THE LEXINGTON SCHOOL
NEWSLETTER
TLS
May 1988

A Mighty Good Legacy

Just as children love to hear stories about the olden days when mom and dad were young, we thought TLS Newsletter readers might enjoy a few stories about the school in the olden days. Margaret Cowling has a unique perspective on then and now because she has been both a student and a teacher here. Miss Cowling came to TLS as a 5th grader the year it opened, 1959. She stayed through 7th grade, moving to Princeton, New Jersey, with her family that summer.

In those days, the whole school was housed in what is now the lower school wing. There were only five girls in the 5th grade, and maybe eight boys, so classes were very small. Mr. Amos Lawrence, a highly respected watercolor artist, was Miss Cowling's main teacher. He was and is a "joyous, energetic gentleman" who still returns to TLS to do workshops for students. Miss Imrie from Scotland taught 3rd grade and doubled as a gym teacher. Field hockey was the main sport played by the girls. Miss Cowling recalls many winter days when Miss Imrie had them playing hockey in the snow. Just finding the white ball was a game in itself!



TLS PHOTO ARCHIVES

L to R: Todd Trimble, Debra Carpenter, Jessica Bell, Margaret Cowling, 1961-62.



TLS PHOTO ARCHIVES

Miss Imrie refereed girls field hockey in the olden days.

The teacher whom Miss Cowling remembers most vividly was a "formidable, flamboyant and absolutely inspiring" man named Hillyer Rudisill III. From her child's perspective, he was an "adult" and could have been any age. He was actually somewhere in his late 20's. Mr. Rudisill was very tall, lanky, and had one of the most piercingly effective "looks" ever utilized by any teacher. He wore broad-brimmed Panama hats in the spring and strolled the playground smoking an aromatic cigar when class was recessed.

continued on page 2

From the Headmaster:

by David Lowry



Good schools change. This fact is illustrated by the presence of two articles in this edition of the Newsletter: Margaret Cowling's memories of the first days of TLS and the report of the Board decision not to add grades 10 - 12 at the present time. Drawing from the past and planning the future, this is the very heart of educational institutions.

Independent schools have a unique advantage in this process. We are able to respond quickly to the current climate, be it numbers of students, academic needs of groups or individuals, or a new curricular emphasis. Standing independently, we are freer from top-heavy bureaucracy and governmental regulations than comparable schools in the public domain. Our reaction time is shorter; our ability to implement plans is swifter.

As schools move ahead, as beloved teachers leave and new ones join the faculty, as traditions molt, taking new shapes and forms, as we remember the golden moments of the past, we all sometimes wonder if this is the "same" school. The answer is and should be "yes" and "no."

Going once, Going twice...

Start saving your pennies and circle the date, Friday, October 7, on your calendar. The auction committee proudly announces the following items to whet your appetite for CELEBRATION 1988.

New Year's Eve in the Big Apple!
Item includes air transportation, hotel accommodations, and tickets to *Phantom of the Opera* for four people.

A chance to become streetwise!
The item is a full year's subscription to the *Wall Street Journal.*

Japanese culture for your children and their friends!
Item includes a day with a Japanese family to experience their country's traditions, foods, games, music and crafts.

continued from page 1

Mr. Rudisill's room was filled with part of his personal library, a widely diverse, fascinating selection of books. Some days he would put on his pince-nez and read the class stories from Sherlock Holmes or Poe in a voice that would have been the envy of any actor. If a student's attention drifted from the task at hand, he was an incredible marksman with an eraser. Mr. Rudisill taught Latin, English, and History in a way that demanded a thorough knowledge of the facts as well as an articulate evaluation of those facts. When he assigned a book report, he gave his students the freedom and constant encouragement to express their views, no matter how different those views were from his own. If he didn't agree, he would say so, but a student was never wrong in the opinion he or she chose to share. His goal for them was that they could support their opinions with specific data and sufficient clarity. For Miss Cowling, this sponsored a great love of reading and a fierce dedication to independence of thought and the ability to express that thought.

When Miss Cowling's family moved to Princeton, she entered a school system far bigger, infinitely more impersonal, and known to be one of the toughest school systems in the country. For weeks, she was simply "Kentucky." It did not take long to discover, however, that the foundation, the skills, the confidence, and the curiosity instilled in her at TLS were strong and durable gifts. In her own words, "If we can continue to impart such a legacy to our students today then we have indeed accomplished a great deal. No tradition could be finer— even if we don't play field hockey in the snow or have teachers who wear pince-nez!"



TLS PHOTO ARCHIVES

Norton Pritchett and Hillyer Rudisill joined the TLS faculty in 1960.

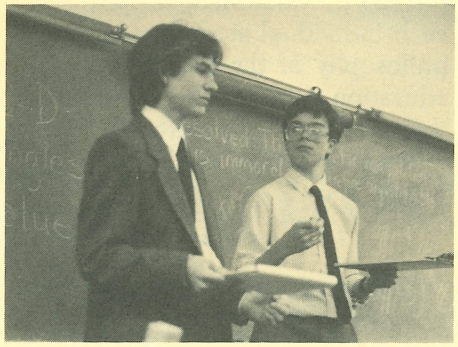


Amos Lawrence came to school this spring to demonstrate watercolor techniques to lower schoolers.

Lincoln and Douglas Would Have Been Proud

Some of the very best offerings in an independent school are born of students' interests and parental support. Such is the case with the TLS Speech and Debate program. Four years ago, Carol Aldy's son was a 7th grader who wanted to start a debate team. She had debated in high school and college and, before she knew what had happened, she had been volunteered by her child to become the TLS coach. That first year the team worked after school—usually around the Aldy's kitchen table. The second year, a course in debate was offered and ten students registered. In the last two years, class size has more than doubled and the TLS team has been racking up the trophies. In 1987 we won first place in the [illegible]e debate sweepstakes. Second place was claimed in 1988 and third place in 1986.

Debate topics fall into one of two categories, policy or value. The resolutions are selected by state and national organizations, so students all over the country are debating the same topic each year. "We begin by learning together," says Mrs. Aldy, "but, by the end of the season, the students are usually way ahead of me!" Not only is that fine, it's the way things ought to be. Students must do their own research in order to be fully prepared to defend both sides of every issue relevant to the resolution. The pursuit of evidence "for or against" is so challenging and stimulating to debaters that around tournament time the coach warns parents to be on the lookout for signs of addiction. The debaters refer to this phenomenon as a "debate high" and when a tournament is over, they say they go into "debate coma." So far, there have been no deaths attributed to the excitement of being a debater. In fact, some students feel that they really come alive.



TLS debaters Paul Anschel and Matt Purdom know that there are two sides to every issue.

As a member of the speech team, students can participate in a variety of speech or drama events: monologue, poetry interpretation, prose reading, storytelling, duo acting, broadcasting, extemp, public speaking and oratorical declamation. TLS won the first place sweepstakes trophy in speech at the St. Xavier tournament in Louisville last fall. Fourteen team members qualified for the Kentucky High School Speech League tournament in March. When all the scores were tabulated, we claimed the 3rd place trophy. Sixty-six junior and senior high schools were competing at state this year.

Participation in both speech and debate affords students the opportunity to develop their own special interests and talents. They polish their communication skills. They develop poise and self-confidence and learn to think on their feet. Debate, in particular, enhances many important academic skills: research, organization, analysis, reasoning, and time management.

Neither Lincoln nor Douglas would debate the fact that public speaking is usually a very competitive endeavor. Nonetheless, Mrs. Aldy's philosophy as coach at TLS is to emphasize cooperation among her students rather than competition. She feels a school is in troubled waters if team members start competing against each other.

Working together in a cooperative spirit fosters leadership as the experienced members of the team help the newer members. It also fosters camaraderie. Everyone shares in the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. Learning to cope with both is important in a young person's maturation.

1987-1988 National Debate Resolutions

Policy Debate

That the United States should adopt a policy to promote political stability in Latin America.

Value Debate

That genetic manipulation is immoral and therefore unjustifiable.

The Lexington School admits students of any race, religion, color, sex, national or ethnic origin.

Board Decision Regarding High School Addition Postponed

The past two years have seen giant steps taken by The Lexington School's Board of Trustees, parents, and friends to assure students the quality of education that has been the school's hallmark since its 1959 founding. A tremendously successful capital campaign resulted in pledges amounting to $3.1 million. A $2 million renovation and expansion of the physical plant is complete and funding has begun for a permanent endowment.

Amidst the excitement of the capital campaign, the board was asked to consider the feasibility of adding grades 10 through 12 to the existing program. A Long Range Planning Committee was appointed by Board Chairman Jim Kenan to identify the salient issues involved in such a proposal and to make a comprehensive study of those issues as they relate to the school's current role in the community.

Before the committee began its study, a professional firm was hired to survey the degree of interest in the Lexington area for additional private education at the high school level. Headmasters of other schools were interviewed about their experiences, both in adding and in closing down a secondary division. The president of the Independent Schools Association of the Central States was consulted to clarify the challenges which an independent elementary school faces when it considers the inclusion of a high school.



The Lexington School Board of Trustees, 1987-1988, addressed important questions affecting long range planning.

Once this information was gathered, the committee spent hours discussing the implications of what they had learned. The survey indicated that the demand for additional private education at the secondary level was very low. Could sufficient enrollment be generated to support a comprehensive high school program? Furthermore, the committee's study determined that expansion through grade 12 would change the identity and focus of The Lexington School as it now exists. Today's mission is to provide an intellectually challenging curriculum for children and young adolescents that will stimulate them to perform to the best of their ability and foster an attitude that will encourage lifelong learning. The focus is on the individual child. The addition of a secondary curriculum would result in a shift away from the strengths of the current program. A major concern in planning for the future is that TLS not jeopardize the tremendous gains and strong foundation built up in the last 28 years.

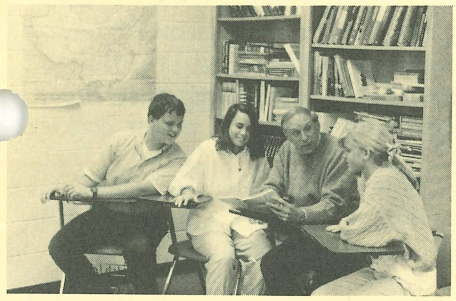
When the committee's study was presented to the full board, the consensus was not to pursue the addition of a high school at this time. The issue has been tabled at least through the 1988-1989 academic year.

In a related development, the Board of Trustees affirmed its commitment to continuing the ninth grade regardless of the Fayette County public school's decision to include grade 9 in the high school setting. The Lexington School's philosophy is that this is an important transitional year in a child's development. It offers opportunities for leadership and character development that are unique.

Decisions, Decisions

Each year many upper school students are interested in exploring the boarding school option for secondary education. Jack Brost, Director of Secondary Placement for the last seven years, says that there is a group of factors which should be looked at carefully as individual schools are evaluated.

A school's academic program is surely a foremost consideration. Many of this country's boarding schools have superior academic reputations. Success at such institutions translates into superior preparation for college. A school's athletic programs and facilities, as well as its other cocurricular offerings, deserve a hard look. Since boarding school is a home away from home, there must be ways to spend free time which meet the student's own individual needs, interests, and talents. A school's size, its location, and whether it is single sex or coed are important issues, too.



9th graders David Robinson, Anne Kenan and Whitney Martin chat with Mr. Brost about boarding schools.

Choosing the right boarding school is a rather long and involved process. It usually begins in the spring of the 8th grade year with conferences with parents and students to decide on initial preferences. At this time, eight to ten schools may be selected for serious consideration. After examination of the catalogs from these schools, usually four or five are selected for visitation. These visits are extremely important. All boarding schools share certain common characteristics: a small faculty-student ratio, a student body from all over the country and often from around the world, and opportunities for experiences in independence, decision-making and self-reliance. But each school has its own personality, too. In reaching a final decision, this aspect of the school is often the determining factor. Before the visits, many students have preconceived ideas of the schools and rank them accordingly. It is not unusual for the ranking to be completely reversed after their visits.

Students work on their applications with February 1 as a deadline. All applications are reviewed several times by each school's admissions committee in an effort to bring about a strong match between student and school. In these readings, SSAT scores, academic record for grades 7, 8, and 9, teacher recommendations, and the interview all factor into the decision regarding acceptance. During the final weeks before the March 10 notification, it is not uncommon for Mr. Brost to receive calls from the schools to discuss a particular aspect of a student's application.

Most students who initiate the process of applying to a boarding school follow it through to completion and do go away to school. Occasionally, a student will realize along the way that boarding school is not for him or her. Despite this, the decision-making process has proven a valuable experience and has contributed to a clearer understanding of self and goals.

Boarding and day school acceptances and attendance by TLS 9th graders, 1982-1988

School	Acceptances	Attendance*
Girls Schools		
Ethel Walker	2	0
Foxcroft	2	1
Grier	1	1
Madeira	8	4
Miss Porter's	13	8
St. Catherine's	6	3
Stoneleigh-Burnham	2	2
Boys Schools		
Avon	2	0
Canterbury	1	1
Deerfield	8	3
Episcopal	7	4
Hill	1	1
McCallie	3	1
Portsmouth Abbey	1	1
Salisbury	2	0
South Kent	1	1
Woodberry Forest	10	6
Coed Schools		
Andover	2	1
Ashville	1	1
Baylor	7	3
Berkshire	1	1
Brooks	1	1
Choate	4	2
Concord	1	1
Exeter	3	2
Groton	4	2
Hotchkiss	10	4
Kent	1	1
Lawrenceville	12	7
Middlesex	3	0
North Carolina School for the Performing Arts	1	1
St. Andrew's (Boca Raton)	1	1
St. Andrew's (Delaware)	2	0
St. Paul's	2	2
Taft	3	0
Western Reserve	2	0
Westminster	2	0
Lexington Schools		
Lexington Catholic	9	9
Sayre School	8	8
Local High Schools	129	129

*Numbers do not include the class of 1988.

Faculty Newsmakers

Art faculty members Isabel Kasperbauer and Judy Apple attended the National Art Education Association's annual convention in Los Angeles over the spring break. An impressive array of visual arts presentations, experience institutes, seminars, panels and exhibits directly contributed to their professional interests and needs. The NAEA convention is the largest and most comprehensive conference on art education in the world.

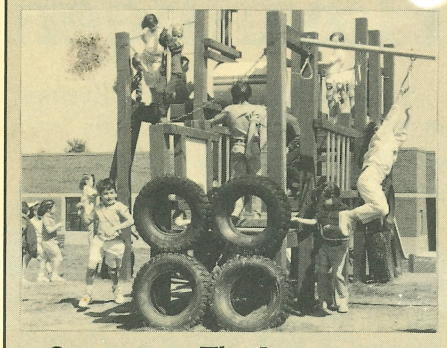
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Admissions Director Connie Freeman joined pre-school teachers Mary Beers, Barbara Brogan, Gale Smothers and Margaret Barker for a Developmental Education Conference held in Lexington in March. Theoretical concepts such as developmental age, readiness, overplacement and giftedness were among the workshop topics offered. Commitment to nurture each individual student was the philosophy of the early childhood education experts who presented this program. Our staff felt very affirmed by what the experts had to say.

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Imagine 10,000 music teachers together at one time and in one place! Martha Anderson, lower school music teacher, was among those who attended the National Music Educator's Convention in Indianapolis, April 20-23. The convention included seminars, research papers and concerts performed by some of the finest choral and instrumental groups in the country.

Camp Curiosity



Summer at The Lexington School will be extra special this year. Camp Curiosity for children from ages 4 to 7 is being offered June 6 through July 1. Activities include art, storytime, cooking, gardening and special trips geared toward growing, learning and fun. Try us out. Camp at TLS is more than a place, it's a feeling. Call 278-0501 for additional information and registration forms.

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