THE LEXINGTON SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER TLS

March 1990

Heroic Efforts In Upper School

Is a hero a knight in shining armor, a person who happens to be in the right place at the right time, or a sandwich? Upper school students spent the first eight weeks of the winter term researching, contemplating, and debating the definition of a hero, and they decided that being a hero involved all of the above... and more.

"Heroes" was the theme for an interdisciplinary approach to learning which linked social studies, languages, creative writing, science, and the arts. Topics pertaining to the theme were studied in depth with the relatedness of information being stressed. The simple absorption and retention of facts took a second seat to mental and physical involvement with the material that demanded problem-solving and the application of learning from one context to another.

After four weeks of academic preparation and classroom discussions, students selected an area of concentration for an arts project which would pay tribute to heroes. Their schedules were rearranged to include a 90-minute time block each day for working on their project. Two days, February 8 and 9, were earmarked for a celebration of heroes.

Some students organized an extensive timeline of heroes through the centuries. It covered the gallery hall leading to the theatre, thereby giving the entire student body exposure to thought-provoking material. Clay busts of heroes like Einstein, Pascal, and Joan d'Arc were sculpted. A colorful mural depicting such sports heroes as Jesse Owens, Babe Didrickson, Michael Jordan, and Billie Jean King was painted outside the gym. A group of writers created their own hero by composing his mythology, assigning him icons, and depicting his image in plaster. Their hero, Chagne, struggled to maintain the balance between good and evil in the world, ever prepared to sacrifice himself for humanity.



Some 9th graders sculpted busts of the heroes they researched.

Dramatic presentations abounded with reenactments of posters, photographs, and paintings. In a reenactment, the people in the picture step out of the background setting and speak what they imagine their characters would say. The students painted the background for each reenactment and wrote the narratives based on their research of the work. Enlightening excerpts from *A Lamp at Midnight*, a play about Galileo and the scientific revolution, were presented by a group of thespians. One 9th grade history class determined a class hero, JFK, and developed a narrated slide show about his life. They also created a visual display of memories of the Kennedy years.

The upper school celebrated their "heroic efforts" with one another and with middle schoolers right before winter break. It was a time when hours of hard work, frustrations and resolutions, and ideas and experiments came together for everyone.

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Heroic

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Teachers felt as satisfied as their students about having been stretched in new and challenging ways. Science teachers had directed plays. P.E. and language teachers had guided mural artists. Math teachers had acted as editors and publishers.

The culminating event of the heroes celebration was a speech given by Dr. William Parker, retiring Vice-Chancellor of Minority Affairs at UK, who shared insights about his two personal heroes: his father, and his friend, Martin Luther King, Jr. As one 9th grader put it, "Dr. Parker had that little something that drew me in to listen to what he had to say. What he had to say was very inspiring."



John Tackett is reading the narrative written for the reenactment of Iwo Jima.

And, yes, we did have sandwiches—six, six-foot heroes complete with meat, cheese, lettuce and other trimmings served on a crusty bun. In another heroic effort, the faculty and students proudly left only crumbs. ■

From the Headmaster:

by David Lowry



Schools must prepare students for their futures. As we look ahead, such experts as Edward Fiske, Education Writer for the *New York Times*, predict that success will depend upon the ability to work collaboratively; to locate information and use it creatively; to reason or form and justify opinions; and to call on mechanical, artistic, and interpersonal skills. So often, these ingredients get short attention in schools. The interdisciplinary unit on *Heroes*, described in this issue's lead article, gave powerful emphasis to such atypical learning experiences.

While some people may feel more comfortable in the straight discipline-by-discipline approach to education, such comfort may lie simply in its familiarity to their own past school experiences. Schools cannot deliver a 1950's education to prepare young people for the year 2000. To cross boundaries, to find information, to synthesize, to create, to work together: these are needed skills of our future adults. All schools must incorporate them into their curriculums. ■

D.A.R.E. To Keep Kids Off Drugs

Project D.A.R.E. is not what its name might imply. In fact, it's an ironic acronym, because D.A.R.E. stands for Drug Abuse Resistance Education. The program is designed to help students acquire the information and skills they need to act in their own best interest when facing high-risk choices and the peer pressure that often goes with them.

At the suggestion of a group of TLS parents, Project D.A.R.E. was introduced into the middle school curriculum this year. The sixth grade is in the midst of 16 weekly sessions being conducted by specially trained police officers from Fayette County. Early indications are that students think D.A.R.E. is "cool." Third graders are having four sessions which emphasize personal safety, how to say "no" to things which are not safe, and reasons to feel special about oneself.

D.A.R.E. was developed by the Los Angeles police department and piloted there in 1983. It was introduced in Lexington in the 1986-87 academic year in selected elementary schools. The main focus of Project D.A.R.E. is peer resistance strategies. The program for middle schoolers is also designed to have an impact on self-esteem, decision-making skills, values regarding law enforcement and personal safety, and drug-related knowledge and attitudes. Student leaders from area high schools participate in D.A.R.E. by acting as positive role models for younger children. The faculty at school aid in the implementation of the program's philosophy and goals in their classrooms. ■



Officer Jerry Belcher, Marijo Foster, and Officer John Whitaker have joined forces to implement the D.A.R.E. Program at TLS.

Black History Month At TLS

The February observance of Black History Month got off to an early start at TLS this year. In January, Phillip L. Cherry, Education Coordinator of Walden Theatre in Louisville, was invited to school to present a lecture/reading based on the life and work of the poet Paul Laurence Dunbar. Dunbar (1872-1906) was the first American poet of his race to achieve national acclaim. In addition to exposing students to Dunbar's poetry, the assembly also provided a view of the man behind the words and his struggle for artistic integrity.



Afro-Brazilian dance was part of our celebration of Black History Month.

In February, Nego Gato was Syncopated, Inc.'s guest artist-in-residence. He and the troupe came to TLS with a very energetic and athletic dance performance which emphasized capoeira. Capoeira is a traditional fighting dance originally developed in the 1600's as a means of self-defense for African slaves attempting to escape from plantation owners in Brazil. Dozens of our children enjoyed dancing on stage with Nego Gato.

We coordinated with UK's Martin Luther King Jr. Cultural Center to rent a series of beautifully animated stories and African folktales for our lower school students. The Nguzo Saba Children's Films are based on seven cross-cultural principles designed to strengthen the family, the school, and the community.

The special events which are scheduled for Black History Month each year augment a variety of projects and activities in the classrooms. ■

Straight From The Heart

Part of the pre-kindergartners celebration of Valentine's Day this year spread love beyond the confines of their classroom. "Valentine's for Vets" is a nation-wide project which was brought to pre-K by a parent who had read about it in the newspaper. Teacher Mary Beers was enthusiastic and found that her children were too. After explaining the meaning of "veteran" to the class, Mrs. Beers asked each child to make a valentine and compose a little message to go with it. Messages were dictated to parent volunteers who transcribed them. Here is what one child wrote to her unknown valentine—"Thank you for fighting for us. I love you. I love you for fighting for our country. Will you please be careful for what you have injured? My cat had a kitten." Love, Fielden.



Ashton Potter wrote her valentine with some help from Janelle Simon, a Pre-K mom.

CELEBRATION '90 will take place Friday, October 5. "IT'S HOT!" is this year's theme.

You can become a part of the fun by planning to attend. It's a festive evening, not to be missed.

You may also help with CELEBRATION by donating individual items to the auction or soliciting donations from companies. Please contact Corky or Walt Robertson at 233-3721 or 278-0501 regarding any "hot ideas."

What's Going On Around Here?

No one wants to be "just a number" in this world, least of all a zero. But Ms. Gillespie's 3rd graders learned that "even nothing is something" when they presented a play in their math lab about the value of zero. In the beginning, all the digits were very unfriendly to "O." They called him names like "Zilch," "Nil," and "Goose Egg." No one liked him because he was always borrowing from other people in subtraction problems. It took a Fairy Godnumber and a Math Wizard to set things straight. When they explained Zero's unique properties to the others, he felt very important and special. At the end of the play, Zero was one of the gang. He was welcomed warmly into a numbers game. "Even Nothing is Something" was directed by Lanna Bell, head of the Math Lab.



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"Mickey Mouse Chemistry" is hardly a complimentary way of referring to a lesson in the 8th grade's science curriculum. Nevertheless, the term was aptly applied when Ms. Ford walked into her classroom with a set of "those ears" on her head. It didn't take long for her students to figure out the seriousness behind the silliness. It had to do with the shape of the water molecule. The angle of attachment of the hydrogen atoms to the oxygen atom forms a molecule that looks exactly like the Disney character. This kind of creativity in the classroom teaches children things that they never forget.

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"Bach to the Future" was a program in the Performing Arts Series that struck a chord in all of us. Visiting artist Stephen Webber, a college professor and professional musician for over 13 years, came to TLS in January with a computerized, multi-track recording studio which immersed the theatre in sound. Synthesizers sizzled as students learned how computers super-charge everything from classical music and movie sound tracks to the latest top-forty records. Mr. Webber demonstrated composition and recording techniques with some volunteers from the audience. His equipment could make the beat go on, and on, and on . . .

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This year's Medieval feast in Mrs. Barker's kindergarten was something that all the knights and ladies could write home to the castle about. The nobility arrived in full regalia for the occasion—knights in shining armor and ladies in silk dresses, some with a matching barb. A wizard brought magic that spelled good times for all. After the feast, the knights competed in a jousting tournament, and the ladies danced the galliard to songs of the crusade.



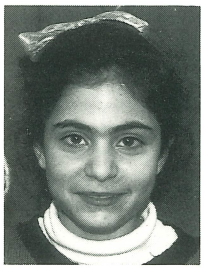
Lords Huber, Cowgill and Milward prepared for the jousting tournament.



The real stars of the 6th grade's French puppet show.

Sixteen 6th grade French students, under the direction of Nicole Charron, staged a charming performance of *Blanche-Neige et les Sept Nains (Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs)*. When Madame first wrote the script some eight years ago, the production was in the Disney tradition. This year's play had a medieval/renaissance setting. The children began making their puppets weeks in advance of the performance. They researched the dress of the period and costumed their characters accordingly. The royalty were decked in posh satins and velvets. The dwarfs looked a lot like serfs. "Extraordinarily good" is how Madame and middle school art teacher Linda MacKellar described this year's puppet creations. That same compliment was bestowed on the French students for their accents and articulation by five UK French professors, including the chairman, who attended the show. This level of critical acclaim made everyone involved feel justifiably proud. ■

Headmistress For The Day



On Friday, February 2 at approximately 1:15 p.m., all the copy machines at school decided to go on the fritz. Dr. Lowry wanted to speak to 6th grader Amera Hussain, Headmistress for the afternoon, for an executive decision regarding how to handle such a crisis. Unfortunately, Amera was watching a movie in the theatre with her friends and could not be disturbed.

The chance to head the school is a live auction item at CELEBRATION which is strictly for fun. Within certain guidelines, the Head gets to "tell people what to do." Middle school faculty members were asked to dress like they did when they were 12. There were a lot of pony tails, circle pins, and bobby socks. Middle schoolers were asked to dress for the year 2050. Some folks were very dapper senior citizens. Others looked like they were on their last leg. A few were already angels.

In the spirit of turnabout being fair play, Amera had P.E. teachers Roberta Owen and Tom Parlanti running laps. Sweeping the floor and wiping off the tables in the cafeteria after lunch were two chores from which the kids got excused. Guess who had to pick up the slack? ■



Sarah Carney, Hannah Dodson, and Meredith Strode looking ahead to the year 2050.

Alumni Profiles:
Meet the Pettits



Van Meter, Hale, Harrison, and Gregory Pettit, 1989

Gregory, Harrison, Hale, and Van Meter Pettit — four brothers, all grown now, living away from home, pursuing fame and fortune. Many former and current teachers at TLS remember these "boys" with a particular fondness. Each Pettit would attest to fond memories of his years at The Lexington School. They share the belief that the education they received at TLS got them off to a great start.

There are other common threads in the Pettits respective lives. All four went to prep school after TLS: Gregory and Harrison to Woodberry Forest, Hale to St. George's in Newport, R.I., and Van Meter to Andover. At about age 14, each child got to spend the summer in Austria with a friend of the family. These innocents abroad became hooked on the opportunities for education and adventure on foreign soil. A penchant for languages seems to run in the family. Terry Bailey, who taught all four Pettits in her career at TLS, remembers "fairness" as a shared trait. The boys "had a keen sense of treating people right." Finally, each of these young men seems to possess the self-confidence to go after what he wants.

GREGORY PETTIT '74 graduated from Princeton in 1981 with an A.B. in history. Law school seemed like it would be his next stop, but he wanted to get some work experience before committing to that. Gregory's proficiency in French (which he began studying in the 3rd grade) helped him land his first job. He went to work for the Venice-Simplon Orient Express in Paris as Director of Sales for their merchandising subsidiary. He was responsible for boutiques in Paris and Venice, a mail order catalog, and over two dozen wholesale customers in Europe.



Those two years in Paris whet Gregory's appetite for a business career. When he returned from Europe he spent a year at *The Blood Horse* as assistant to the managing editor before entering Columbia University's graduate School of Business in 1984. He received his M.B.A. in 1986.

Gregory lives in New York now and works in the world of high finance. He is Director of Strategic Investor Relations Research for William Dunk Partners, Inc., a management consultant firm. Corporate communications is Gregory's specialty. He currently represents 12 companies in their efforts to develop high impact, low cost ways of building relationships with financial institutions. In so doing, he talks with more than 350 large investors around the world each month to emphasize his clients' strengths. He revamps corporate literature, writes annual reports, selects investment banks, and recruits outside directors. Gregory is also the publisher of The Pettit Survey, a monthly study of American investment opinion, for his firm.

Spending time with family and friends, reading, and keeping up with politics in Kentucky are some of Gregory's current interests. He loves to come home for the races. He has never owned a car in his life.

HARRISON '76 followed brother Gregory to school, but he didn't exactly follow in his footsteps. "Boys"-terous might be the best adjective to describe him in his younger days. Harrison admits he was full of mischief at TLS and often went to school feeling his oats. "I spent a lot of time in the office," he said. "Mr. Borst, Mr. Pritchett, and I had one of those love/hate relationships. They liked me, but they realized I needed straightening up." Harrison says it was some time in high school that it dawned on him that he had learned a whole lot at

TLS, in spite of himself. (Eventually, of course, he did "straighten up.") "I had read the right stuff, studied Latin, and had good writing skills."



The student in Harrison blossomed at Woodberry Forest. In his senior year he did a three month internship with an international investment management firm in Edinburgh, Scotland. The paper he wrote on fiscal policy in Great Britain won him the coveted Senior Project Award at his graduation.

Harrison entered Denison University in 1979. After two years of study in economics, business, and marketing, "central Ohio was becoming a little dull." He applied for Denison's Junior Year Abroad Program at the Institute of European Studies, University of Vienna. In addition to his studies that year he was a member of the Vienna Celtics Rugby Club which played matches in Germany, Italy, C.S.S.R., and Yugoslavia. Vacation spots while Harrison was headquartered in Vienna included Morocco and Turkey.

It was about this time that Harrison realized a true "wanderlust." His desire to experience different cultures all over the world led him to transfer to the University of Wisconsin. They had a unique year in India program for which he applied and was accepted. He spent his first ten weeks in Madison studying the language of Tamil, and then traveled to Madurai, Tamil Nadu, South India for independent study. His research project was a report on a rural development program, Joe Homan's Boys Town, in Tirimungalam Village. Harrison graduated from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, with a B.A. in South Asian Studies in 1984.

His application to the Peace Corps came as no surprise to anyone who knew him. While waiting to get accepted, Harrison worked in Washington, D.C. for a year in the International Center for Development Policy, in the offices of Senator Walter Huddleston and Representative Ron Mazzoli, and at Meridian House International. As part of the visitor's program service at Meridian House, Harrison "looked after" foreign V.I.P.'s including South Korean dissident Kim Dae-Jung.

Harrison was stationed with the U.S. Peace Corps for two years in the Philippines. His official title was "community development worker." In writing an article for the Woodberry Forest magazine, Harrison described those years as "the experience of a lifetime." His father put it this way—"some aspects of Harrison's life imitate Harrison Ford's adventures in the movies. The truth is that Harrison Pettit has really done what Harrison Ford has only done in the movies."

After developing credibility with the people in his village of Ifugao, Harrison organized a political group. They wanted a potable water system for their community and he was able to secure the necessary funding outside the Philippines. He also organized five small business projects and initiated an area-wide farmer's association. In conjunction with the Deparment of Agriculture, Harrison established a demonstration garden and conducted training seminars in vegetable gardening and freshwater fisheries.

Harrison has been back in the States for two years now. He worked for the Washington offices of the Peace Corps before entering the M.B.A. program at Georgetown University in the fall of 1989. He was married last summer to a fellow Peace Corps volunteer. Harrison says they both like working for a non-profit service. He feels that a good management background will be invaluable for any future efforts in third world development.

School spirit was never a stranger to **HALE '79**. "He was into it all," says Mary Lee Nichols, upper school division head. Plays, musical productions, soccer, yearbook, and scores of class projects for which he was often the leader were the beneficiaries of Hale's seemingly limitless energy at TLS.

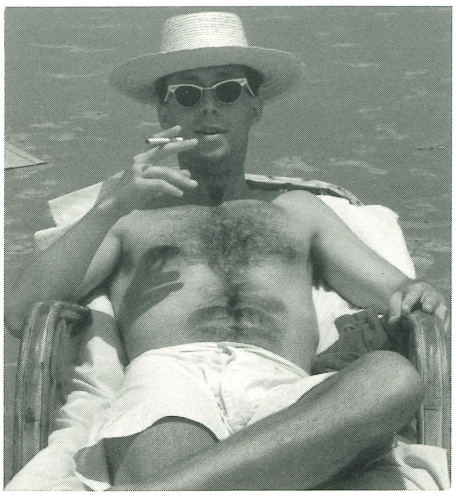
Emory University in Atlanta was Hale's choice for college. His B.A. was earned in history. Madame Charron remembers Hale as a gifted student in French. His fluency in the language was such that he enrolled in a French university in Paris for his coursework junior year. Hale's real love as an undergraduate, however, was the theatre. He acted in plays every chance he could get, both on campus and in the city of Atlanta. His talent earned him election to Alpha Psi Omega, a theatre honor society.

Hale stayed in Atlanta after graduation and became a member of a theatre group there. He took training in acting, dance, voice, and mime. He mastered several Southern dialects. His first "real job" in acting was a role in *Amadeus*.

Hale learned a lot about work behind the scenes as well as in front of the curtain. Running a box office, selling ads for Playbills, lighting, and directing were all added to his repertoire. Hale knows first hand what it's like to be a starving artist, but those years were good ones. Part-time jobs teaching French and waiting tables at "snooty" restaurants helped him support himself.

Hale returned to Lexington after

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Pettits

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three years of working in Atlanta determined to eventually pursue acting in New York. An encouraging answer to the question, "to be or not to be," came when Hale competed at an audition in Louisville for enrollment in the National Shakespeare Conservatory. He was one of only 15 students they accepted into their 18-month training program.

Hale was involved in the opening of Cafe' Max and was their first maitre d' while he was waiting for his future to begin. In January, he packed his bags and moved to New York for the next "stage" of his career.

Although it is generally agreed upon that Harrison has set the ultimate standard in his family for experiencing foreign cultures, **VAN METER '82** is not far behind. Right now Van Meter is in Chiang-Mai, Thailand, teaching English at a Christian college as part of the Princeton in Asia Program. He applied for the job in his senior year, stating in the application that "despite his fine education at Princeton, there remained an enormous amount of knowledge yet to acquire." Attending to his ignorance of the non-Western world was high on his list of things to do. Van Meter had gotten a taste of what it is like to live in the Third World in the summer



of 1987. Under the auspices of Operation Crossroads Africa, Inc., he had spent two months doing volunteer labor on a farm relief project in Senegal. The summer after that was quite mundane by comparison. He did six weeks of solo travel in London, Paris, Venice, and Amsterdam, "the motive being to learn how to navigate foreign cities alone and to visit museums, gardens, and architectural masterpieces."

Van Meter is the artist in the Pettit family. He earned his A.B. in art and archeology in 1989. His thesis at Princeton was an exhibition of works which interplay the spatial qualities of painting, sculpture, and architecture. For extracurriculars, he played on the Princeton Rugby Football Club, was an officer of the St. Anthony Literary Society, and set designer for three university plays. Van Meter submitted an architectural proposal to improve the common space and dining facilities at his alma mater before he left. His plans are being considered by the committee in charge of proposed renovation.

What's next for Van Meter is a question without an answer right now. Architecture looks like a possibility, but this family has learned to expect the unexpected. Van Meter's experiences in Thailand may be opening up entirely new vistas. ■

Save These Dates!

March 21	Admissions Open House	**May 17**	9th grade show
March 27	Spring Concert	**June 4 - 28**	Camp Curiosity
April 19	5th and 6th grade Musical	**June 16**	TLS Golf Classic — Dinner and Calcutta
May 3	Picnic with our Pops	**June 18**	TLS Golf Classic — Lunch and Tournament
May 4	Little Kentucky Derby		

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