



From the Headmaster:
Tom Needham

Ambassadors Lead the Way

A warm smile, eye contact and a handshake.....all begin the introduction to Hill Top for any new family..... thanks to the work of our dedicated Ambassadors. With another Open House for Admission candidates on the first Saturday in February, Mrs. Fitzpatrick and I held a meeting with the Middle School Ambassadors and then a separate one with the Upper School Ambassadors, during their mentor periods.

The purpose of the meeting was to talk together about the upcoming Open House and also to create a forum around the topic of how their tours are going and list the locations and topics that they think are the most important to cover while leading a tour. So, a long list of ideas were placed on the white board in the Conference Room during each meeting. We also practiced the introduction phase of meeting their guests, how to respond to questions and lastly, how to close out the tour with a "good-bye" and "it was nice meeting you."

Boy, do these students get it. They are energetic and are proud to show off their school to visitors. They each have their own strategies for remembering people's names, answering those difficult questions and know how important it is to be polite and respectful.

At the end of the meetings I asked each group if there was anything else we needed to say about giving a tour. One perceptive young man raised his hand and said, "I think its important not to talk constantly, I have learned that I need to stop talking enough so people can ask questions." A number of his peers agreed that this was a great idea. Then this same student said, "And, Mr. Needham, I have one more. You shouldn't talk at these people but talk with them." He went on to describe that this made them feel more at ease and he sounded less like a recording.

There are also some very enthusiastic new students who have expressed an interest and will likely be joining the ranks of the Ambassadors in the coming season. In closing, I am happy to report that it looks like the enrollment for next year at Hill Top Prep is in safe hands with the talents and energy of our Team of Ambassadors.

The Stage Door
Courtney Allen

Hill Top Prep theatre department needs you! The Evening of the Arts is fast approaching and **we need volunteers**. If you have experience in sewing and/or in stagecraft, come join our preparation team to create the world for MidSummer Nights Dream - 60's style. We are also looking for costume donations. Time to clean out your closets and donate any 60's style clothing to the theatre. If you have any questions please email Courtney Allen at ccameron@hilltopprep.org.

February Calendar

- 2/3 - Basketball vs. Lewis School (Away)
- 2/5 - Basketball vs. Delaware Valley Friends School (Away)
- 2/6 - Specialist of Schools Workshops by Craig Stevens
- 2/7 - Admissions Open House
- 2/13 - Holiday, **NO SCHOOL**, Offices Closed
- 2/16 - Holiday, **NO SCHOOL**, Offices Closed
- 2/17 - Basketball - Academy In Manayunk (Away)
- 2/19 - Basketball - Crefeld (Away)
- 2/20 - February All-School Activity - Relationships
- 2/24 - Walnut Hill College Rep visits Hill Top
- 2/26 - National Honor Society Induction Ceremony
- 2/27 - Academic Progress Reports - Professionals Open House Luncheon





Yearbook Yodels:
Hilary Alexander

The yearbook would like to offer you a wonderful opportunity to let your child know that you recognize their efforts. Place an ad in the yearbook that shows your pride and also helps defray our printing costs. Go to the Hill Top web site and locate Hilary Alexander's Teacher Page, there under the Yearbook class, you will find the ad flyer with the price list and examples of previous year's ads. Please consider sharing the information with aunts, uncles, grandparents, god-parents or close family friends. Every student gets a free yearbook and an ad in the yearbook is a lasting memory of your support. Thank you!

Call or email Hilary Alexander with any questions, 610-527-3230 ext. 686 or halexander@hilltopprep.org



Parents Association Proclamations:
Michelle Wilson

SAVE THE DATE: March 14th, Hill Top Parents Association will be hosting a **Hill Top Cabaret Night** as our Spring Fundraiser!

From **6:30-10:30pm** we will be entertained by a local troupe. The evening will also include a wine bar, hors d' oeuvres, and a silent and live auction.

Ticket price: \$25/person.

We would like to invite your family and all your friends to attend this family friendly, community followed event. See you there!

Musings from the Middle:
Mike Cohen

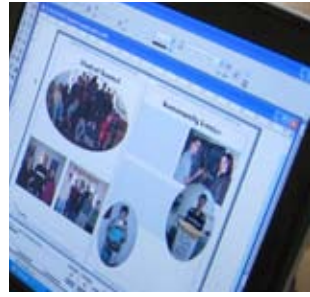
We'd like to offer you a warm winters welcome to the happenings this February in our middle school. As we get into these chillier months, our students are keeping warm and hard at work. We are learning how to write business letters, persuasive speeches, and honing numerous other skills, destined to help them in the years ahead. In January, we hosted a special pancake breakfast. Everyone enjoyed the delicious creations of our cooking club paired with Headmaster, Mr. Needham. The students sat at tables by birth date, allowing them to meet new people and make new friends. During this time, the students participated in thoughtful discussions around relationships, led by the 9th graders. The **Great American Mail Race** provides an opportunity for students to learn more about specific states. In conjunction with their **Geography** unit on the United States, each student in the 6th grade **Language Arts** class has selected four schools he would like to contact in a chosen state (Alaska, California, and Florida). The class looks forward to developing pen pals that will last throughout the year and beyond. Last marking period, the 7th and 8th grade students learned about Egypt and the mummification process in **Ancient History**. Now, having learned all about it, they will create their own sarcophagus (Egyptian coffins) in **Visual Arts**. Finally, over this month, in order to prepare them for next year, the 9th graders will have the chance to observe classes taught in our Upper School. As you can see, February promises to be an exciting month full of a variety of opportunities for the middle schoolers.





The Upper School Scoop:
Liz McGowen

January was a busy month in upper school classes. As the semester drew to a close, students engaged in many activities that provided interesting experiences related to the concepts presented in classes. For a warm-up to writing a compare and contrast essay, Mrs. Organt's *American History II* class completed a very popular activity where they took a trip back in time to compare decades through the use of "old" and more recent Hill Top yearbooks. Mr. Wesler's *Forensics* class was also busy, as they took part in fingerprint lab activities, which provided students an opportunity to practice the investigative skills that they are studying. As a culmination to a semester of reading and writing in Ms. Hannigan's *Literature* class, each student successfully critiqued his or her own writing portfolio, and noted a substantial increase in the quality of writing. In Mrs. Allen's *Speech and Debate* class, Cody Holt prepared an excellent speech about censorship and did an outstanding job of delivering his speech in front of the entire student body, faculty, and staff. These are just some examples of the interesting activities in which our upper school students took part. We are excited to begin a new semester which is sure to be filled with additional creative, interactive, and interesting learning experiences.



Chronicals of Admissions:
Meredith Fitzpatrick

We are excited to welcome two new students to our Hill Top Prep community this semester! **Hunter Kippen**, 7th grade, and **Max Denbin** 8th grade!

Please make sure you take some time to say "Hi!", give them a 'hi-five' in the halls or show them where Mr. Needham keeps the M&M jar.

Our next **Open House** for families will be on **Saturday, February 7, 2009 from 9:30am – 11:30am.**

Support Report:
Denise Faust

As we reflect on the month of January and look ahead to February, it is easy to see why the time has gone so quickly! January has quickly passed us by as we have continued on our focus of relationships. This topic has tied in nicely with the work that has been going on in the Middle School for *No Name Calling Week*. The school as a whole had an opportunity to learn from the 9th graders as they did a brief presentation on this topic to teach us about the potential effects of name calling and how it can escalate to bullying. The Middle School Students are also participating in a poster contest this week around this theme. Finally, the 7th graders will begin participating in a point system where they will have the opportunity to gain rewards for appropriate class behavior.



Upper School students have also worked on the theme of relationships in terms of how to handle difficult interpersonal situations, managing conflict, and sustaining relationships outside of school despite far distances to travel. The seniors and many juniors will have an opportunity to explore the topic of relationships at college as many of them go on a field trip in the month of February to DCCC and West Chester University.





The Book Shelf:
Amy Gillespie

I have always been a big fan of audio books. I'm constantly listening to books in my car, while I'm cleaning and while I'm grocery shopping. Not only are they a great way to multi-task and attack the "want to read" pile, they can be a great help to students who need to hear the work in order to efficiently process it. This year the library is building its collection of audio books, particularly with a new collection of Playaways. Playaways are individual Mp3 players that have a single book loaded onto them. There are no tapes to break & no CDs to keep track of. No special equipment is needed. Just plug in your headphones & go. One of the best features of the Playaway format is the speed control. Because these are digital recordings, the playback speed can be adjusted for those who need a slightly slower pace (or a faster one), without any distortion to the recording. In other words, you can speed up the narration without it turning into a recording by Alvin and the Chipmunks. Thirteen new Playaway titles have been added to the Hill Top collection. For a complete list, go to the library's web page and click on New Books, or search the library catalog for Playaway. For more information on the Playaway format, see their website at www.playaway.com.

For a wider selection of audio books, check your local library. All area libraries now offer downloadable audio books. With your public library card & your favorite Mp3 player, you can access hundreds of titles, download them to your computer & then load them onto your player. Students are also welcome to bring their Mp3 players to the library where a dedicated station has been set up to help with downloadable books.

You may also want to check out daily trivia questions from the library at <http://hilltoplibrary.wordpress.com>.

Student Life Update:
Dave Van Dyke

On January 23rd, the Upper School basketball team's hard work was rewarded with a victory over a talented Lewis School team. In a game that saw the Hawks trail by 10 points during the first half, the team rallied to take and keep the lead through the final buzzer. Coaches Twaddle and Lawley attributed the victory to a complete team effort. We congratulate the entire Hill Top basketball program and wish the teams luck as they finish the '08-'09 season with a series of away games.

The Hill Top wrestling team showed what they were made of as they represented us in the annual tournament at Friends Central. This year marks the 15th year we've participated in this 7 school tournament and coach Wesler says he couldn't be more proud of how our boys performed. Congratulations to Matt Brennan who received a bronze medal in his weight class.

On our January 26th in-service day, Middle School skiers and boarders hit the slopes at Bear Creek Mountain Resort. We could not have asked for a better day to spend on the mountain. The trip was such a success that on our way home, we were talking about scheduling another trip before the season is out. Thanks to all of the students and parents who joined us for making this trip so enjoyable.

Speaking of skiing and boarding, the Upper School will be travelling to **Stowe, Vermont from March 5th -7th** for two days of what is sure to be our best ski trip to date. For anyone still on the fence, there are still a few spots left. Stowe is having a fantastic season as the snow continues to pile up so we should enjoy excellent conditions.

Hill Top Prep's new lunch program will begin on **February 17th**, immediately following the President's Day weekend. We are very excited about this program that will provide healthy and balanced lunches with a reduced cost to parents. **Please review the materials that have been emailed and mailed home and return your payment by Friday, February 6th if you wish to participate.** Any questions about the new lunch program should be directed to Mr. Van Dyke

