



THE ARGO

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The Newspaper of the Rutgers Preparatory School

Spring 1998

Growing Attention Towards Creative Arts

by Babi Das, with help from Kristin Checchio

On April 28, saxophonist Brent Carpentier awed the audience with his "swinging" solo performance at the annual spring instrumental concert. Along with drummer Jarrett Sutton and pianist Mitch Francisco, Brent is part of the first instrumental group to represent Rutgers Prep at The Teen Arts Festival, held every May. As a freshman, he joins the ranks of many other accomplished artists who devote their time and energy to the performing arts at Prep. Sophomores Ari Harkov and Micheal Szeles were recently selected to perform with the

prestigious New Jersey All State Choir. Students such as sophomore Kristin Checchio, Portia Hunt, and siblings Kristin and Eric Peterson spend much of their week commuting back and forth from regional choirs or instrumental groups. A cast of fourteen, as well as many more behind the scenes, prepared all spring for the drama production. Both the men's and women's choirs are over forty members strong. There is indeed an increasing crop of dedication and talent in the creative arts at Prep, that has caught the attention of parents and the administration.

For the past several years, students being honored at the annual Creative

Arts Dinner have had to pay to attend. Recognizing the disparity between this event and the annual Sports Award Dinner, which athletes attend at no cost, The Parents' Association, under a committee chaired by Martha Needleman, funded this year's dinner through a school-wide Avon fundraiser.

The administration has also shown initiative in supporting the proliferation of performing arts at Prep. In an open meeting held in mid-February, the Board of Trustees' Strategic Planning Committee, headed by Andrea Cunnell, focused

the discussion on "identifying the immediate needs of creative arts" at Prep, according to Music Department Chair Mrs. Hunt, who, along with most of the school's music and drama department, attended. Mrs. Cunnell feels the Strategic Planning Committee holds an important place in the Prep administrative network because it "brings together every constituency" - the Board, faculty, parents, and students. The meeting was centered primarily on space availability, an issue which has come into focus in recent years through the expan-

sion and growth of music groups, as well as from student outcry. A year ago, former Madrigal singer Jay Golon and senior violin virtuoso Kyle Szabo both wrote stinging editorials which voiced their anger and concern over the shrinking facilities and practice rooms available for music groups. While the problems were never alleviated during their years at Prep, Mrs. Hunt said that the addition of new facilities looks hopeful starting in the fall of 1999. Her primary goal is to avoid hav-

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Too Much Pressure!!

by Amanda Rabinowitz

As many of you may have noticed, as the end of the school year so rapidly approaches, the average Prep student is experiencing intense pressure, as opposed to spring fever. Is the plight of the average Prep student the plight of the average teenager? I'm sure that some of you would disagree. So, what would cause this heightened tension in our otherwise picturesque environment? Many would tell you that AP classes are the culprit.

At Prep over 60 percent of the sophomores, juniors, and seniors are currently taking advanced placement courses. At Prep the gifted elite are the majority, and less than half of the students that Prep turns out

will escape without experiencing the little pink book of the advanced placement exam. In order for high school students to present themselves to colleges as competitive candidates, they must distinguish themselves from others that go to their school by taking the most rigorous courses offered. At Rutgers Prep, this could amount to taking two AP classes sophomore year, and six AP classes for each of the remaining two years. It's no wonder that the students I spoke to reported feeling tremendous pressures to take all AP courses for which they were eligible. In the words of one junior, "This school is so competitive. If you don't take AP's and other

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Dipak DeBiswas as The Prince in The Dispute

The Dispute and The Test

by Theresa Lin

Unlike past years, this year's spring show was comprised of two one act plays written by Pierre Carlet de Marivaux, "The Dispute" and "The Test". Although quite simple in some ways, these two short plays were quite challenging to both the actors and the technicians for reasons that were unique to the show this year. In addition to the

standard actor's challenge of memorizing one's lines and getting in character, actors also had to adapt themselves to a stage that was surrounded by the audience, such that an actor's back would be to some part of the audience at any given point in time. The set was also enhanced by Mr. Mordetsky's stunning artwork, a projector system, and a rippling on-stage pool.

The spring show was

also very special because it was the final performance of many seniors, such as Jeremy Wang-Iverson, Whitney Case, Dave Pung, Nick Lessard, and Dipak DeBiswas. We wish them luck in the years to come and thank them for all they have done for Prep's drama department in the past years. While we say goodbye to graduating seniors, we look forward to seeing new faces next fall.

Too Much Pressure!! - Students and APs

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people do, you just can't compete." This is not only a valid statement, considering colleges tend to take only a few applicants from one school, but it is one of the main reasons that the students I spoke to take AP classes. Another junior who started his sophomore year with two AP courses, but declined to take any AP's the following year, describes his motivation for taking AP classes as follows: "If people I hung out with didn't take them, then I definitely wouldn't have." A sophomore called AP's "the thing to do", and felt that she'd be looked down upon for taking regular classes.

Do Prep students feel

pressure? "Oh yeah, I could handle things better if there wasn't so much pressure to do everything," one sophomore said. One student I spoke with felt so much pressure to take AP's that he reported taking advanced placement in courses he wasn't particularly interested in. When I asked students if they thought that their classmates would be interested in an honors program, in addition to AP and regular programs, they felt that it would be a positive addition. "It would ease the transition, and you wouldn't have to pay \$72 for the AP test." Honors classes would also offer an alternative for those who don't find regular classes

too rigorous. However, Prep may be too small for there to be enough interest in such a program. In all, while Prep students told me that they feel pressure to take AP classes, and that the two AP weeks are extremely stressful, they still expressed that they are not sorry for the AP classes they have taken, and plan to take. "I feel that [AP's] will help me in college no matter where I go." So, is all the stress and studying worth it? Different students have made the decision that's right for them. Obviously a lot of us can handle AP classes very well, as we consistently score well as a school. In the words of one junior, "In the end it helps to push yourself."



Riki Alcidi and Neeraj Kumar help out at the Magic Show

Community Service Magic Show Excelsior Update

by Julie Ann Miller

On Sunday, April 26, nine Rutgers Prep Students traveled to the South Brunswick Community Center to help out with a magic show and party for children with disabilities. Upon arrival, the Rutgers Prep volunteers helped set up mats for the children to sit on during the show and tables for the party afterwards. The children began arriving around 1:15pm and all set-up work changed to escorting children to the show area where

they would watch Corky and Daisey, the clowns in "Circus Frolics." Sitting with the children during the show and being their good friends was the most important reason for students being there. The magic show was a huge success, not only for the children but also for our RPS volunteers who could be seen laughing and joining in as well. All in all, it was a lot of fun and knowing that we could make the children happy brought smiles to our faces too.

Two Excelsior issues are coming out this Spring. One, a prose issue, is being released the day of commencement, and a second issue will be released the day of graduation. Also, three juniors were winners in the 1998 NJCTE Writing contest for grades 10-12. Abbey Winant earned second place in poetry, Heather Crossner won third place in prose non-fiction, and Sahil Khanna received an honorable mention for his script. The awards ceremony was held May 7th. *The Argo* would like to thank Babi Das and Katie Crisafulli for contributing the club updates.



School Council: Final Update

The newly elected members entered office with a full agenda awaiting them. Council has finished annual tasks such as distributing money to clubs for the coming year and selecting, through secret ballot, a recipient for the Sperduto Award, which is given to the senior who has done the most for the

school. The honoree will be announced at Commencement. On Friday, April 24, Council treated the entire upper school to ice cream sundaes, served outside on the patio, and made candy-filled "psyche" bags for all spring athletes. Council rounded things out with another successful Burger Blast on May 22.

Creative Arts

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ing the Prep bands and the drama department share the same facility, Holley Hall.

With the construction almost completed on campus, the prospect of an auditorium, another costly structure, seems to have disappeared. The original intent to build the facility was foiled by the fire department's discovery of unsafe parts of Elm Farm, which led to the creation of a new lower school wing. Then, with the retirement of Athletic Department Head Mr. O'Connell came the new gymnasium. Despite these expenses, which Mrs. Hunt recognizes as equally important to the Prep community, she credits Headmaster Dr. Loy with intensive fundraising efforts to make new creative arts facilities a reality. Mrs. Hunt revealed that plans for additional performing arts classrooms are in the works. In their current stage, the rooms are

still a project in the making. Yet advances, such as gaining approval from Franklin Township to build the facility behind the middle school and the presence of architects at the planning meeting, are drawing the project closer to construction.

As for the artists currently at Prep, well, they may never see an auditorium on campus or have the chance to perform on its newly waxed stage. They, like saxophonist Brent Carpenter, may have to shape their talent while moving from practice room to practice room, from Holley Hall to Baldwin Hall. But while Carpenter claims that the current facilities "limit the quality of our performances," there are plenty of people, students, parents, faculty, and administrators alike, who, after hearing Carpenter's smooth jazz solo or any of the other polished performances at the evening concert, would beg to differ.

The

Dougherty, Torres, Scully, and Goetz all in top form

by Jeremy Wang-Iverson

The athletes who become the best players on a team usually enter as freshman and make an immediate impact. Traditionally, future Prep stars spend a year or two honing their skills before emerging as a leader of his or her team. Among an incredibly strong freshmen class, there are four athletes who have wasted no time getting to the top. Kate Dougherty, Jose Torres, Adam Goetz and Megan Scully take advantage of their talent and work year round on their sport to achieve extraordinary results.

You don't hear anyone complaining about nepotism when Mr. Dougherty puts Kate on the mound as often as possible. Last year the Girls' Softball Team was 6-8, while this year, even after losing a number of starting seniors, they finished 12-6, one of the best seasons in recent years. Kate's pitching and hitting have had a tremendous effect on the team, and her high expectations for herself and team spirit make her a leader on and off the field. While helping as an individual force, her consistency can also give the team confidence. The team hadn't even competed with Morristown Beard in recent years and took a 5-1 deficit into the Prep fifth inning. Prep scored five runs to take a 6-5 lead, and Kate then struck out six of the next seven batters to preserve the lead. Her performance this year was recognized: she was the only freshman in the Prep division to be named to the first team All State softball team. She swam in the winter to build arm strength,



Council: Final Update

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The Freshman Phenoms:

Dougherty, Torres, Scully, and Goetz all in top form

by Jeremy Wang-Iverson

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Goetz, Dougherty, Torres and Scully: representing 9 varsity sports in total

and takes pitching lessons year round to insure constant improvement.

You could say that in sixth grade Jose Torres saw his burning bush. After watching Steffi Graf and Lori McNeil play a match point at Wimbledon, he knew he wanted to play tennis. He had played casually for two years; then he started working with a

then injured his back while leading 2-0 in the second set. He elected to play, and as a result of favoring his back faced with a 4-0 deficit in the third set. Jose buckled down and came back. The Wardlaw player had a match point, but lost it, and Jose pulled out the gritty win. There's no question he loves to play. In the fall, Jose asked Mr.

told Megan he had never been hit harder. She makes sure her presence is respected on the ice: "I was ejected from a game last week because I kicked the crap out of this one kid for giving me a hard time." She's fifth on her team in goals, third in hits, and her coach wishes he "had ten of her."

Although she is de-

fense). Debbie Gray, who has also seen her on the ice, gushes, "She plays with the intensity of a caged tiger, but she really has a big heart." Her talent has also landed her starting spots on the basketball and soccer teams.

"I once had this kid bite me," Adam Goetz confesses as one of the travails he faced in his 10 years of wrestling. Mr. Dougherty must have been counting the days until this freshmen hit the varsity mat and it was well worth the wait. His 28 wins shattered the freshmen record for wins (20), and his point total was seventh all time in Prep history for one season. During the fall he is one of the leaders of pack in cross country, and this spring he is baseball's best pitcher. Coach Santowasso, who also coaches wrestling, thinks he could become a better baseball player than wrestler. Behind his seven innings of shut-out work, Prep defeated Solomon Scheter in the first round of the State Tournament. Right now, his focus is on wrestling and he attends camps over the summer to improve his skills.

Interestingly, these athletes all have similar characteristics regarding their sport: a fierce competitiveness, self-imposed pressure, and a love of their game. All except Jose climbed the ranks through Prep's great farm system, the middle school, and should continue over the next three years to become the top players in the Prep B division. Hopefully, there will be fans to support them as they light up the competition and try to bring home state and county championships over the next three years. They're exciting to watch now; who knows what they'll be able to do with even more practice. With help from: the four athletes, their coaches, and Dr. Riley

Roving Reporter: Praise for the Freshman Phenoms

"He is the ultimate competitor. When he gets on the mat he has concentration like I've never seen. I aspire to be like him."
- Khanjan Nagarsheth, on Adam Goetz

"Whenever you think you have him, he comes up with yet another shot ... he is deceptive both with his shot selection and power. On top of that, he also introduced the team to Dominican dance ..."
- Ganesh Ramanarayanan, on Jose Torres

"She really picked up the team at crucial moments, and I know she's going to be a great leader in seasons to come."
- Heather Crossner, on Megan Scully

coach who helped him rapidly improve his game. Not only did he make his Prep debut at first singles, but he also won six matches, more than any Prep first singles player in recent years. With stamina developed through running cross country and his great technical skill, he consistently baffles opponents by returning many a shot they had assumed would be winners. His most spectacular performance came against Wardlaw-Hartidge. He easily won the first set, but

Ackerman if they could get some balls out of the shed so he could hit around. There wasn't a net up. Jose: "We can put one up." It was raining. Jose: "Hardly." It's a good thing he can play in the rain.

Megan Scully might look innocent and unassuming, but chances are you've never played hockey against her. This Olympic (yes, Olympic) hopeful plays on a boys team in Bridgewater and once hit an opponent so hard that after the game he

voted to hockey and will spend her summer in ultra-selective hockey programs at Lake Placid and Dartmouth, Prep fans can see her as her alter ego "Showtime", the center for the girls lacrosse team. Just starting the sport this spring, Coaches Zboray and Shifman rave about how fast she is learning, already controlling the face-offs like a veteran, and picking up 18 goals and 9 assists in only four games as an offensive player (she was previously on de-

Homophobia at Prep

by Amanda Rabinowitz

Looking at my November Argo, I read negative student responses to the MECA presentation, insisting that there is no tension in our school, and that there are more important issues that should be focused on. I both agree and disagree with these statements. Whereas the MECA presentation focused on race relations at Prep, I believe that the briefly mentioned problems of sexism and homophobia should have been more of a focus. But beyond that, I feel that a recent incident makes it difficult for anyone to honestly believe that there is no tension in our school. The issue that I would like to address is homophobia.

In our school there are approximately 240 students and not one of them is openly gay. The possibility that not one out of these 240 (in most cases) sexually mature individuals is homosexual is statistically ridiculous. This would lead one to wonder why potentially homosexual students would not feel comfortable "coming out" in the Prep environment. Any student who attends this school does not

have to wonder why. Perhaps the intimate size of the school and the "everybody knows everything about everybody" feel lend to this fact, but more than that, every student knows that any openly gay student would be brutally ridiculed and socially ostracized. But because there is no openly gay target towards which these merciless homophobes can unleash their wrath, they instead look to pick out the "most likely" homosexuals among their peers and ridicule and ostracize them.

I have yet to walk one day through the Rutgers Prep halls without hearing the insult "gay" or one of its colorful synonyms. The brand of homophobia that runs rampant in Rutgers Prep is vacant of shame. Most students will admit to their homophobia with pride. I suppose that hating gays is a sure way to assert your own heterosexuality. The truth is that approximately 10 percent of all sexually mature individuals are in fact homosexual. So if Prep students have had the "good fortune" to have never come across a homosexual as of yet, it is unlikely that this fortune will keep up.

by Lon Zimmet

When the new editor-in-chief of the Argo suggested that I stop writing articles that do nothing more than complain and insult people, I wanted to cry. "But there's so much more to bash," I pleaded. And besides, what could I possibly find to extract from this world that merits my praise? But alas, much to my chagrin (and surprise), I have found something.

I was looking forward to writing an article about the unavoidable failure of "The Gala," the brainchild of Senior class president Jeremy Wang-Iverson. I was all set to write about the naiveté of Mr. Wang-Iverson and how foolish it was to expect people to come to this little "dance." I suppose it would have been more fitting had I actually written that article before attending the Gala, for then I could go through a most symbolic ritual of tearing up the piece in front of Jeremy and swallowing the remains (in essence,

eating my words). However, we must all settle for an admission of my error and an apology. I am truly sorry for my hasty misjudgment, Jeremy, for the Gala was, in every sense of the word, a success.

With publicity that was nothing short of brilliant and promotion that would make Don King blush, Jeremy achieved something that I deemed impossible. He convinced people to attend a Rutgers Prep function, and he did it in style. While Prep staples such as the plays generally draw about 50 to 75 upper school students, The Gala managed to draw over 100 upper schoolers and about two dozen non-Preppers. I saw people that night who I assumed would eat glass before coming to any function even remotely associated with Rutgers Prep. Not only did they show up, but they stayed and shot pool with foreign language teachers and watched a teacher and pig consummate their love.

This wasn't a Prep af-

fair that only appealed to a certain minority of the population of Prep. People representing all of the diverse factions of Prep came to gym on Friday night, and, for at least those five hours, we were something more than a body of unconnected, uninterested entities. For at least those five hours, we were almost a community.

I don't know if the Gala was a financial success for any of the parties involved, but it doesn't even matter. The very fact that the Seniors, Juniors and Sophomores pulled this off at all is mind-boggling and commendable enough. This also discredits those members of School Council who maintain that they are not to blame for the mediocre school spirit; I no longer believe that it is the students who aren't trying hard enough. If you are reading this, Council, then perhaps you should consider inviting Jeremy to a couple of your meetings. Who knows, maybe you'll pick up a thing or two.

Eating My Words

The Year in Review

by Scott Vafai and Justin Auciello

As the departing editors-in-chief, Justin and I have mixed emotions. Though we are sad that we will no longer be able to take part in the creative process behind The Argo, we are happy to see a new staff take over and add new ideas to the paper. We would like to take this chance to look back on what we accomplished this year and to thank all of the people who helped us create each issue.

This year we tried to incorporate new ideas and new concepts into the paper. In addition to adding

more music and movie reviews, we tried to place more emphasis on surveys and their usefulness. We encourage future staffs to continue to administer and publish more surveys. We also look fondly on the double issues we were able to publish. However, if there is one important piece of advice we can leave for future staffs, it is that the quality of the issues is much more important than number of issue published.

After serving as editors-in-chief we realize, more than ever, that it is the staff that makes or breaks the paper. We would like to take this time to thank all of the editors, the Jeremies,

Ganesh, Tilak, Heather, and Julie Ann, and all of those people who wrote articles this year. In addition, we would like to thank Mr. Richardson and Ms. Ables for always being understanding when it came to time crunches and missed deadlines. We would also like to wish Heather the best of luck as the new editor-in-chief; we are confident that she will do an excellent job.

Although leading The Argo staff can be a very difficult and stressful job at times, we have to say that it was one of the more rewarding experiences of both of our high school careers.

THE ARGO

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