

FOCUS

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1101 City Avenue Wynnewood Pennsylvania 19096

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Sold on Sellers

by Oliver Goodman '13

There is one change at Friends' Central School this year that may very well trump all other changes to our community—Yes, this one even outshines the new yogurt bar. The change, of course, is the new head of school, Mr. Craig Sellers.

As Mr. Sellers invites me into his office, he warmly unfolds and—after a brief conversation about his position on the FCA 18+ Masters' swim team (he swam freestyle)—Mr. Sellers shares his life story with me.

"I grew up in Cape-Cod, Massachusetts..." he begins.

From Cape Cod, Mr. Sellers attended the Lawrenceville School, in Lawrenceville, New Jersey--about 15 minutes outside of Trenton. After Lawrenceville he went on to attend Franklin and Marshall College, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. In between college and law school, Mr. Sellers took a year off to

travel and work on his photography--I especially encourage anyone at Friends' Central to try to see some of Mr. Sellers' astonishing work hanging in his Wood Building office. After law school, Mr. Sellers lived for fifteen years in New York City where he worked on Wall Street. Later in New York, he taught at a Quaker school called Friends Seminary then went on to work at a school in New Hampshire for five years. Mr. Sellers now lives in Wynnewood.

Mr. Sellers told me his immediate plans for Friends' Central are to "get to know as many people as I can" and "to listen—and learn."

Mr. Sellers, we couldn't be more happy to have you as our new head of school and we invite you to get to know us through class, clubs, or even lunch in the dining hall.

For a daily dose of Mr. Sellers' humor, follow him on Twitter @fcsens. ❖



Welcoming Ms. Otsuki

by Noah Silvestry '15

Jean Otsuki is one of the many new faces on this year's faculty. She teaches 9th and 12th grade lit, and has so far enjoyed her time at Friends' Central.

Before coming to FCS, Ms. Otsuki taught for a year at Moses Brown School, another independent Quaker school, located in Providence, Rhode Island. This year of teaching followed her graduate work in English at Yale, where she received her Masters degree. The main elements of said graduate work included research in 20th century British literature and teaching. Teaching in graduate school was what indicated to Ms. Otsuki that she wished to teach professionally. When the job here at FCS became available, she consulted Megan Fifer, another teacher at Moses Brown, a Friends' Central graduate, and daughter of Mark and Ginger Fifer, two current FCS faculty. Of course, Megan spoke positively of our school and encouraged Ms. Otsuki to apply for the job. The rest, as they say, is history.

So far, Ms. Otsuki has been impressed by the collaboration in the English department, finding that teachers work together

by talking about their classes and sharing materials. She also took note when applying that her potential colleagues were all, for the most part, long time faculty at FCS, some of whom were alumni. Since so many teachers and students remain a part of the community for such extents of time, Friends' Central struck her as somewhere she would like to be.

As mentioned, Ms. Otsuki teaches 9th and 12th grade Lit. So far, she has particularly enjoyed teaching short stories to the freshmen, and is also taking pleasure in her work with the seniors on *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley. Prior to the school year's start, she anticipated having a good time teaching Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* to the seniors because she had such a good experience reading it and planning how to teach it.

Ms. Otsuki is integrating smoothly into the Friends' Central community, and anticipates having a positive teaching career here. While we are several weeks into the school year already, we should all continue to welcome her warmly and make her first year at FCS a great one, as with the rest of the new faculty. ❖



From Head to Tozer

by Max Ginsberg '14

FCS varsity boys' basketball has a new head coach, Ryan Tozer '01, who will begin his first season guiding the Phoenix. The previous coach, the popular and highly successful Jason Polykoff '05, has joined the basketball coaching staff of the University of Pennsylvania after a 20 year experience at FCS which included being a coach, teacher, and student. Coach Tozer has been hired to replace Polykoff in his previous teaching and coaching roles at FCS, including Middle School math teacher and sports information director in addition to being the basketball head coach.

Tozer has been a teacher in the Philadelphia School District since 2006. He also has quite an impressive basketball resume, as he was a 1,000 point scorer at FCS and the third all-time leading scorer at his alma mater, Eastern University. Following graduation from Eastern, Tozer started off his men's basketball coaching career by being on the staff of La Salle University followed by an assistant coaching position at Holy Family University. Ryan then initiated the mens' basketball program at Rosemont College, where the program enjoyed early success under his leadership.

This year's FCS boys' basketball squad will have a fresh look with a new coach and coaching staff, along with the departure of two outstanding players from last year's

team. When asked about his strategy for building a competitive basketball team, Tozer responded, "As a coach, you can never discount the importance of talent in building a program but even talent needs discipline and toughness especially in end game situations. I want our teams to be recognized not only for talent but for toughness at both ends of the floor. Defense wins championships and mentally tough players play hard at both ends of the floor. Our kids will always play hard and we will be tough to beat."

When asked about alterations that he may have to make to the boys' basketball program, Tozer indicated that drastic changes are not likely: "I'm not sure any changes are needed as the program has had a great run of success. Once we get started we will evaluate the overall program and determine if any changes are required to keep us a premier program in the area."

With a change in leadership and skilled personnel, it is only natural for interested (some say fanatical) FCS fans to be wondering about the competitive level of the team for this first year under Tozer's tutelage.

Continued on next page

Galen’s Goals

by Max Ginsberg ‘14

We welcome Galen Guindon ‘06 as the incoming varsity boys’ soccer head coach. Galen replaces Chris Campbell, who is retiring from the FCS head coaching position after nine seasons on the sidelines for the FCS boys’ soccer team. We wish Coach Campbell all the best and thank him for his tireless service to the FCS soccer squad. Coach Guindon, one of Campbell’s former players and assistant coaches, was a four-year varsity player and team captain at FCS. Coach Guindon ended his career as All-Main Line, All-Friends Schools League, and All- Southeastern Pennsylvania selections. Galen then went on to play collegiate soccer at Goucher College, where he was a two-time All-Landmark Conference selection, and an Academic All-Region player.

When asked about his strategy to build and sustain a winning soccer team, Coach Guindon responded, “The team will need to play tough and organized defense in order to win on a consistent basis. Over the course of a season, it can become easy to just go through the motions. My goal is to create a culture that challenges the team to play their best soccer each day and always progress forward.” Galen also indicated that his first year goal is to “win a Friends League Championship.”



Retiring Coach Campbell was Guindon’s soccer coach for three years as an FCS player, and Galen served on Campbell’s staff as an assistant last year at FCS. Guindon states that he learned many real-life lessons from Coach Campbell, “I learned to play hard and tough soccer as well as how to develop and grow a program. None of these skills, however, will compare to the lessons I received through watching Coach Campbell deal with the passing of his son, Chris Campbell Jr. I am a much better man having spent so much time around Coach Campbell for the past ten years.”

As soccer is a game of momentum shifts, which can lead a team to victory or have them sadly veer away from victory, we asked Coach Guindon about the always crucial halftime strategy. Galen responded, “I try to make two or three small adjustments during halftime that will help swing the game in our favor. Somehow I always find myself telling the team to stop dribbling so much and to keep the ball moving.”

Galen’s enthusiasm for the sport is tremendous, and his willingness to teach the game of soccer will no doubt keep the team competitive in the Friends’ League this year and moving forward. We wish Coach Guindon the best of luck as he starts out his rookie season as FCS boys’ varsity head soccer coach! ❖

From Tozer on previous page

When posed this question about expectations and benchmark goals for the upcoming season, Ryan responded, “I expect our team to be competitive every time out and my goal is and always will be to win every game. While it may seem unrealistic to expect to win every game, a coach must convince his team that every time they take the floor that winning is the goal. Individually, I expect our players to work hard in developing their individual skills and understanding of game situations. I consider the basketball court a classroom and want our players to be achievers there just like in any class they take at FCS.”

The program is in capable hands and the team is likely to succeed both in the short term and in the long run.

One of the signature trademarks of the boy’s basketball program that we are known for in the Friends’ League and the region is an uncanny knack for in-game adjustments and the ability to be competitive in any game situation, including against nationally ranked teams. When asked of his game time tactical strategy, Tozer indicated, “Depending on how well we are able to scout our

opponent as a staff, we will certainly have to make adjustments throughout the game. Defensive assignments, controlling tempo, and offensive mismatches are key adjustments to look at during a game.”

Finally, a team is only as good as the fans who support them. We are privileged at FCS to have The Quake, our super motivated fan base, who can rattle the rafters with noise and unnerve opponents with crafty (and tasteful) commentary during heated games. When told of the knowledge and passion of The Quake, Tozer enthusiastically responded, “I hear we have the best fans in the Friends’ League. Having lost two great players from last year’s team, The Quake will be more important than ever in helping motivate our team. We need the student body to be our sixth man this year if we are going to compete at a high level especially with the tough schedule we face. Our team needs the entire Friends’ community to come out, be vocal and give us a true home court advantage.”

Welcome back Coach Tozer! The FCS community is excited to have you as our head coach for the varsity boys’ basketball team. GO FCS! ❖



Diving into the New Season

by Jess Miller ‘15

Friends’ Central is excited to introduce two new coaches into the aquatics department, Sean Ford and Tracy Alt. Prior to coming here, both Sean and Tracy worked in Parkersburg, West Virginia for the local YMCA- Sean, as Head Coach and Aquatics Coordinator and Tracy as a swim instructor. Additionally, Tracy worked as the Phys. Ed instructor and Head Coach for the local high school, and also managed the city pools during the summer months.

Growing up surrounded by team sports, his mother, a swim coach, and his father, a coach for several different sports, Sean, early on, “learned the effect that a good coach can have on a team.” After taking a long break from swimming with his age group, Sean dove back into the sport in high school, and continued to swim successfully at the Division II program of West Virginia Wesleyan College as a scholarship athlete. He “swam the sprint events and anchored the relays” while he also “dabbled in Breast and IM to fill in a full slate of events,” learning an important lesson about “what can happen when a coach isn’t there for the right reasons in college.” This lesson stood as an inspiration to “give back to the sport that had given [him] so much.” To pump up for his meets, Sean would listen to “Darude” by Sandstorm. Nowadays, he listens to “Till I Collapse,” by Eminem.

Tracy Alt has a similar story. Her mother had her swimming as soon as she

was born and, at only four years old she began swimming on summer and club teams. At 15 she began coaching a summer swim



league. Tracy continued to swim through all four years of college as well. Like Sean,

she attended West Virginia Wesleyan College and enjoyed swimming 100 Breast, 200 Breast, and 500 Free. To get ready for her

Tracy remembers listening to Limp Bizcuit while in high school and Linkin Park in college, however she says that “anything upbeat with a lot of bass usually does the trick.”

Coach Sean Ford hopes to continue the most successful FCA season last year. Since swimming has played an important role in his life as a sport, an activity, and a job, Sean has a lot of aspiring for the swim teams to achieve. He believes that “every swimmer has the ability to succeed as long as the will to improve is matched by the intensity to compete.” So, as a coach, Sean helps motivate athletes as well as friends and family, but he feels that motivation must come from within. He feels that in order to improve, maturity is key, for “at some point you have to decide that you want to be the best possible version of yourself.” Realizing the importance of inspiration, Sean is ready to coach.

Coach Tracy Alt hopes for Friends’ Central athletes to break more records and to help them qualify for more events, such as the final, championship round events in meets. Swimming her whole life with clubs and teams, Tracy connects to the swimmers, for it feels “natural for [her] to become involved.” Tracy feels that the teenage athletes are still young and need to listen to their coaches for health and support. She also feels that athletes must be mature to listen to their coaches to be successful and learn something new about themselves. Tracy is all set to coach the swimmers at Friends’ Central. ❖

meets, she would always go off by herself and get “stretched while getting [her] head together.”

Welcome Back, Señora G-T!

by Emma Xu '14

Last school year, Señora G-T went on her sabbatical at the end of January. This September, she returned for the 2012-13 school year.

During the summer, she took three graduate courses in Madrid, at the Universidad Complutense and after being a student again, she traveled in the Basque country of northern Spain.



Señora G-T did many things during her time away from Friends' Central. During the spring semester, she was a teacher's aide for one first-grade class and one third-grade class in the Spanish immersion program at the Independent Charter School in Center City. She traveled with her husband to Buenos Aires, Argentina. Then, she took a photography class at the University of the Arts because of her great interest in photography.

This year, she is teaching two sections of Spanish III Advanced, one section of Spanish IV, and one section of Advanced Spanish Literature 2. So far this year, she has enjoyed getting back on campus and reconnecting with students, colleagues and staff members. She is looking forward to sharing her sabbatical experiences with her students through the school year.

Bienvenida de nuevo, Señora G-T! ❖

Welcoming Mr. Keaton

by Ben Fogel '13

As we start the new school year, we welcome many new faces on campus—as evident by so many “new teacher” articles in this issue.

One person that the Friends' Central community, and the senior class in particular, has quickly grown to love is Michael Keaton.

Mr. Keaton, or Mike, has joined our community as the Associate Director of College Counseling. Coming to us from the Admissions Office at Haverford College, Mike Keaton will be another experienced and competent voice in College Counseling.

Originally, Mike Keaton was from the Mount Airy area. He went to Upper Dublin high school before attending Syracuse University. Having lived in both Bryn Mawr and Haverford, Mike is more than familiar with Friends' Central and the local suburban community.

Since July 1st, Mike has been patiently waiting to get into the day-to-day working with students and faculty alike. Now that the school year is finally in full swing and the college process for the class of '13 is completely underway, Mike is sure to have a full plate, and we know he'll love it. ❖



Another Welcome: Do the Math

by Kate Forrest '14

During the beginning of the school year, I had the delight to get to know Ms. Rebecca Benjamin better. New to the Math Department, she is a very educated teacher and a great person to sit down and talk to. Recently, I had the opportunity to chat with her about her past and present endeavors.

Focus: Where did you grow up?
Ms. Benjamin: I grew up in New York City, until I moved away for college.

F: Where did you attend university?
B: I went to Swarthmore College for my undergraduate degree and I got a masters degree at UC Berkeley in California.

F: What did you want to be when you were younger?
B: Actually I wanted to be teacher. But if I couldn't do that for my profession, I wanted to be involved in policy in some way.

F: What was your first impression of FCS?
B: Everyone was extremely welcoming. I wanted to come back to the East Coast after studying in California, and FCS had a great community. Everyone, teachers and students, seemed happy to be here. I wanted to be a part of such a cheerful community like FCS.

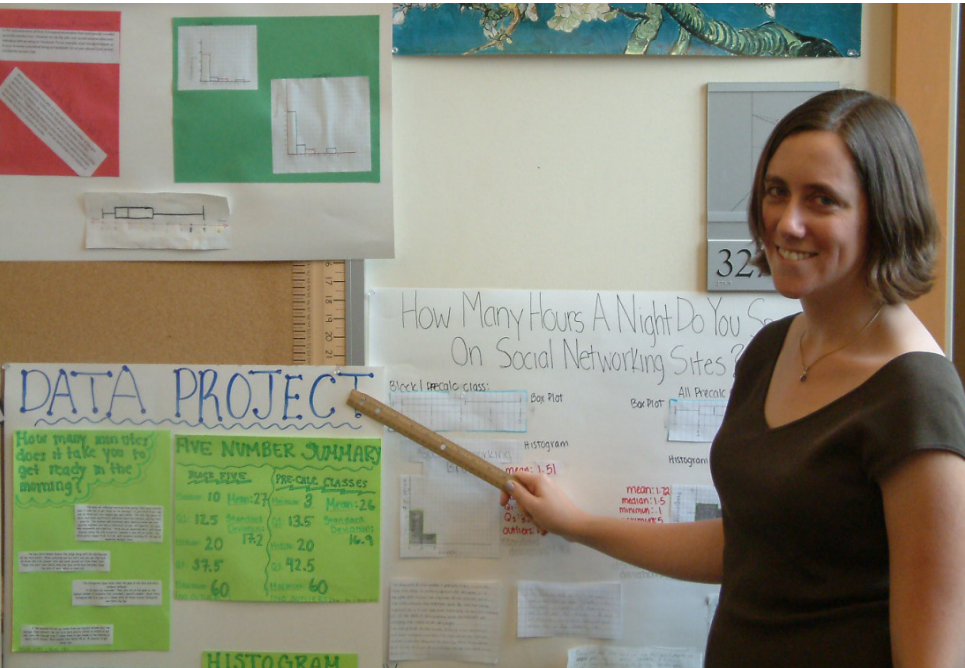
F: What do you think of Meeting for Worship?
B: It is still very new to me. While Swarthmore was a Quaker college, I never attended Meeting like we do here every Wednesday morning. Swarthmore is rooted in Quaker values, so while I came to Friends' Central with a good understanding of the values it is built on, Meeting for Worship is still a new concept.

F: If you could teach any other subject at FCS what would it be and why?
B: Although I am not an artist, I would love to teach art classes. I think that it would be very fun to collaborate with others on a regular basis. There is not a specific type of art that I would want to teach though.

F: What is your favorite part of FCS so far?
B: I love how independent and self-driven the students here are.

F: Tell me a fun fact about yourself.
B: Because I grew up in New York, I did not need to learn how to drive until after college. This is the first job I have had to drive back and forth to and I am still getting comfortable behind the wheel of a car.

If you haven't already, I invite you to introduce yourself to Ms. Benjamin, as she is still very new to Friends' Central. ❖



The cast of *Great Expectations*, rehearsing for their October 26 premiere.



The Welcome Assembly, in Pictures

Photos by Jim Mack

On the 28th of September, the Lower, Middle, and Upper schools gathered together to give a great, communal welcome to our new head of school, Mr. Craig Sellers. Through these photos, we invite the reader to remember this gathering fondly, and to continue making Mr. Sellers feel welcome as we continue this, his first year as the head of Friends' Central School. ❖



Focus would like to invite anyone with suggestions for questions to be asked at our presidential debate on [October 26](#) to please email them to Mr. Morris, at bmorris@friendscentral.org.

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