

FOCUS

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Sub Central

By SAOIRSE HAHN '15
and SOPHIE MACFARLANE '15

Though there have been many alterations to the FCS faculty this year, some of the most noticeable ones have been the new substitute teachers who can be spotted around campus. Some of these substitutes include Galen Guindon, Dwight Dunston, Chris Bleakley, Ryan Levan and Jake Fogel (profiled in our last issue). Interestingly enough, all of these young men were graduates of Friends' Central not too long ago. We want to identify some of them for you as more than the few faces seen strolling around the oval, and give them credit for the work they do for us here at FCS.

Galen Guindon, class of 2006, graduated college and wanted to experience the world of education from an educator's point of view, as well as coach high school athletics. Friends' Central allowed him the best of both worlds, as he acts as the coach of boys'

varsity soccer in the fall, JV girls' basketball in the winter, and boys' varsity baseball in the spring. Other than sports, Galen subs for multiple classes in the Upper School, whether it is English, history or a foreign language. When asked about any plans for the future, Galen remarked that he "[hopes] to coach soccer in a high school someday soon." He is also attending Temple Graduate School starting in January for a Masters in music education, with the hopes of later teaching music along with coaching. Galen also explained what brought him back to FCS after graduating, saying that the "community feel" is what makes FCS different from other schools. He commented that the "teachers genuinely care about the overall development of their students and co-workers."

Ryan Levan has been another fresh face on campus this year. Post FCS,

Ryan attended the University of Pennsylvania and graduated in 2010. After graduating, he applied to Columbia Law School, but deferred his admission because he wanted to "try a hand at teaching while taking this year to explore various other opportunities before committing definitively to a career in law." His aspiration for the future is to "do something fulfilling" with his career. Whether he chooses education, law, or something completely different, Ryan wants to make sure that he is happy with what he is doing, and has explored all of his options before settling on one career path. While back at FCS, Ryan has had the opportunity to teach many classes, and has been able to get a view of the school from a teacher's perspective as opposed to a student's. Even though it has been about five years since Ryan has been a part of the FCS community, he joked that not much has changed besides "Ms Novo taking over for Mr. Kennedy as Principal, the basketball team being one of the best in the nation, and the great new salad bar in the cafeteria." Ryan is happy to be back

for a year, and the community is certainly happy to have him.

Dwight Dunston has the current role of "long term teaching assistant." Dwight wanted to come back to FCS after graduating in 2006 along with Galen, Ryan, and Chris, because he sees it as "a place that combines a wonderful education with an open and nurturing environment that allows people to learn and grow from each other." Dwight hopes to eventually be in the classroom full time as an English teacher, and is currently getting a lot of great experience that can lead him into that kind of career. Dwight, as well as Galen, said that the sense of community at FCS is what separates it from other work environments.

I think the community that FCS has can be generally agreed upon as one of the most important aspects of our school, but these guys explain that most schools do not give the same attention to detail in the lives of their students as FCS does, and that is what draws them back in after getting their diploma. ♦

Head to Head

By HILDA NJANIKE '13

One of two finalists is about to begin an exciting new chapter in their career as the Head of Friends' Central School. Ken Aldridge and Craig Sellers were chosen among 5 semifinalists after hours of deliberation which concluded in a consensus. Both candidates, along with their partners, visited our school for two days these past two weeks in order to see how they "fit in with our community." Though they have extensive Quaker school experience in common, each adds a specific element of diversity. Mr. Aldridge is an African American man, and Mr. Sellers grew up in a working class family with modest means.

Their differences will only help them to better understand the students who might feel underrepresented in our community. Another distinction between the two is that Mr. Sellers is a Quaker while Mr. Aldridge is not, though he is familiar with Quaker principles and holds them to a high degree. This is in addition to the day they spent touring our school and enduring intense scrutiny by the many support groups created to aid the decision process. Obviously, both candidates have a great desire to fill this position, but one will end up disappointed.

Having taken part in the student support group, I can testify that both candidates are extremely articulate and eager to connect with students on a personal level. They possess a repertoire worthy of any Head of School, but the decision rests on how well they can juggle internal school affairs such as academics and external ones such as fundraising. I am sure the Board of Trustees, the ultimate decision makers, are in a tight position, because both candidates will definitely move our school forward in a positive direction. We should expect to be notified of our new Head of School perhaps before winter vacation! ♦



The Penn State Scandal: A Student's Perspective

By DANNY YAHALOMI '14

I'm a very passionate person in terms of trying to make a difference in the lives of some young people." - **Jerry Sandusky, Former Assistant Football Coach, Penn State.**

To the public, The Second Mile Foundation, with its mission to target disadvantaged youth for enrichment programs and outreach, was a spectacular success. Founded in 1977, the Foundation had brought honor to Pennsylvania State University, where it was based, and to its founder, the legendary Penn State Assistant Football Coach, Jerry Sandusky. Even President Bush praised Second Mile when he called the organization, in 1990, a "shining example" of charity work.

How things change.

On November 4, 2011, Jerry Sandusky was indicted on 40 counts of sexual abuse of young boys, many of whom had been introduced to Sandusky through the Second Mile Foundation. This mind-numbing change of events and its implication for the morality of someone who others had come to admire, calls into question the fundamentals of trust. To think that an exemplar of the community could be engaged in such egregious wrong doings makes the cynic in us worry about the society that we live in. And it doesn't end there.

Joe Paterno, the single most winning coach in collegiate football history, was after all, also to blame. In 2002, Paterno was made aware of these contemptible acts by wide receivers' coach Mike McQueary, who saw Sandusky raping a 10-year-old in the locker room showers. Paterno told the Athletic director. He did not tell the police, nor did he confront Sandusky. Paterno did not do right as a human being and did not act as a responsible adult and mentor.



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The Maine Man

By DANIEL BANKO ‘13

Harper Estey, class of 2013, spent this past semester at the Chewonki School in Wicasset, Maine, and in only a few more weeks will be joining our community again. I decided to catch up with Harper to see how he has enjoyed the program so far, and to learn more about the program itself. I interviewed Harper on November 8, 2011.

Focus: How did you learn about the program?

Harper: Libby, the old admissions director, did a presentation last winter. I had heard about the program before, because a few people from my older sister’s year had gone, so I decided to go to the presentation and check it out.

F: How is life on the campus?
H: Incredible. All my classrooms, my cabin, and the dining hall are less than a minute away from each other. The scenery on campus is fantastic; there are over 400 acres of woodland that we wander around in. (Provided we sign out first.) The campus itself is about four miles from any “civilization,” but that just makes the bike ride to the local grocery store even more fun.
F: Can you tell us more about the program?
H: The academic portion of



Chewonki is centered on the environment and sustainability. For the first month of school, the Natural History of the Maine Coast class (my science course) focused almost solely on climate change. Our sustainability class is based around improving our community and moving away from fossil fuels as much as possible. Chewonki has only had the semester program for about 25 years. The organization itself has been around since 1916, starting off as just a boys’ camp. The boys’ camp evolved to include wilderness trips, such as one I recently went on, backpacking for five days along the Appalachian Trail, and in

the last five years, a new girls’ camp has opened up in Debsconeag, Maine.
F: What made you decide to enroll?
H: At the meeting with Libby, she talked about doing something different. She talked about how, if you find yourself staring out the window in class, then Chewonki may be a great place for you. After attending FCS for nearly 12 years, I thought it would be a fantastic experience to do something different before graduating next spring.
F: How has the experience been so far?
H: Better than I ever expected. On any given day I could be knee deep in

a salt marsh, spinning wool from our farm, harvesting over 100 pounds of carrots, or building solar hot water panels for one of the cabins.
F: What do you miss most about Friends’ Central School?
H: Probably Cross Country and Track. Every day at about 3:30 I find myself wondering what workout I would be doing if I were at FCS...
F: When are you returning?
H: My first day back at FCS for classes is going to be everyone’s first day back from winter break.
F: Would you recommend the program to others?

H: I would recommend this program to anyone looking to try something new. If you like learning, if you like the outdoors, or if you just want to get away for a semester, Chewonki is a fantastic place to do so. It is a whole new experience that I think everyone would enjoy, given the opportunity. Every single sophomore should come to the presentation for Chewonki later in the year, because I went by accident and fell in love with it.
Thanks, Harper, and we are excited to see you again when you return after winter break! ♦

New in for Ewen

By ISABEL NARDI ‘14

As Ms. Ewen welcomes Santiago into her family, the FCS community is also welcoming our newest member, Jeannette Kelleher. Ms. Kelleher is filling in for Ms. Ewen this year. Sophomore Kate Forrest observed, “Ms. K is very intelligent and always has a smile while teaching.” Ms. Jeanette Kelleher had nothing but good things to say about the Friends’ Central students and faculty as well.
She shared that she previously worked at Springside Chestnut Hill Academy as well as a few schools in Northern Jersey. Ms. Kelleher noted that at FCS students “have a certain poise and maturity.” She has also found

that at Friends’ Central “the kids are intellectually curious and are easily capable of carrying a strong discussion.”
I couldn’t fathom the idea of coming in as the third teacher in one year but Ms. Kelleher said she is well adapted, having come mid-year to a previous school. She also shared that she has been emailing back and forth with Ms. Ewen to collaborate on thoughts for the rest of the year. They are planning on meeting to discuss how the year has been going and what is to come.
Although the FCS community can’t wait for Ms. Ewen to return with a bundle of baby stories, we hope to have Ms. Kelleher remain a part of the Friends’ Central community. Just like Santiago, she has been a wonderful addition. ♦



Some Good, Some Bad, But All Festive

By PETER DISSINGER ‘15
and DR. PATTERSON

Film buffs Dr. Patterson and Peter Dissinger reveal the best of tidings and the worst of tidings captured in seasonal movies.
DR. P
Favorite holiday movie: *A Christmas Carol*. The 1951 black and white version with Alastair Sims. I love the book, I love this movie version, I love the ghosts, the Cratchits, and maybe even Tiny Tim. I even love its treacly sentimentality.



Best about this version is Sims’ way of handling the transformation of the snarling, pinched-face Scrooge into the philanthropic, turkey-loving Uncle Ebenezer. Runner up might be the Disney version starring Scrooge McDuck as Scrooge.
Least favorite holiday movie: *It’s a Wonderful Life*. Actually, I’ve never seen the film from start to finish - and that’s pretty much what annoys me about it. Every holiday season, the movie is on - constantly on. And always in media res. Never have I turned on the TV to find it just beginning or just ending. Plus, it’s always showing on at least one channel when I flip the dial, or more likely any flip of the dial will bring it up 2, 3 and 4 times. My theory is that this movie has no beginning or end; an endless loop of Capra.
Guilty pleasure: *Die Hard*. It’s one of the all-time best action films. Bruce Willis runs barefoot on broken glass, generic terrorists attack a high rise on a snowy Christmas Eve, and John McClane defeats evil just in time for the holiday (yay!).
PETER
Favorite holiday movie: One of my favorite holiday movies is *Elf* (2003) about an orphan (Will Ferrell) who hops aboard Santa’s sleigh and is taken in by Papa Elf. When it turns out he’s not elf

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Call Me, Beep Me, If You Want to Reach Me

By IAN CRUIESS ‘14

Cell phones have caused quite a ruckus at Friends’ Central over the past few years. The current policy at FCS requires students to have permission from teachers before using most electronic devices but allows listening to music on cellphones or ipods during study halls. When the policy was brought up in Student Council, it was made clear that many students and some teachers see this new policy as already outdated. The reality is that students often sneak text messages to their parents to avoid having their cell phones confiscated.

After hearing students speak out, I wanted to see what other schools have done to update their policy. I emailed faculty members from many schools near Friends’ Central and, after receiving many responses, it was clear there are a lot of differences in each school’s policy. Some schools do not allow cell phones or ipods to be heard or seen on campus; on the other hand, schools like Germantown Friends and Abington

Friends allow electronic devices such as cellphones, ipods, and computers to be used, except for classes, Meeting for Worship, and assemblies. Many schools, like Malvern Prep and Springside Chestnut Hill Academy are currently re-evaluating or finalizing their electronic policies.

Here at Friends’ Central we too are looking at our electronics policies, but instead of the Technology department making the changes, Regroup has decided to propose a trial. This trial would be over a one-month period, allowing students to have unlimited use of cell phones/ipods anywhere but in the Meeting room or in classes. Students would be allowed to ask for permission to use them in classes for academic purposes. One worry is that visitors may see students on cell phones all over campus and that it may harm our community. If this is the case, Regroup has given the administration the ability to terminate the trial at any time. So, although this may be a step towards updating our policy, there is no guarantee anything will change. ❖



From **Penn State** on Page 1

In failing to act, he endangered young boys. Ditto for the athletic director Tim Curley, senior vice president for finance and business Gary Schultz, and school president Graham Spanier. Sandusky was not allowed to bring kids into the football building, and the issue was dropped.

And more boys were abused.

Today, Sandusky faces a potential life sentence, and Schultz and Curley are charged with grand jury perjury and failure to report suspected child abuse

by Sandusky. Joe Paterno and Graham Spanier were fired from their respective jobs. Even if all the men are convicted, justice cannot be served. The faceless boys, abused by Sandusky from the time the problem was known until the indictment occurred, were harmed by the unconscionable neglect of men who should have done better. Their scars live on. Justice simply cannot be served.

Let’s hope that this will be the last time an organization puts winning ahead of their fundamental responsibilities of protecting our youth. ❖

From **Holiday Movies** on Page 2

material, he is sent down to New York to be with his parents and find himself. There are so many great scenes in the movie and the Christmas spirit is undeniable. I love the Spaghetti scene - who else but Ferrell could pull off eating a pasta sundae; and the fight with the department store Santa is absolutely hilarious. But at the end, there is a sweet and serene message that no matter who you are, you can still believe in Santa and have the Christmas spirit. The close runner up has to be the original cartoon of How the Grinch Stole Christmas (TV 1966) - it’s a classic.

Least Favorite Holiday Movie: Don’t get me started on this category, there are just too many to list (*The Santa Clause 2 & 3* and the entire Santa vs. Alien genre - yes it does exist), but *Deck the Halls* (2006), which stars Matthew Broderick and Danny DeVito, is the by far the worst Christmas movie I have ever seen. DeVito and Broderick should be able to carry this film, but when your plot line

is about whose Christmas lights are better (not to mention who is wasting more electricity), you’ve got an issue. I was barely able to sit through thirty minutes of this movie; the lights just drowned anything interesting out.

Guilty Pleasure: Gotta go with *Home Alone* (1990) on this one. It’s not only a great kids’ movie, but full of laughs and innocent humor. A young boy (Macaulay Culkin) is left behind at his house by accident while the rest of the family travels to Europe. The plot is absolutely absurd, but watching a young Culkin defeat two boneheaded burglars makes you think that you could live at home alone as well. Don’t forget, this all takes place around Christmas time, so the holiday theme is spread throughout the movie. All of this craziness culminates in a happy, jolly ending, just the way a kids movie should end. If you’re not into the Home Alone movies, try *Jingle All the Way* (1996) and watch Arnold Schwarzenegger go Christmas shopping; it really shows off his soft side! ❖

Let There Be Light

By NOAH SILVESTRY ‘15

The holiday season is here, and without a doubt, many students at Friends’ Central have adopted the holiday spirit once more. With winter break in sight, and the holidays just as close, it seems natural that students are beginning to show their excitement in many ways. People are decorating, singing, dressing up and giving gifts just to show that cheer that comes with the holidays. As a community that embraces diversity, we are all aware of the several significant religious holidays that fall during this season, but are they all represented equally at FCS?

As a Quaker school, simplicity is a valued concept, so materialism should be an ideal that is not encouraged. Because of this, I will not discuss materialism associated with the holidays in this article. I wish to discuss purely the values and true meaning of the “holiday spirit.” I am a Jew, so naturally Hanukkah is the first holiday that comes to mind for me. In order to better understand the holiday, allow me to briefly recap its history In short, there was a group of Jewish rebels known as the Maccabees under Greek rule. This group eventually regained control of their land, and returned to the Temple in

Jerusalem, where they intended to light the menorah as a part of the Temple’s rededication. There was only enough oil left to light the menorah for one day, although miraculously, it burned for a total of eight days, allowing the Jews to prepare more oil. A celebration was held for this miracle, and that is how the tradition came to be.

Hanukkah, for the above reason, has become known as the “festival of light” to many. While this may seem like a clichéd maxim, Hanukkah being a celebration of light is very relevant to Quaker ideology, as they share the concept of some relationship between God and light. However, there is little mention of this at Friends’ Central, and it is in this sense that I believe that Hanukkah is underrepresented at our school. As a community that seeks to learn the beliefs of many cultures in order to have a diverse cultural knowledge, it seems strange to me that the true significance of this Jewish holiday, the real holiday spirit, is not taught, shown or mentioned. Christmas is seen as a time to be with one’s family, and to show love to all through giving. Both of these things are extremely important and relevant prin-

ciples, so it is wonderful that they are spoken of, shown and felt by many. But where are the important and relevant principles that can be drawn from Hanukkah? How can we as a community acknowledge the true spirit of Hanukkah as we celebrate the holidays? I am not talking about decorations or Hanukkah-related songs; it is my main concern that the community keeps an open mind to many ideals extracted from religions and their holidays, and that includes Hanukkah. Regardless of our faith, we can appreciate Christmas for its real significance because what we can gain from it is still relevant to our lives, and I feel that we can do the same for Hanukkah.

So this holiday season, think about what you’re really celebrating, and why that’s important to you, specifically. Think about all the holidays that fall around this time of year, and why they all bring something special to the table in terms of values. Think about Hanukkah, how independence is crucial, how self-determination is possible, and how even everyday miracles call for a celebration. I wish all of you the happiest of holidays! ❖



It’s Only the Best Shows on TV, Gosh

By JACK KORNBLATT ‘13

As the fall ends and the winter starts, TV networks often begin bringing in a whole host of new TV shows. Traditionally, these are referred to as Mid-Season Replacements, as they begin their run midway through the year. Typically, shows like this are brought in after the cancellation of a show, production difficulties, or shorter seasons. As such, most networks place a lot of hope in these shows, since their cancellation would look doubly worse. Below can be found some of the more highly-anticipated new shows of the winter.

Napoleon Dynamite - An animated series based on the original *Napoleon Dynamite* movie in 2004. The show will pick up where the movie left off, featuring original story lines and several guest stars. Voiced by the entire cast of the original movie, this ambitious new series starts airing on Sundays at 8:30 pm in January 2012.



A Sexcellent Article

By OLIVER GOODMAN ‘13

It seems that a celebrity has emerged from the 2nd floor of the Wood Building at Friends’ Central School. *The New York Times Magazine* featured a cover-page article titled “Teaching Good Sex” about Mr. Vernacchio’s Sexuality and Society class. This unique class is available as an elective to Friends’ Central seniors. A former student said of the class that it will “change the way you think and act about the world.” After hearing this, I was eager to sit down



Smash - a musical show in the vein of *Glee* about a group trying to put on a Broadway play based on the life of Marilyn Monroe. Staring Katherine McPhee of American Idol, NBC is hoping this show will save the network’s sinking ratings. Smash is set to premiere on Monday, February 6, 2012.

iRob! - following up on *!@# \$ my Dad Says*, CBS has created another program with very difficult punctuation. This time, the story is about a former long-time bachelor (Rob Schneider) who marries into a very close-knit Mexican-American Family. *iRob!* is scheduled to premiere on CBS on January 12, 2012 at 8:30pm.

Missing - For those who enjoyed the movie *Taken*, *Missing* is right up your alley. The story is about a retired CIA agent who runs around Europe using whatever means necessary to find her son after he was abducted in Italy (sound familiar?). The series will premiere March 15, 2012. ❖

with Mr. V. and ask him a few questions about the article.

Focus: For anyone who might be interested in taking your Sex & Society class, could you give a brief description of what it’s like?

Mr. V: The Sexuality and Society class examine topics in human sexuality (such as values, language, gender, love, attraction, orientation, sexual activity, etc..) from a variety of perspectives (biological, psychological, cultural, ethical, and historical). The course is about clarifying what healthy sexuality is and how each person can make decisions that lead to building healthy sexuality. It isn’t a course about sexual activity, nor is it a course where students are asked to share personal information. It’s about learning information and practicing skills of communication and decision making that can help a person know, appreciate, value, and celebrate their sexuality.

F: How was it working with the writer?

V: Working with Laurie Abraham was amazing! It was clear from our very first meeting together that we shared a lot of the same ideas and values about what makes healthy sexuality. She was so kind, funny, and easy-going about the whole process. She was interested in getting to know me and what I do, and

Phoenix in the Phast Lane: Melanie Chalmus

By DANIEL YAHALOMI ‘14

Friends’ Central School pride is perhaps best exemplified by the immense support from the community at the basketball games. At the core of this pride, is the cheerleading squad, who help to energize the crowd and motivate the team. Just as any team, the cheerleading team depends on practice, hard work, and the inspiration of a leader, in this case, their captain Melanie Chalmus.

“Melanie is a natural born leader,” says Coach Tanya Muse, “She takes pride in her role as cheer captain. As cheer coach, I set the bar of my expectations very high, and Melanie rises to the occasion every time. She is a major asset to our team.”

Cheerleading is more to Melanie than just supporting the team. She told me that she enjoys cheerleading because “when I am standing on the court it is almost like I am in the game. It is so different from being in the stands, I can see everything in a different way.”

Melanie is applying to many colleges next year where she hopes to have the opportunity to cheer as well. Any team would be lucky to have her! ❖



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getting to know this amazing school community. What she saw impressed her a lot! She calls the article “an appreciation” of comprehensive sexuality education and of me and my work. I feel very lucky to have met her and hope we’ll be able to collaborate on projects in the future.

F: Do you feel she mixed up or exaggerated anything?

V: I think the only thing Laurie may have exaggerated is how much I sweat when I teach. I don’t sweat that much... do I?

F: What will you hope to be the outcome of this article?

V: I hope that more schools will want to try comprehensive sexual education and I hope more parents will see that it is possible to talk with young people about sexuality.

F: Have you received any outrageous complaints?

V: No! In fact a parent has even sent me flowers.

F: What’s next? Talk shows? A book? Fame and glory?

V: Although all of that would be nice, I want to keep teaching at Friends’ Central. But I do hope I will be able to do some lectures at various high schools and colleges and speak at major sexual-ity conferences in the US. ❖