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Montessori Students perform for their grandparents and special friends on Founders’ and Grandparents’ Day.

Green Hedges School does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, or national origin in the administration of its education policies.
Green Hedges School has challenged and prepared young people to lead lives with effective, purposeful and positive contributions to the world. The Class of 2012, for which we are immensely proud, is the latest iteration of this preparation. These alums are joining some of the finest secondary schools around, and are poised for wonderful success there and beyond.

To fully understand Green Hedges, one must closely examine its people, customs, program and traditions. At the core of this exceptional school are elements of an educational community that are tried and true. We stand, steadfastly, behind the elements of the GHS experience, and equally enjoy the initial advocacy of these elements to newcomers, as well as the fruits of our labor. In this issue of Clippings, you will enjoy reading a few examples of how these elements are used to promote the school as well as how they manifest themselves in the lives of people and our broader community.

Green Hedges, intentionally small by design, plays a strong and leading role in the preparation of young people. One Admission Director of a nearby secondary school recently remarked to me, “I wish more of our incoming students had the training and balance of GHS graduates. They really soak up the experience at our school!” Nothing makes my GHS colleagues and me happier.

Over the course of my first three years as Head of School, I’ve relished my many engagements with alums, past parents and current parents who have shared their own GHS experiences with me. Inevitably, in each case I learn that GHS played a distinct and significant role in the formation of their own (or their child’s) positive development. I invite others to share your GHS stories with me too, at br Gregg@greenhedges.org.
THEN AND NOW:
The Secret Language of Flowers
Sending loved ones flowers as a code for passing secret messages was a popular custom in 18th century England, and although the secrecy related to the meaning of each flower has been abandoned over time, there is still a dictionary listing the flowers and their intended meanings. Interestingly, and seemingly by chance, in its seventieth year of existence, Green Hedges School chose as one of its symbols a dogwood flower, whose secret meaning is durability. Inside the small dogwood blossom shaped brochure that reflects the current program and priorities at Green Hedges are questions that anyone wanting to know about the school might ask:

How do we nurture individual excellence?

Why do young minds thrive at Green Hedges?

How do we instill a love of learning?

What’s our secret for cultivating lifelong learners?

With just these kinds of questions in mind, co-founder Kenton Kilmer wrote in the February 1947 Humanities Review that, “education should open… the doors of the mind on an eager interest and delight in the unknown… the doors of the heart on beauty and sorrow and joy and heroism.” After commending the benefits of integrating content across academic disciplines and of providing intellectual challenge, Mr. Kilmer concluded, “Education frequently removes the chief blessing of childhood, the sense of wonder, but we are managing education so as to increase that sense of wonder—to retain the old association between wisdom and magic, grammar and glamor, spelling and spells.”

In celebration of the School’s 70th anniversary, Head of School Bob Gregg spoke at the Town Hall of Vienna, giving an audiovisual presentation about Green Hedges and its history. His concluding remarks, which echoed Mr. Kilmer’s own words, included the observation that “We hope to instill a love of learning which will stay as [students] continue to question, analyze, explore, and experience wonder and find joy in life and the world around them.”

As Green Hedges begins its eighth decade, the joy and playfulness to which Mr. Kilmer alluded, along with the passion for learning, character, and wisdom that undergird them, continue to inform the daily life of the community. Lady Mary Wortley Montague, the wife of the British ambassador to Constantinople and the person who long ago introduced to Europe the Turkish custom of creating secret floral messages, might be amazed to see a world where Ancient Sumer and Adobe Photoshop, “All Blues Jazz” and “Frere Jacques,” Physics and Picasso coexist as beautifully as any thoughtfully arranged floral bouquet. This 70th anniversary issue of Clippings examines the questions found inside the blossoming dogwood flower and celebrates what is enduring at the school, not only by marking the longevity of Green Hedges, but also by revisiting its founding values, manifested in each school year like perennial flowers in a garden.
E X I T S

WALKING INTO A NEW FRIEND’S HOME for the first time, we learn more about the person than we would have thought to ask. The artwork, the books, the photographs, even the knickknacks or their absence tell us about people, about what they most enjoy and love. It is not so different for families visiting schools for the first time. That, says Leslie Dixon, Director of Admissions at Green Hedges School, is why it is important for prospective families to spend time on campus.

Families that become acquainted with Green Hedges and choose it for their children often come to think of it as a home away from home. The love of learning that is characteristic of the school is a theme that permeates every aspect of the program and community. And when, nearing the end of a Green Hedges education, families begin thinking about secondary school placement, the school offers graduating students a unique process that maximizes acceptance rates and ensures a good fit for each high school student. This process, which is one of many factors in graduates’ academic success, helps students carry their love of learning to the next level of education, and hopefully even farther into their futures. It is worth contemplating how, from the first visit to campus until graduation and beyond, love of learning is woven into the fabric of the School.

Visitors to Green Hedges begin their campus tour in the wood paneled parlor of the house that housed the school’s founders, Frances and Kenton Kilmer, and their ten children. Reproductions of paintings by Frances’ father, Impressionist painter Frederick Frieske, and a family photo welcome newcomers as warmly as do Libby Scott, Assistant to the Head of School, Leslie Dixon, Director of Admissions, and Bob Gregg, Head of School. The published writings of members of the Kilmer family are displayed in a bookcase in the parlor, and as the tour begins, Leslie Dixon tells the story of the founders, a family with ten children who, lacking what they considered the perfect school for their children, founded one.

As the tour reaches the Stable, so called because it once housed, among others, a pony named Polka Dot, Mrs. Dixon leads visitors into the unique Grade 1, a hybrid Montessori and traditional classroom. That students love what they are doing is obvious by their rapt attention. When they trace each other’s bodies on large pieces of paper on the floor in a beginning lesson in
biology, it is their own bodies they are studying. In the same way, when they read myths and fairy tales from around the world, the struggles of the main characters are their own struggles: how to overcome fear, how to persevere, how to do what is sometimes difficult because it is the right thing to do.

For some students, love of learning is ignited during field trips such as the Grade 4 annual overnight trip to Hard Bargain Farm, an environmental center where the fun of rolling down hills, milking cows, and collecting eggs from chickens is seamlessly interwoven with data collection and learning about the environment. For others the magic comes about during a Grade 5 field trip to the Echo Hill Outdoor School on the Chesapeake Bay, where students can get their feet wet in more ways than one. Still others may respond to guest storytellers in the library, or to an assembly featuring Reptiles Alive! or the Traveling Trombones. Getting to be the Fiddler on the Roof and actually climb a stage set with a roof may be memorable to some students, while others may long remember the chance to use sophisticated computer graphics for creating personal logos or to vicariously roam foreign cities and admire their landmarks in the Grade 6 Cities Project.

Walking from classroom to classroom and moving up the grades, Mrs. Dixon emphasizes, “We are grooming them for independence.” The progression is easy to see when encapsulated in one morning’s walk through the school, and nowhere is it more resonant than in the main building, at the “T” intersection where visitors find themselves at a crossroads with Middle School on their left and Montessori on their right. On a spring day, such visitors might have just passed art displays and short essays by Grade 8 students regarding famous modern artists, displayed after their trip to the National Gallery of Art where they briefly acted as docents, lecturing about the artist of their choice. If visitors turn to the right, they might find where such studies begin in Montessori classrooms, and might get a feel for why Matisse called some of his work “cutting into color” or “painting with scissors.” And, standing at the intersection of the “T” directly in front of the well-equipped Science Lab and hearing that Middle School students study Natural Earth Sciences, Biology, Physics, and Chemistry, the visitor may peek into the Montessori wing to the right only to notice how many of the activities there are carefully prepared to nurture the roots of nascent scientific skills that eventually lead to these sophisticated studies.

“The little ones are safe, and the older ones get what they need,” says Leslie Dixon, remarking on the unusual but felicitous relationship of oldest and youngest students sharing the hallway that forms the top of the “T.” The oldest read to the youngest, sometimes help them with their coats, and over time often form endearing relationships with them. Then, when a young one loses a tooth or an older one graduates, the milestones are often marked on both sides of the hallway.

Middle School students exercise leadership in the school and benefit from being able to do so in an environment that applauds and supports their efforts. When at the end of Grade 7 they and their families begin thinking about high school, Head of School Bob Gregg hosts a meeting with all Grade 7 families to begin the search for schools that will best fit the needs and talents of each student. Individual meetings with each family follow to discuss the hopes and goals for secondary school placement.

After a thorough information gathering and decision making process that culminates in students having the chance to experience mock interviews, Bob Gregg hand delivers each application and personally discusses each student with the prospective schools. This personal contact not only helps ensure a good match with high schools, but also gives Mr. Gregg an opportunity to check on how the older GHS alumni are doing. Invariably, the answer is that Green Hedges students are well-prepared academically and socially for navigating their new school environments. Surveys that Green Hedges sends out to students, families, and secondary schools indicate that GHS students are indeed extremely well-prepared for the challenges ahead. It is evident that a relationship with learning and with community that began years before in the parlor of Kilmer House continues to sustain students and families for years beyond graduation.
How do we nurture individual excellence?

It is a difficult day for the Plebeians in Grade 5. The Patricians, haughty and demanding, require that the mosaic tiles be cut just so, and the work is expected to go on at an unreasonable pace. Being Romans of lesser status, the Plebeians are trying to accommodate. Fortunately the Equites, the business people of middle status, find a way of improving some of the working conditions, if not the demands, through negotiations. Never mind that the “tiles” are being cut from long strips of construction paper. The pressure is real. As the role-play unfolds, teacher Stacey Vagoun prompts members of each group to express their points of view and help bring the inherently difficult situation to a satisfactory conclusion. When the classroom carpet starts to become covered in small colored paper squares, and when each of the parties has had its say, she stops the action.

This role-playing exercise is part of the History Alive! series that teaches subject matter while exploring issues such as community building, perseverance, kindness, and marginalization. Along with the History Alive! and Geography Alive! series, and the Making Meaning series that teaches young readers to grapple with increasingly challenging reading material, it forms a unified but varied and flexible path of learning for students from Grades 1–8. By the time they are halfway through that academic progression, Mrs. Vagoun says, “I expect my students to formulate opinions and back them up with facts. Learning to disagree respectfully is a skill.”

Another skill well represented in the curriculum is research. Students begin doing research in Grade 2 and by Grades 3 and 4 begin working on longer term individual projects. The model of the “Four Square” serves to create building blocks for increasingly more challenging writing. Younger students learn to place parts of a sentence into a structure that is provided. Later, they combine sentences in another Four Square, learning how to make sentences connect in a paragraph. By Grade 5 they learn how to write a five-paragraph essay, building from the shorter writing assignments previously taught and assembling them in a modular fashion. During other assignments, students engage in discussions based on provocative questions found in David White’s book Philosophy for Kids and sharpen their awareness of character development by reading novels and biographies of such personages as Queen Hatshepsut and Julius Caesar.

One of the great advantages of small class size in a school that is itself small by design is that in each of the skill categories named above, the learning is tailored to each child’s strengths and challenges. Throughout, the reading program encourages children to make inferences about what they are learning, a skill at which students from independent schools excel on the SSAT and SAT exams. No doubt the relative advantage of independent school graduates in this skill area is due in part to the active learning that can more easily take
place
when teachers can
nurture the individual learning style of each student.

Experiments in role-playing like the one described above are designed to involve students in a personal way. Today, at the end of the exercise relating to the Roman tile shop, Mrs. Vagoun helps the students reflect about what it felt like to take each role. Not surprisingly, the Plebeians had secret thoughts of wanting to leave the city, while the Patricians felt powerful and elite. A lively discussion follows about what it means to be a fair and just person. Then, just after she helps the former Patricians clean up in a symbolic righting of the balance of power in the classroom, Mrs. Vagoun, visibly proud of the growing ability of her students to remain both engaged and dispassionate enough to keep perspective, says, “You guys are just about done with me; you’re ready for Middle School.” All the young Romans look pleased at the prospect.

A few days after the tile making exercise, at the Spring Music Concert, Kathy Wilson, Band and Grade 7 Humanities teacher, tells the audience to listen for two kinds of solos as the GHS Jazz Band plays. There are scripted solos, and, for those with growing skill and confidence, there are improvised ones. The other musicians, who play with as much attention to the bandleader and to each other as any sports team members, support the soloists with their sensitive timing and with appreciative glances. In fact, the sports analogy is literally true in the case of these band players, who at other times are teammates in intramural soccer, basketball, and softball. Individual excellence, in these contexts and many more, is nurtured through the recognition of talent within the framework of collaborative learning.

While Jazz Band members come in an hour early twice a week on a volunteer basis so they can practice and learn together, all of Middle School participates in Concert Band as part of the academic program. Analogously, while students generally complete Algebra 1 before graduation, math students who excel receive extra challenge to enrich their studies. Some students need support discovering their area, or areas, of special interest or ability. They benefit from the opportunity to explore academic fields to which they feel drawn. And, in every field of endeavor, all are expected to try their hand at everything, a fact that sometimes causes students to fall in love with whole new areas of interest that they had not previously considered. What all of this requires is skilled teaching, and time. Summing up one of the most important values at the school, Diane Prentice, Grade 3 teacher, says, “Children at Green Hedges are given time and space for learning, and I am given time and space to support them.”
con·fi·dence

date: early 15c., from M.Fr. confidence
source: or directly from L. confidentia, from confidentem (nom. confidens) “firmly trusting, bold,” prp. of confidere “to have full trust or reliance,” from com-, intensive prefix (see com-), + fidere “to trust” (see faith).
When Frances Kilmer wrote long ago that “It is as necessary to wait with unhurried confidence for a child's achievement as it is for a gardener to wait for a seed to sprout,” she, no stranger to French and Latin, knew that the derivation of the word “confidence” contains the notion of faith, in this case faith in children’s innate curiosity and desire for mastery. Fast forward to Green Hedges of today, when, around a table in the teachers’ lounge, the topic turns to highlights of the year. “I was teaching integers and my student had been struggling, and then I saw his eyes light up and knew he got it,” someone says. “When my kids beg me to keep reading so they can find out what happens at the end of the book, that’s a special moment” says another.

After a few more examples, some of which have to do with growing social confidence demonstrated by students, others with study skills or with academic challenges successfully met, the room grows quiet. “But sometimes it’s not what I’m doing that seems to help,” says someone. Another agrees. “Yes, sometimes I have to watch and listen, and give them time. Sometimes my patience is what motivates a student. It is an art to know when to teach more, and when to wait.” And then a jumble of voices rushes forward, emphatically agreeing about the difficulty and importance of sometimes not showing the next step. Because, as one of the teachers says between bites of sandwich, “sometimes it looks as if we are going on a tangent, but actually the students are making meaning from what they have just read. Knowing when to allow that to happen is an art.”

How to navigate the sensitive passages in learning, those sometimes known as teachable moments, is a topic that takes up a little more of the brief lunch break, until one of the teachers exclaims, “and I get so excited when my kids reach one of those points! I call it a teacher-next-door moment, because once or twice I have actually run to the classroom next door so I could share the moment with someone right then.”

Frances Kilmer, who wrote that “structure is necessary in a world where there is too little to lean on, but rigidity is unacceptable” would have felt right at home in this conversation, not only because it was taking place in her former dining room, but also because of the love and dedication palpable in the emotions expressed. When five-year-old Montessori students mentor three-year-olds, when Middle School students command the attention of their peers to teach choreography for the annual musical, when children from another country arrive mid-year and feel themselves at home by the time spring comes around, in each of these instances, the trust that teachers place in students is rewarded with success.

Another Kilmer quote, that expectations are demanding but not arbitrary, also speaks to the confidence that teachers place in students. Reaching high goals means taking risks, and risks imply occasional failure. That possibility, too, is included in the learning. “Of course we, and the parents, want children to succeed,” says Head of School Bob Gregg, adding, “but it is also important for them to know how to handle a skinned knee, to learn to be resilient.” Assistant Head of School Deb Haag agrees, saying, “We want to give them a virtual toolbox, a lot of strategies for learning how to learn. Our curriculum is built around essential questions and reflections. “And,” she adds, “at Green Hedges there is no back row. We expect students to be engaged and active learners.”

“We guide students on an 11-year journey that builds confidence and fosters leadership,” announces the dogwood shaped brochure that Admission visitors receive. How does one build confidence in another person? The answer at Green Hedges is that, within an environment exclusively designed for students aged 3 through Grade 8, teachers instill confidence by having it themselves, toward their students and toward the worthiness of the endeavor.
At Green Hedges graduations, a mixture of pride, joy, and fondness sweeps through. Families, friends, faculty, and staff members, some tearful, some who have known the graduates since they were toddlers, look backward and forward in time together. The graduates have their say, and Bob Gregg, Head of School, reflects back to them salient aspects of the graduates’ best qualities, qualities that will sustain each one in making the transition to high school.

Mr. Gregg’s speeches are based on the myriad interactions that build during any school year, from working car pool together to sharing lunch time every week, from going on band trips to visiting New York, from practicing interview skills to applauding the students at sports, music, and theater events. That’s why, Mr. Gregg says, his charge becomes easier and also more difficult each year: easier because by now he has had several years to get to know most students, and more difficult because how does one distill so many anecdotes and impressions into a few short minutes on the podium?

Mr. Gregg’s intimate involvement in the high school application process gives him the chance to know students even more thoroughly during their Grade 8 year. “What will you miss, what are you looking for, what are some adjectives that best describe you?” These are some of the questions that students answer, while also providing detailed information about their interests and activities in and out of school. And, to round out the process, significant portions of faculty meetings near the end of the school year are dedicated to discussing the accomplishments and development of graduates. This overview helps faculty members decide how to distribute annual awards, and it provides a long-term, comprehensive picture of each student’s journey.

Please join us in saluting the Green Hedges graduating class of 2012!
Throughout the year the eighth grade students engage in a variety of fundraising initiatives in order to present the school with a class gift at graduation time. Special thanks to the Class of 2012 for their gift of $3,310 which will be designated for the new iPad Pilot program—possibilities include additional iPads, apps, carrying cases, and the storage unit to be housed in the library.

Thank you to all of you who generously supported their efforts.

Matthew Breeding
8 YEARS | THE POTOMAC SCHOOL
Here at Green Hedges, I’ve realized that it gives you a chance to be yourself. You can be yourself because you always feel so comfortable around your classmates and teachers. Green Hedges: Where your teachers are your friends. It’s because of this that you honestly can be you.

Green Hedges has been a home away from home for the last 8 years, but it is time to move to a new home. GHS has done a more than exceptional job of preparing me for high school, and for this, I really do appreciate it. Thank you.

Camyrn Easley
2 YEARS | THE POTOMAC SCHOOL
Afros and fishtails. Light and dark. Shrubs and flowers. Trees and bark.
F- and A+. A last dance and one moment. Goodbyes and Green Hedges.

Maya Glenn
2 YEARS | EPISCOPAL HIGH SCHOOL
Memories are a large part of what makes Green Hedges, Green Hedges. For example, one small memory that I will never forget is how I was able to read with the first grade students. Every Tuesday, I would walk into their classroom and they were all eager to read with me and welcomed me with open arms. Another memory that I am very grateful to have is being in the Middle School production of Fiddler on the Roof. I have to admit that when I was cast as Golde, I was not exactly what you would call thrilled. When it comes to musicals, I have always been cast as the dancer, but this time I wasn’t and that really brought me outside of my comfort zone. When the musical came to an end and I looked back on the experience that I had learning to act, I realized that I wouldn’t change one bit of the experience.

Michael Provenzano
11 YEARS | JAMES MADISON HIGH SCHOOL
The thing that I really enjoyed about Green Hedges were the small classes. This gave us a chance to know everyone just a little bit better. It also benefited us with the teachers. The teachers were able to give us the attention we needed and even helped us before school with work that we did not understand.

First, I would like to thank all my amazing teachers who have helped me through this long journey. I would also like to thank my classmates who I shared my downfalls and laughs with. Lastly, I would like to thank my parents and sister for sending me to GHS and for making sure I could rise to my full potential.

Dara Shahriari
6 YEARS | GEORGETOWN DAY SCHOOL
Up until now, my eighth grade year, I have thought of Green Hedges as a school, but now I see it as more of a second home where people can grow together with friends and family. I have had some great memories here at GHS and am so sad to leave. One thing that I love about Green Hedges is that everyone can be themselves. I would like to thank my teachers for helping me and for all that they’ve done for me. I will always remember these last few years at Green Hedges as great ones.
At GHS, I found a group of people so accepting, that I could be who I really was, more so, in fact, than I was able to in Richmond. Sure, I don’t go to the mall on weekends, I don’t play video games, nor do I dislike homework, but none of that seemed to matter to the GHS Middle School. They accepted me for who I truly am. And although I occasionally reminded Mr. Marz that we had a Spanish quiz, or reminded Mrs. Gray that she hadn’t assigned us any science homework, we got along perfectly well.

Sometimes I compared GHS to an old car - we’ve had flare-ups and malfunctions like a car - but in the end, we have been able to work things out. The thing that I will miss the most is how close our class is. We can talk to each other about anything. In my new school it will be a big adjustment for me because of all of the people. Hopefully, I can make new and exciting friends, but I will never forget my GHS classmates.

One thing that I will never forget about GHS is the strange way a teacher here can swiftly change your mind about a subject. One day you just can’t take a whole hour Latin class, and the next day Mr. Marz has you eagerly waiting outside his door for the 7th grade to clear out.

Lastly I want to thank my parents for giving me this priceless opportunity that will follow me throughout my life. Green Hedges and all its wonderful features will be in my heart forever.
GOODBYE  
Mikey Provenzano

I like to enjoy myself out in the sun.  
Playing outside at Green Hedges with my friends, and having fun.  
Green Hedges can be serious too.  
Whether it comes to Mr. Marz or Mrs. Chenulu!  
Green Hedges is like family, all toasty and warm.  
It’s like having a campfire at Genesee Valley right by a farm.  
The thing about Green Hedges that I adore.  
Is that everyday I get to learn new things more and more.  
Green Hedges is wonderful and cool.  
Knowing that I will be prepared for high school.  
My time as an eighth grader is coming to an end.  
But that’s good in a sense, as a new journey begins.  
As much as I like in the morning, Mr. Gregg saying “Hi!”.  
I will too, with all my colleagues having to say the one dreadful word..... Goodbye.

The Class of 2008 heads to college!  

Members of the Class of 2008 were accepted to the following colleges and universities. Schools they chose to attend are highlighted in blue.

George Mason University  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
James Madison University  
Mary Washington University  
Miami of Ohio University  
Radford University  
Rhodes College  
The College of William & Mary  
Tulane University  
United States Military Academy at West Point  
University of Colorado, Boulder  

University of Delaware  
University of Georgia  
University of Kansas  
University of Kentucky  
University of San Diego  
University of St. Andrews, Scotland  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University*  
Washington & Lee University*

*Multiple graduates attending.

GHS Alumni return to school for graduation on June 12, 2012.
LIFELONG LEARNERS:
Alumni Notes and Quotes

We do not know exactly how Michelangelo felt when, at the age of 87, he scribbled ancora imparo, Italian for “I am still learning,” in the margin of one of his sketches, but we admire the sentiment. The continuing sense of vitality and engagement implied are something we hope for, for ourselves and for our children. Long after leaving Green Hedges, alumni of the school enjoy a variety of pursuits, continuing to extend themselves in sometimes unforeseen ways.

ELIZABETH BASSETT KEISER ’49 represents the first generation of Green Hedges alumni. A professor who specialized in Chaucer and other English poets at Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina, she retired in 2002 and is winner of the college’s 2007 Charles C. Hendricks Distinguished Service Award. The Alumni Association notes about her include the fact that “she diverged from professional expectations of teaching primarily in one’s field of expertise by making a major investment in teaching writing as discovery in a wide range of courses she designed for this purpose. Her commitment to experiential learning took her beyond the classroom with students—to Paris, Cape Coast, London, Greensboro and the Guilford woods.” Asked to reflect on life long learning and Green Hedges, she wrote:

Through the window in the upstairs bedroom in our New Hampshire cottage, I see a tree with red berries. Thus far, it has defied our naming: my current best guess is some kind of Hawthorn. Almost without fail every nap time its topmost branches are gently rustled by at least one pair, and sometimes two or even three couples, of visiting cedar wax-wings. Their graceful plucking of berries fills me with a curious delight because their shapeliness and elegant plumage remind me of Green Hedges School.
earliest memory of a bird’s beauty is not of watching a living creature but gazing on an image given me by Frances Kilmer. I pasted the photo, with its caption “Two cedar waxwings,” onto the grey hardback cover of a notebook. Each student received one of these journals on our last day of school. Most of the pages were blank, but in some Mrs. Kilmer had pasted transparent envelopes to hold feathers or seeds or other treasures we might collect. And on others she had written out fables from La Fontaine, triple—spaced as I recall. We were encouraged to copy the French text, imitating her carefully shaded cursive lettering, and to write out our own translation into English.

Remembering the scant attention I paid to these prompts, I wish it had been otherwise. I see in a new light my recent disappointment as I ponder the difference between what my grandchildren enjoyed most on their holiday with us and what I had hoped they would prize. What helps me deal mercifully with those frustrations with myself and them is remembering Frances Kilmer’s amused acceptance of the mostly empty notebook I brought back to show her in the fall. More important than my sense of having failed to complete the assignments was the love I felt then—hers for me, and mine for her and for the notebook with those cedar waxwings adorning its cover. Although I had never seen them alive, they struck me as both perfectly beautiful and perfectly natural. Little could she or I realize at the time how my later observations of these graceful creatures diving in and out to harvest berries (on a tree I have yet to identify) would sound a note of delight in the same soulful key. That echo becomes part of a chord, augmenting my present tense perception with memories and reflections on my first world. Mrs. Kilmer’s labor has borne fruit in my own creative efforts to enrich others’ engagement with things in front of them as well as to evoke their attention to things that feel a bit foreign at first. Remembering her affectionate acceptance of my lack of studiousness, and her endorsement of my momentary wonder and occasional curiosity, I can let this foremother’s patience and good humor infuse my own pedagogy. Perhaps some seeds I have helped to plant will germinate and reach full growth only decades later.

Author’s Note: Writing about the cedar waxwings spurred us on to a serious effort to identify the tree whose berries they harvest so reliably. We have learned finally that it is a Downy Serviceberry, aka “Shadbush,” “Juneberry,” or “Shadblow” (Amelanchier arborea). I think Mrs. Kilmer would be pleased that remembering her summer assignments whetted our curiosity, and that we persevered successfully. Elizabeth Keiser can be reached at elizakeiser@aol.com.
10 years later...

The class of 2002, ten-year alumni of the school, is represented by a few portraits below:

JUSTIN BIGGS ’02 graduated from the Wharton School of Business and since then has been enjoying New York and working for Union Bank of Switzerland. A recent extended tour of jury duty surprised him by providing an interesting break from his long work hours. Justin’s travels have recently taken him as far as Mexico, and at this writing his father, Carl Biggs, is on one of his many service trips to Haiti. Justin’s brother JEREMY ’98 is working at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, from where he graduated, while his brother TY ’91 is on the West Coast in Naval Post Graduate School, expecting a third child soon. Watch for exciting news about sister AMBI ’93 in the next issue of Clippings.

JOHN KERIVAN ’02 graduated from Virginia Tech in December 2011 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Management and is considering career opportunities in both the public and private sector. This spring John won a fitness challenge for his age group at the Gold’s Gym in Fairfax Station. His brother KYLE ’98 also attended Virginia Tech for his undergraduate studies and will graduate from George Washington University in December 2012 with a Master’s Degree in Landscape Design. Kyle’s particular interest is sustainable landscaping with native plants.

ANTHONY JOHNSON ’02 attended Saint Stephen’s and Saint Agnes School in Alexandria, Virginia, where his academic standing enabled him to stay on the Head’s List during his senior year. Then, after completing a three-year Bachelor of Music (contemporary music, jazz guitar specialty) at the University of Tasmania’s Conservatorium of Music in Australia, Anthony went on to complete a two-year Masters program in IT at the same university. He graduated in December 2011, and is now working in IT at a large Australian bank in Sydney. He recently announced his engagement to Jessica Griffiths, and they plan to marry in her hometown of Launceston, Tasmania in February 2013. He hopes that once he is more settled in Sydney he will be able to jam with friends and perform, and resume playing Australian Rules Football as he had done in Tasmania.

AVITAL ISAACS ’02 has enjoyed dramatic writing. A Film Studies major at Oberlin College in Ohio, Avital graduated summa cum laude. During her college tenure, she spent a semester at the Prague Films School where she directed and performed in an award-winning improv troupe called The Sunshine Scouts. Now in Brooklyn, New York, Avital has taught sex education workshops, mentored high-risk high school girls, and performed at a variety of venues. Reflecting on her early elementary years, she writes, “My teachers were paragons of patience. I was a morbid child, as evidenced by my Grade 3 diorama of Edgar Allan Poe’s A Cask of Amontillado, portraying the scene where Montresor entombs Fortunato in the walls of the catacombs. Under the accompanying book report, my teacher wrote, enigmatically, ‘Very creative!’” In other family news, Avital’s brother, YOAAV ’98, is working on a doctorate in philosophy at Princeton University.

ANALYSIS

Since Grade 1 when, at Mrs. Dart’s invitation, she revised the story of Charlotte’s Web, AVITAL ISAACS ’02 has enjoyed dramatic writing. A Film Studies major at Oberlin College in Ohio, Avital graduated summa cum laude. During her college tenure, she spent a semester at the Prague Films School where she directed and performed in an award-winning improv troupe called The Sunshine Scouts. Now in Brooklyn, New York, Avital has taught sex education workshops, mentored high-risk high school girls, and performed at a variety of venues. Reflecting on her early elementary years, she writes, “My teachers were paragons of patience. I was a morbid child, as evidenced by my Grade 3 diorama of Edgar Allan Poe’s A Cask of Amontillado, portraying the scene where Montresor entombs Fortunato in the walls of the catacombs. Under the accompanying book report, my teacher wrote, enigmatically, ‘Very creative!’” In other family news, Avital’s brother, YOAAV ’98, is working on a doctorate in philosophy at Princeton University.

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Avital Isaacs ’02 graduated from the University of Colorado Boulder and received a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology. Soon after graduating, he was offered a position as a banker at Wells Fargo. When he is not working, Eddie loves to run, play volleyball, golf, hike, and...
ride his bicycle. He also enjoys photography.

After leaving Green Hedges where he created and edited The Missing Link, a student publication, ANDREW KULAK 02 continued his interest in writing at Flint Hill School in Oakton, Virginia, where he served as editor and photographer for the school newspaper and worked on the school’s yearbook and literary magazine. Andrew’s passion for Latin and the classics continued in high school, leading him to major in Classics with a concentration in Latin language and literature at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana. He then worked for Abercrombie and Fitch before departing on a 12,000-mile trip to 42 states, a trip serving as a basis for his current writing. Having taken graduate level philosophy and English courses at George Mason University, Andrew is about to begin graduate work in English at Virginia Tech, where he will also serve as a teaching assistant. Eventually he hopes to teach at the high school or college level, and to write a novel.

After graduating from Green Hedges, WYATT SMITH 02 attended Centreville High School, where he played Varsity Tennis during his freshman year. One year later, he moved with his family to Elgin, South Carolina. There he attended Heatherwood Episcopal School, where his father, former Green Hedges middle school math teacher, Hopkinson “Hoppy” Smith, teaches. Wyatt played pitcher and second base on the school’s baseball team before attending Winthrop University near Charlotte. Having graduated as a Finance major, Wyatt is excited about the prospect of entering the world of business.

Having graduated in 2011 with a Bachelor’s Degree in Health, Fitness, Nutrition and Exercise from Virginia Tech, GWEN VITO 02 is a year away from earning a graduate degree and certification as a registered dietician. She has just completed a year-long internship that enabled her to work in a variety of settings, including Duke University Hospital’s Oncology Unit and the Raleigh-Durham Health Department. Both Gwen’s interest in science and her enjoyment of food preparation played a role in her pursuing this career path. Meanwhile, her interest in herpetology, which began at age four, continues primarily as a hobby. Her two snakes, Corona and Lime, share her affections with a cat named Mr. Pink. This summer Gwen will travel to Australia with her mother, Teri Harbour, to visit sister, OLIVIA 06, now a student at James Madison University doing environmental science studies in the Great Barrier Reef.

GHS Annual Fund Reaches All-Time High!

283 gifts
$162,236 raised!

Because of you, the Annual Fund continues to grow! Leadership gifts accounted for 78% of the total revenue raised and continue to be the cornerstone of growth within the Annual Fund. Contributions directly and positively impact each and every student’s learning experience by providing support for: Academics & Faculty Arts Athletics Financial Aid Library Technology and more!

A full report of giving to Green Hedges will be published in the fall of 2012.

Thank you for your participation!
Mission

We inspire young people of talent and promise to develop clear values, a desire for wisdom, and an appreciation for all endeavors which broaden the mind and enlighten the spirit.