After the horrendous events of that day, an evening in the theatre seemed like a possible antidote and a sure escape. Outside the Painted Bride Art Center, the audience observed a moment of silence before entering the theatre. The piece was more than diverting; we were treated to a kind of theatrical stream of "unconsciousness." Free associating to the idea of sleep, the company in collaboration with renowned theatre artist Joseph Chaikin, developed a theater piece which played like a pastiche of images expressing a human's need for restoration. Stylistically, the sweep of the production mimicked a dream. I sent a note backstage congratulating the company and extolling the amazing ensemble work. It was a comforting end to a

**It was a comforting end to a truly surreal day...
while humans can destroy,
they are also capable of creating.**

truly surreal day, reminding me that while humans can destroy, they are also capable of creating. I also wrote a check for the ticket I "stole" in Edinburgh the year before.

Cut to two years later, and we are preparing to present *Oedipus the King* as our fall production at FCS. I got in touch with artistic director Quinn Baureidel to inquire about having our drama students take a workshop with company members and was delighted to have artistic director Dito van Reigersberg and actor Sarah Sanford meet with our cast here at FCS. Both teachers approached our students with such generosity and respect that I knew I had found like-minded theatre educators. We learned how to find the collective voice of the group,

We learned how to find the collective voice of the group...

how the chorus is the mediation between dramatic events of the play and the community affected by them. With their guidance, we sculpted a powerful chorus for the tragedy, one that achieved what scholar David Wiles calls, "a collective affirmation of unity that prepares an individual for the recognition of human limitation."

Since that time, Pig Iron has also worked with FCS drama students during the Greek unit of the class in Classical Drama. Maureen Noonan '09 shared this thought: "They made me feel more comfortable with opening up to a group." Alex Barron '09 says that "Pig Iron is about letting go, not caring about what is around you. You can't hold back; you just jump in." She was referring to the welcoming atmosphere that was so carefully established by Dito and Sarah and so integral to revealing truth through the art of theatre. Since Maureen, Alex and their classmates participated in the workshop at the beginning of the year, we are still the beneficiaries of Pig Iron's unique approach to making theatre: that every step taken in the studio supports the leap of faith required to reach the ensemble's full potential as artists.

Trust is the word that comes to mind when I attempt to define what distinguishes Pig Iron's work.

Trust is the word that comes to mind when I attempt to define what distinguishes Pig Iron's work. Before they create a new piece, they work to develop a space where all the artists can do what they call "research." Through movement exercises, improvisation, classic clowning techniques and song, they take an initial idea or inspiration and make it into theatre. From musing about what life was like for James Joyce's daughter, Lucia, in an insane asylum, to considering the visual drama of people evacuating a building under attack, the com-

pany has explored a myriad of possibilities for theatrical expression, always using ensemble performing, that is, performance driven by the group, rather than by an individual. Collaboration is a constant.

As the play is built, images are presented, stretched, chewed on, sometimes thrown out but ultimately used to serve the play. The company members gather and share images, free associating and finally making the play. "Play" is the proper word to use in describing Pig Iron's mission. It is sometimes ironic to ask a student to reach back and recall what it was like to "play," especially at this time when adulthood is looming before them. Play means being present and

Play means being present and available to wherever your imagination takes you.

available to wherever your imagination takes you. Every offer by actors in rehearsal is valuable and gets thrown into the "soup." I like that metaphor because it suggests comfort food, that which nourishes and warms. And stirring the soup is director Dan Rothenberg. He throws directives to the company, and they elegantly begin to move within the playing space and explore an idea, using nothing more than their imagination and their bodies.

I have been thrilled with Pig Iron's work with our students, exposing them to the power of the ensemble in every performance, from musicals to Shakespeare. Having the artists of Pig Iron Theatre reinforce that notion and exemplify the beauty of corporate art-making in their own work has been most enriching. Pig Iron is constantly renewing its dedication to creating fresh ways of communicating through performance.

The company will be premiering a new piece, called *Sweet By and By,* this September in Philadelphia's Live Arts Festival. It is a musical meditation on the work of labor activist, Joe Hill. I saw a kind of "first draft" of the piece last year; it is everything I have come to expect from Pig Iron: thoughtful, provoking theatre that presents ideas through the exquisite theatrical lens known as ensemble. Since my initial encounter with Pig Iron Theatre I have become more than an advocate: I now sit on the Board of Directors. I am proud to help promote the fine work of this unique theatre company.

Steve Ruzansky:
Master of the Classroom, Master of the Stage

By Marilyn Lager

Marilyn has been director of the Middle/Upper School library for twenty-two years and editor of this journal for nineteen.

"Puppets up. Watch the angle of the head. Keep the energy going!" The instructions, spoken in a surprising mellow voice, come from the middle of Shallcross Hall. "Okay, now, puppet heads down. Speak like wide-mouthed frogs!" The mellow voice belongs to the teacher and director of this fifth grade puppet show, Steve Ruzansky, and on this gray, March afternoon, these Middle School fifth graders are rehearsing their production to perform at Lower School later in the spring. Their unique, life-like sock puppets display colored wool for hair, buttons for eyes, teeth made of beads, some with bright felt hats fixed to wobbly heads. They bob and talk to the audience atop a simple sheet-covered wood frame.

"Listen for directions…and articulate ….articulate!" The students have rewritten jingles based on familiar nursery rhymes and TV commercials. The whimsically altered slogans of Geico, Flako, Mastercard and anti-smoking songs come from puppets' mouths. And while Steve is directing his last puppet show at Friends' Central, and while the children are having fun, he hopes he is teaching them skills of writing, speaking, collaboration and creativity that will last a lifetime.

Steve is directing his last puppet show at Friends' Central, and while the children are having fun, he hopes he is teaching them skills of writing, speaking, collaboration and creativity that will last a lifetime.

Steve is leaving FCS after thirty-one years here as a teacher (forty years of a teaching career), primarily of ten-year-olds. He was first labeled as an elementary school teacher, before fifth grade became part of Middle School; then in 1988, he began teaching social studies and language arts in the Middle School. His puppetry, emblematic of

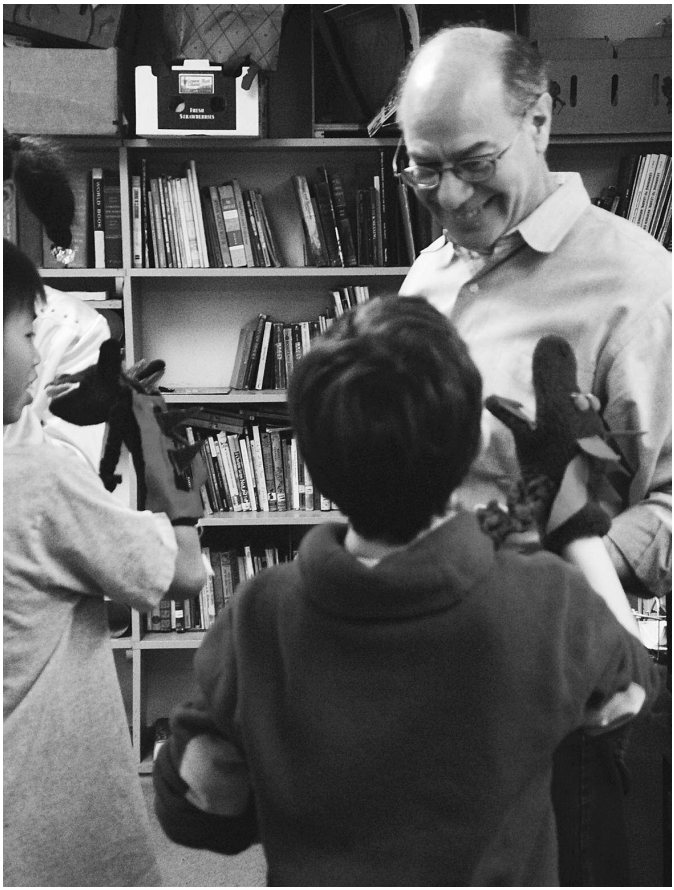

Photo: Leigh Browning

Steve with junior puppeteers.

the project-based learning and teaching he supports, began with a summer stipend where his goal was to come up with a means to supplement his salary. He performed for years at birthday parties, fairs and libraries, eventually bringing the creative skills of play writing and puppetry into the classroom.

His fifth grade teams over the years have included such FCS professionals as Harvey Zendt, Michi Tashjian, Dave Thomas and Lylee Van Pelt, with whom he taught for twenty-six of his thirty-one years. He, Lylee and Dave created a fifth grade that gave the youngsters support, organization and a deep love of learning, in Steve's case, particularly for books of different genres and cultures. Under his guidance, they studied Early Peoples, Ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia and Greece. He wrote historical skits for them and guided their research in the library, long before the Internet and Power Point existed.

"Steve has always displayed great depth and caring about how children learn," says Lylee. "He is a different kind of thinker, full of imagination and innovation. Most of all, he is a gracious man—and he has always tried to teach his students to be gracious in their own

"He is a different kind of thinker, full of imagination and innovation. Most of all, he is a gracious man..." [says Lylee.]

interactions." Lylee pauses. "Working with Steve has been a joyous journey, full of whimsy and wonder. He leaves with us a great legacy of memories, of fifth grade humor, of campfire cheers, of hilarious puppet shows that we will continue to share and value."

Puppetry has been only one of his performance-based interests. Steve is an accomplished guitar and banjo player who has started school jug bands, with students on metal spoons and teachers strumming washboards. He has directed five faculty musicals such as *Anything Goes* and *Carousel* over the years, helped organize faculty talent shows and Home-and-School coffee houses. During a sabbatical, he wrote the lyrics and book for an original musical about Socrates (entitled *Gadfly*), teaming with Andrea Green, a local musician and songwriter. It was performed as a faculty show at FCS and as a student production at Germantown Friends School. His docudrama, *The Trial of Susan B. Anthony* was performed at the Annenberg Theater by the professional touring group, Theater Caravan.

Steve grew up as the son of two Philadelphia public school teachers, and he always felt that "teaching gives one the opportunity to be as creative as one wants to be. Certainly at FCS, the atmosphere was

..."teaching gives one the opportunity to be as creative as one wants to be."

most conducive for me." He had his students making "passion boxes," exploring and researching their passions, decorating boxes with iconic trinkets and pictures of what they most loved and identified with. These boxes each year would hang from the ceiling of their fifth grade classrooms. (Steve's own passion boxes depicted the banjo and golf.) "He doesn't yell. Our classroom has a calm environment," says fifth grader Krishna Kahn. "It's easy to learn when you feel calm." Under his direction for service related activities, his students repaired ripped books, ran used-book drives—"anything to do with one of my prime passions: books!," smiles Steve.

Chiara Neilson, now a rising seventh grader, points out that "Mr. Ruz was always happy when you told the truth. He respected you for it. He taught us stuff in an interesting and fun way." And indeed he encouraged the children to have a good time while at school. "I'm here to have fun while I get my job done," he has told them many

"I'm here to have fun while I get my job done."

times. And what good times were had: thousands of classroom activities, yearly camping trips to French Creek State Park, serving on the Board of the Multicultural Resource Center of Philadelphia (as they hosted such nationally known speakers as Morris Dees and Julian Bond), and mini-courses, in particular, one that art teacher Caroline Maw-Deis remembers fondly. "It was called "From Sheep to Shawl," and we took the children to a sheep farm in Chadds Ford owned by Georgeann Schellenger Blaha '75, spun the raw wool, carded it and wove scarves. All the time I knew I was working with a mentor, a master teacher. I wanted to be and do my best for him."

During many years of his tenure at FCS, he watched his own children grow up and learn right under his nose. Beth '96 is currently coordinator of community and neighborhood services for the city of Burlington, Vermont, while Josh '00 is an information technician in New York for Tran Siberian Orchestra, a symphonic rock band. Stepdaughter Nancy Lipkin '88 manages her own advertising agency, First Impressions, in Cherry Hill. "I always have tried to be the kind of teacher that I would want my own children to have," says Steve.

"I always have tried to be the kind of teacher that I would want my own children to have."

Steve thinks of his retirement as a "rebooting," an opportunity for him to explore the unconventional life of a "banjo busker" (aka street musician and troubadour), as well as pursue numerous professional puppetry possibilities. His wife Cindy, accustomed to Steve's many ongoing creative passions and projects, will continue to work as a psychotherapist and assistant director of Lower Merion Counseling Services in Bryn Mawr. She acknowledges the positive quality of Steve's "need for new and very different learning situations."

Ray DeSabato, principal of Middle School, remembers that Steve was part of the "Rookie Class of 1977": Joe (Ludwig), Ray and Ruz.

Steve and fellow Bluegrass jammers.

"He has long taken pleasure in the FCS community and is known in the area as the master fifth grade teacher," says Ray. "Steve has been a pillar of FCS Middle School."

"Catch the students in the acts of doing good."

Dave Thomas remembers that one of Steve's most enduring philosophies has been, "Catch the students in the acts of doing good. They always hear from us when they do the wrong thing. Make sure they know we see them when they are doing the right thing." Over the years, it has not been hard to catch Steve Ruzansky himself in the act of doing just the right thing.

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