



A+ Test Prep and Tutoring Newsletter

March, 2009

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A+ Blog

Check out our new [blog](#) on the A+ website! It is filled with timely features such as a calendar of upcoming events (SAT, ACT, and free proctored test dates, for example), a word of the day, verbal tidbits (grammar and usage tips), and short articles reproduced from various media outlets. Some of the articles now on the blog focus on calculator policy on the SAT and ACT (Did you know that using the TI-89 is the most common reason students are dismissed from the ACT for calculator reasons?), President Obama's grammatical missteps, and how recess improves children's behavior in the classroom.

"Green up" Your Book Habit with Eco-Libris



A Conversation with a College Admissions Director



Chuck Bachman

Chuck Bachman is Senior Associate Director of

Do you ever think about how much paper is used in the manufacture of books?

Many books are still not made with recycled paper or other eco-friendly materials. Most of the trees that are cut down for books are from unfarmed sources (not to mention the fact that tree farms themselves have, in many cases, a devastating impact on native forests and indigenous communities).

Mandy Haggith, the author of the new book [Paper Trails](#), explained this issue recently: "No one likes to think of trees being felled, but many of us have a cozy image in our heads that it all comes from recycling or "sustainable" woodlands growing in neat rows, perhaps somewhere in Sweden. It's a myth. Globally, 70 per cent of the 335 million tons of paper the world uses each year comes from natural, unfarmed sources. In Canada, the UK's biggest source of pulp, 90 per cent of its output comes directly from its ancient forests."

[Eco-Libris](#), a "green business" headquartered in Newark, Delaware, hopes to raise awareness about the environmental impact of the publishing industry and make reading more sustainable in the future. Founded in July 2007 by Raz Godelnik, Eco-Libris has a simple yet ambitious mission: to have consumers plant one tree for every book they read--specifically, their goal is to balance out half a million books by the end of 2009!

How will Eco-Libris do this? It has joined forces with three planting partners: Sustainable Harvest International, RIPPLE Africa, and The Alliance for International Reforestation. These three non-profit organizations work to improve the environment and local communities in developing countries where deforestation is a crucial problem. The following countries are served by these organizations: Belize, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Malawi, Guatemala, and Nicaragua.

Godelnik says that "one of the most important elements for us in these operations, besides the collaboration with local communities, is that the right trees are planted in the right places. To plant trees is rather easy; but to plant the right

Admissions at [Lafayette College](#) and is past president of the Pennsylvania Association for College Admission Counseling. He has worked in college admissions for twenty-five years, the last ten of which have been with Lafayette College. Lafayette is a prestigious undergraduate liberal arts college that also offers a highly regarded engineering program. Located in Easton, PA, about 1.25 hours from Philadelphia, it is a coeducational institution with an undergraduate population of 2,400; its students represent 40 states and 55 countries.

A+ recently had the opportunity to ask Chuck questions about the college application process.

Has the number of college applications increased this year at Lafayette?

No, in fact they decreased by about 11% this year, but that is in comparison to the past two years when Lafayette had the largest applicant pools ever. The good news, though, is that our indicators show that the overall quality of the applicants improved this year. We are aiming for a freshman class of 620, and approximately 40% of that number will be admitted via early decision.

Does Lafayette accept both the SAT and ACT?

Yes, we accept both tests and have no bias toward one test over the other, although the ACT must include the Writing section.

Have you seen an increase in students taking the ACT?

Yes, there has been an upward trend in students submitting ACT scores, although we have not kept specific data on that. The SAT is a more popular test on the East and West coasts, but we have definitely seen more ACT scores being submitted in recent years.

Does Lafayette consider the Writing section of the SAT?

We do not at this time factor in the SAT Writing score in our admissions decision, although that may change in the future. For the past two years we have been taking note of the Writing scores and comparing it to how students perform in their freshman English classes and first-year performance to see how predictive the scores are of future success. Once we evaluate the data, perhaps as early as this summer, Lafayette will reexamine its policy vis-à-vis the SAT Writing section.

How does Lafayette evaluate standardized test

trees in the right places demands expertise. We always work to make sure the right species are being planted."

Various trees are planted including fruit trees, which provide local communities with additional food and income. Godelnik adds, "Our collaboration with our planting partners is focused on tree planting, but they're also involved in other activities, such as environmental awareness training, sustainable farming, building brick stoves, and the like."

Eco-Libris raises money for these projects through the sale of Eco-Libris stickers which consumers can order through the company's website or purchase at selected bookstores. For only a dollar (discounts apply for quantities of 25 or more trees/stickers), a consumer can plant a tree and put a sticker on the sleeve of a book to display his commitment to the environment.

Eco-Libris is also actively collaborating with publishers, bookstores, and authors to promote their environmental message. Among other projects, they are currently working with Avrim and Vicki Topel, authors of the book [Green Beginnings: The Story of How We Built Our Green & Sustainable Home](#), which chronicles their journey of building a new green sustainable home from scratch in Kennett Square, PA.

In addition, Eco-Libris has begun to collaborate on green-themed children's books, including [The Legend of Honey Hollow](#), [Sammy and Sue Go Green Too!](#) and [The Barefoot Book of Earth Tales](#).

For more information about Eco-Libris, follow this link to their very comprehensive website: [Ecolibris](#). You can also check out their [blog](#).

Featured Student

scores from different test dates?

On the SAT we take the highest subscore in each category. On the ACT we take the highest composite. We do not recalculate a new composite based on highest ACT subscores.

What are the most common mistakes students make during the application process or on their applications?

There are many mistakes that students make, but perhaps the worst is putting the selectivity of a school--its "prestige factor"--ahead of fit; applying to or choosing a school simply for its reputation instead of whether that school offers the right courses and opportunities that match their interests. Other essential factors such as size, location, distance from home, and the overall personality of the place should also be considered.

Another mistake we see is that some students do not put enough time and effort into the application (proofread!) or do not fully answer the essay prompts. Finally, we want to see students take ownership of the process. Do not have your mother or father call us if there is a question about the application or when arranging an interview--call us yourself.

You mentioned interviews--does Lafayette require them?

An interview is recommended but not required. Interviews are conducted by staff from May 1 to December 31. We also offer alumni interviews to those applicants whose high school is assigned to an Alumni Admission Representative. We value interviews by staff and alumni equally.

What advice can you offer students about interviews?

The interview is an opportunity to personalize this process. It is a chance to allow the college to know you and it is an opportunity for you to address questions you may have and therefore get to know the college. It is a conversation about you and your interests, goals, and passions. Be sure to determine if the institution views the interview as an evaluative or informative component. Lafayette's interviews are of a more informational focus, but certainly items discussed could impact the overall admissions decision to some degree. An interview will unlikely make or break a student.

Do you have any final words of wisdom?



Lauren Goldstein

This month's featured student is Lauren Goldstein, a junior at Council Rock South High School in Holland. Since Lauren had registered for the January 2009 SAT, she signed up last fall for A+'s one-on-one SAT prep program. (Her older brother Scott, who is now a senior at New York University and will be attending law school in the fall, also prepped for the SAT with A+.) In math she was tutored by Anne-Marie Mettus and in Verbal (both Critical Reading and Writing) she was tutored by Allan Heller.

Lauren's scores increased an impressive 260 points from her PSAT scores, with the most improvement in the Math and Writing sections. On the SAT essay she received an 11 out of 12 possible points! Both tutors report that Lauren was an engaging student who was pro-active and asked good questions. Lauren says that learning specific test-taking strategies such as plugging answers back into the original and knowing what questions to avoid helped her. Taking multiple practice tests under real time constraints was also good preparation for test day. Finally, for the essay she learned brainstorming techniques and how to write "mini" outlines.

Congratulations to Lauren and her tutors on a job well done!

Thank you for your interest in A+ and our newsletter. Feel free to contact us at 215.886.9188 or on the web at www.aplustutoring.com.

The last piece of advice I would offer is to let your final year of high school be the year you are a senior, not a college applicant. The college search is important, but not the be-all and end-all of the senior year. Give the college search the time it deserves, but remember to have some fun too and keep the college search in perspective.

School and Community Partnerships



A+ Test Prep and Tutoring provides in-home One-to-One Test Prep and Academic Subject Tutoring throughout the Delaware Valley.

We also partner with schools and social service agencies to provide test preparation, remedial reading and math, and study skills courses to students throughout the region. Courses offered include SAT, ACT, SSAT, and ISEE. For more information please contact me at 215.886.9188.

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