



THE ARGO

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The Keys to Success

An Analysis of Student Reactions

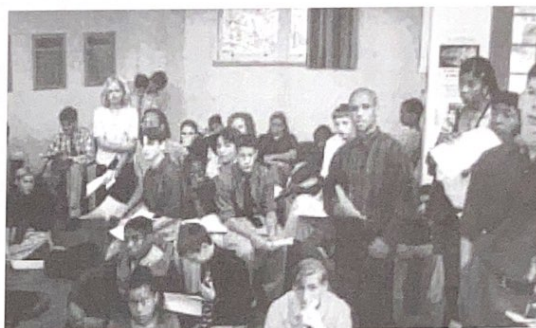
by Babi Das, with help from Lon Zimmer and Heather Crossner

The Speech

A member of the senior class at Rutgers Prep, whose name has been withheld due to requests from the administration, was asked to leave the school after having been caught breaking into academic offices at Prep on Tuesday, September 23rd. Headmaster Dr. Steven Loy addressed the student body on September 31st at morning assembly in a speech that lasted several minutes, openly explaining the reason for the student's absence. The headmaster's speech received mixed reviews from the student body. Most students spoke to the Argo on the condition of anonymity.

"It was a good speech, it made sense," commented one senior. "It is better that he made it, otherwise there would be rampant rumors. This way, he set everything straight." The majority of students appreciated the headmaster's openness in addressing the issue. Many noted that rumors at prep are ubiquitous and that the speech will help to suppress them.

Yet students also pointed to the lack of discretion used by Dr. Loy when naming the senior as the wrongdoer in front of the entire student body, many of whom may have remained ignorant of the incident had nothing been mentioned. A friend of



The Class of 2002

the student commented, "The speech was good in that it stopped rumors, but I don't think Dr. Loy should have used his name."

"In the future, the administration should handle these incidents with more discretion. The entire school does not need to know the details of an isolated incident," said one student who strongly believed that the headmaster's speech was a breach of privacy.

The Punishment

"In a case such as what just happened at Prep, I don't think the punishment should be as severe as removing a person from the school," said a current senior. "The administration should evaluate the student as an individual and look at the record. If this is the first disciplinary problem they have had that should be taken into consideration." Most students believed that the administration over-reacted by asking the senior to leave the school.

"He was a good kid. He was a good student, an athlete, and had a good record at the school," explains a close friend. She believed that these factors should have indicated to the administration that the student deserved a second chance.

Students interviewed for the Argo commented on the school's disciplinary policy. "I think the school's recent decision was too harsh in comparison to what they have done in the past," said one senior who cited a past incident at Prep. "[name omitted] broke someone's nose and popped a blood vessel in his eye. All he got was a three day suspension. I think physically harming people is a lot more serious than having a set of keys."

Contrastingly, there are students who believe that more serious action should be taken in cases such as attempted theft. "There are students whose worst crime seems to have been below average grades and a few dress code violations, and they were asked to leave the school," notes another senior who also is surprised at the school's course of action. Both students do agree



The Prep community cuts the ribbon to commend this special occasion.

Dedication Weekend

by Kristen Checchio

Perhaps the biggest physical change at Prep in recent years has been the construction of the new gym and media center. After a year of compromise and inconvenience, everyone's troubles were rewarded with the official opening of the new facilities on Saturday, September 26. The day started off in the new gym where the ceremony took place. Speeches were made and the ribbon was finally cut, not by one person, but by everyone present with all cutting their own little piece.

After the ceremony, a day of fun and sports and barbecues began. Every part of the Prep community was represented at the post-ceremony cel-

ebrations: there were teachers, administrators, parents, and students whose ages ranged from infant and pre-K-3 to seniors. Activities ranged from a moonwalk and a rock climb for little kids to varsity sports for middle and high school students.

One of the first games of the afternoon was a Varsity girls' soccer game against Timothy Christian. Prep ended up beating Timothy Christian 9-3 in front of a huge audience of fans, but not before tragedy struck. In the middle of the game, Timothy Christian's goalie sustained a serious injury which required an emergency ambulance to arrive and bring

her to Robert Wood Johnson hospital in New Brunswick. As junior Rachel Kendall described the events, the goalie was accidentally kicked in the head, but after lying on the field for awhile, was able to walk off the field with minimal assistance. Later, however, she experienced a severe headache and after passing out, an ambulance was called. Reports are that she may have a minor concussion.

People continued to tour the new buildings throughout the day and admired the new facilities. There was a barbecue outside the lower school by the gazebo, and the day ended in the mid-afternoon with the boys' soccer game. ■

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The Initiation Process

by Pamela Leslie Grutman

September 16 to September 18 were three days that this year's freshman class will always remember. Students formed bonds which were tested numerous times as the Class of 2002 was officially initiated into Rutgers Prep's Upper School on top of Wildcat Mountain. Students made friends, conquered fears, and shared stories.

Before leaving for Wildcat Mountain, many upper classmen tried to tell us horror stories of their experiences. While several of their stories were probably exaggerated, they managed to scare a good many of us, preparing us for the worst. Besides lack of plumbing, dirt, horrible food, and bears (which we did see), what did we have to fear? If you said rain, you were wrong. This must have been the first time it did not rain during the freshman camping trip. Another surprise was that an overwhelming majority of the freshman class enjoyed this trip immensely (except for the small complaint about no indoor plumbing).

The bonds that we formed came together through trust, as we put our well being into the hands of classmates we hardly knew. We found ourselves telling people we had only known for a few days things we thought we would never tell anyone. The freshman camping trip was an oppor-

tunity to see people completely removed from their habitat and surrounded by a new and challenging environment. Students act entirely different when they are camping than they do in school. For once, we were not ships passing in the night.

The initiation games taught us to depend on and listen to each other. The acronym TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More) took on a greater meaning because the team had to succeed for everyone to succeed. When guides gave disabilities to class members, the senses became even more important and trust became an even bigger factor, especially for those who became blind. Those of us who knew how to solve the problem were designated as mute and became very frustrated because sign language was not everyone's specialty. Working as a team without being able to communicate verbally was a huge challenge, but through teamwork, we were always able to solve the given problem.

Some of the most memorable times were when groups sat around campfires and told stories, both fact and fiction. Pink elephants, one fat chicken, a girl in a white prom dress on Clinton Road, a rock, chaos, murder, and mayhem were all topics of discussions. Other memorable moments



were the "trains," visitors in the tarps and long visits to the outdoor facilities.

On the third and final day, only one more challenge faced the class: to get all seventy-five students (minus the injured ones) over a fifteen-foot wall. This was a challenge that was easier said than done. Although there were many good ideas, it was hard work organizing everyone in such a large group. Luckily a few of us had voices loud enough to silence everyone, and through teamwork, we got the entire freshman class over the wall.

Thanks again to all those upperclassmen and their horror stories. Even though we had a fabulous time, you can be sure that we will give the Class of 2003 an even harder time than you gave us. ■

Responses to the Freshman Camping Trip

"An interesting experience that definitely challenged your mind and body." - Justine Seligman

"The camping trip was much better than I thought it would be." - Leigh Kermizian

"The camping trip was a great experience and I will remember it forever." - Annie Werbler

"Thank God it didn't rain." - Matt Kanach

"I heard some great jokes." - Seth Mittelman

"Every time I got up, I knew it wouldn't get any better 'til I went back to sleep." - Wizzer

The Senior Retreat

by Sahil Michael Khanna

This year, the senior retreat marked a new first for Rutgers Prep. To quote one faculty member's description of the purpose of the retreat, "It was a combination of college guidance and student bonding." The retreat was in many ways similar to the freshman camping trip, although it was specifically geared towards seniors and their concerns for college.

Like the freshman camping trip, the retreat was set in the woods of upstate New Jersey and included several activities designed to develop trust and confidence. Unlike the freshmen, we had cabins, beds to sleep on, and a cafeteria where we ate our meals.

Upon arriving at the lodge, the senior class was divided into homerooms and led through a variety of planned activities. These activities included a ropes course designed to foster teamwork and develop trust among the other members of the team. In addition to the outdoor activities, there were also college guidance sessions, planned to prepare the seniors for their ventures into the high pressure world of college applications and campus interviews. One such session was held by

Mr. Richardson, during which time students discussed criteria used in college selection. This was followed by a question and answer session with Gwynne Lynch, the associate director of admissions from the University of Pennsylvania. The questions ranged from very specific to relatively general concerns that the seniors had about the policies of universities. The session was extremely informative and provided valuable insight into what college admissions officers look for in students, and equally important, allowed the seniors to see that there were real people making decisions about their futures.

The retreat was not all work and no play. Time was allotted to enjoy the natural beauty of the area by taking a trip to the nearby lakeside park. And for a change of pace, a dance was held in which nearly the whole senior class participated.

This was the first senior retreat in Prep history. Prep for the first time provided an opportunity for the entire senior class to get to know each other better and to fraternize outside of the usually stressful environment of school. ■



Responses to the Senior Retreat

"Seriously, I liked it. The activities were boring, the ropes course wasn't high, but I still had a lot of fun." - Assad Mian

"Because of the relaxed atmosphere at the Senior Retreat, I was able to become better friends with a lot of people whom I do not usually get a chance to talk to throughout the school year." - Jaydalia Jones

"Despite the fact that we all bonded, there was this underlying sense that we were all getting sick of each other." - Lon Zimmer

"I know the purpose of the retreat was to bond, but we already knew who we were friends with and it wasn't worth it to make us go out in the middle of nowhere when we could've done the college stuff here at school." - Minesh Patel

Ellis Island Trip

by Jose Torres

On September 17, the junior and sophomore classes, the only student groups left in the school, took a trip to Ellis Island, where they got a taste of the past as well as of the present.

After an exhaustingly long bus ride, both classes arrived at what seemed to be a non-working train station where we wandered for a few minutes through the souvenir and food shops scattered around the vicinity. From here, we were also able to catch a glimpse of Ellis Island across the New York Bay waters.

Minutes later the boat arrived, and we were on our



Gina Tarlton and Andrew Venezia relax on the ferry headed to Ellis Island

way to Ellis Island. It was one sight or odor that would never be forgotten. Once arrived on Ellis Island, we entered an obviously renovated structure where we could view an array

of displays. At one such display, the voices of those who directly experienced the migrations could be heard. At another, the last names of those who made contributions to Ellis Island

could be viewed. At still another, the populations of different racial groups were recorded according to their native geographical locations.

There were also more

food and souvenir shops which featured over-priced items; and although the food and souvenirs were great, what was truly memorable was the play at the theater. This play was basically about four women telling of their experiences as they came to Ellis Island. The play was brief, but its message was certainly received—conveying the hardships and the discriminations endured by those of low social status as they tried to get into this country.

Although there were some negative aspects to this trip, the positive ones should not be ignored. We were able to get a glimpse of the past and a look at the foundations of our great nation. The trip was truly a memorable one. ■

The Keys To Success

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that the school seems to have an inconsistent policy of disciplinary action which fails to distinguish between different levels of wrong-doing, a thought echoed by several others.

The Keys

Despite surprise among many students over the events that have taken place, those who spoke on a condition of anonymity revealed that several sets of keys to the school and its academic offices have been circulating among upperclassmen for the past year. Last year, a member of the class of 1998 stole a set of keys from a former teacher at Prep. Several copies of keys were made - six according to one source - and distributed to other members of last year's senior class. These keys were used throughout the year to steal several tests and final exams, including chemistry and pre-calculus.

"Chem exams were kept quiet," revealed a current junior. "[The thefts] were going on from about right after the midterm. But the exams didn't start getting well known and widely used until the end of the year."

Several current seniors casually bragged about being offered access to those keys at the end of last year. "You know, I could have gotten one of those," a senior casually remarked during a discussion of Dr. Loy's address to the student body. "Someone was looking for somebody to sell [keys] to," he explained, referring to a member of the class of 1998. "He asked me, but I figured I

would have never had the balls to use it anyway."

The keys were being sold for prices ranging anywhere from five to 300 dollars, various sources say. At least four other seniors claim to have been offered a set of keys; at least two claim to have a set in their possession.

Academic Honesty

In a school that prides itself on nurturing a close knit community and academic integrity, the theft of exams is not an issue to be taken lightly. At least that is what one would think. The idea of exams becoming "well-known and widely used" throughout the student body is certainly an alarming thought for many teachers. Yet many students, specifically upperclassmen, appear to be unfazed by the theft of exams.

"I don't think there is much the school can do. Sure, it's not fair, but stuff like this is going to happen whether you like it or not," said one senior. Many upperclassmen know a student who had access to stolen keys or had a copy of an exam. While students do have to sign an academic honesty agreement at the beginning of each school year, Prep does not have an honor code that requires students to inform the school if they have knowledge of academic dishonesty. Schools with an honor code discipline a student who has committed the dishonest act as well as those who had knowledge of it. If Prep did have such a code, some suggest

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Seniors work together and climb The Wall

Peer Leadership

by David Rosentraus

Almost everyone in the school has been in the peer leadership program as freshmen, but many people do not know about the work that the seniors put into being peer leaders.

Even before school started this year, peer leaders went on a peer leadership retreat at Aldersgate New Jersey. The retreat's main purpose was to allow the peer leaders to get to know each other better and to pick the co-leaders who they would be working with for the rest of the year. In years past, the co-leader selection has gone roughly because of refreshingly honest comments, but this year the process went smoothly with few arguments. At the retreat, the peer leaders cooked their

own meals, a new experience for some, and went through a ropes course, which was harder than it looked.

As some might not know, the peer leaders have a class everyday taught by Mr Kaufman. The class is used to teach the peer leaders leadership skills they need in order to conduct discussions with freshmen groups. One of the projects is to have co-leaders lead the class to practice for the real thing; the peer leaders can then see what skills they have and what they might do differently for next time. One class activity was to decide what items were the most important if the group was lost in the desert, which led to a debate ending with the loudest

people's solutions as the chosen answers. The peer leaders learned that as important as it is to be a good leader, sometimes listening is the most important skill in a situation.

So far the class has been progressing well. The only meeting with the freshmen that has taken place so far was a successful game of human bingo which had some freshmen doing the macarena and singing the theme song to Gilligan's Island. Hopefully, the individual groups will go just as well. To all the juniors considering the course next year, peer leadership is a class that helps you not only learn more about yourself, but learn a lot about others as well. ■

Faculty Reactions to "Keys to Success"

Keys to Success: A Matter of Partnership

by Dr. Steven Loy

My heart sank when I read "Keys to Success." I felt a diminished sense of community and a hollow space creeping toward the core of our school.

I assume that Rutgers Prep, like most social institutions, has random keys floating around. The response to floating keys could be monetary. We could spend our money to replace locks, but is there any guarantee that within a few weeks or months a new set of floating keys would not be making their appearance? Replacing locks is a futile effort if the desire to steal and cheat remains. Rather than spending money on new locks, I believe our response must be to reaffirm what is important to us.

If we are to stand for anything of significance to our current students, our faculty, our parents, our alumni, our new applicants and even to the colleges to whom we apply, we must be honest. Our community is based upon a partnership and upon trust. There is more than an expectation that all of us will act honestly, there is an obligation that we will act honestly. We place the highest priority on academic integrity because without it, the entire enterprise of learning is compromised.

The faculty has fo-

cused on assessment alternatives so that different learning styles could be supported. As a faculty we have accepted the challenge to catch students doing things correctly and to acknowledge this success. In return, we seek to work with students to celebrate their accomplishments and to assist them with their difficulties. If the feedback we receive on tests,

Replacing locks is a futile effort if the desire to steal and cheat remains.

quizzes, papers and projects is not honest, then we are restricted in the type of help we can provide. And the result is that a most powerful partnership is lost.

Trust, once it is lost, is very difficult to regain because it reveals the priorities of an individual and of a community. While my heart sank when I read "Keys to Success," I did not lose trust in the people who are Rutgers Prep. I would argue that keys to success are not ones which let you in a locked door. Keys to success such as trust and partnership, allow you to know in your heart that you have done the right thing. ■

A Community Based on Trust

by Richard J. Karman

Recent events, which led to a student's being separated from the Rutgers Prep community, have raised issues that many people find uncomfortable, and I'd like to address some of them.

While I do not know how much of the student body is represented in the opinions expressed in the Argo, that is not the important issue. People on campus with these views deserve to have them addressed seriously.

Having worked in a number of schools since the late 1960s, I am not surprised that students have keys to various parts of the campus. Every school where I have worked, and most schools where colleagues have taught, have had a "key issue." In most cases faculty members have loaned keys to students, trusting they will be returned in a timely manner, and in almost every case the students have kept that trust. Unfortunately, it is sometimes the case that trust is abused, and we need to be alert to that happening. Is that cause to distrust students generally? No, and I would not like to see our atmosphere poisoned by suspicion.

Does it follow logically that students who most certainly have keys are engaged in stealing material to improve their academic record? Clearly

at least one was, and the implication from the student opinion article is that many others are engaged in that kind of activity as well. My crystal ball is out of service, but there are several indicators that lead me to believe that if students have keys, they are not engaged in wholesale stealing of important material.

The first indicator has to do with the lack of student protest over the School's handling of the student found with the keys. Students have a clear sense of fairness, and if one of them is perceived as being singled out for punishment when many others are engaged in the same activity, they will nearly always let the adults in a community know. Second, students who are being placed at a disadvantage because of the activity of others will not directly "rat" on a fellow student, but they will alert teachers to the problem. We have had no warning signals from students about this at all. Finally, the article stated that stolen Chemistry exams were used widely during the second half of the year. Logically one would expect an impact on grades.

I have looked carefully at the chemistry grades from the first and second semesters, and in virtually every case where student work improved second semester, it was a progression that one would expect. The av-

erage improvement was just over a half grade. Alternately, a number of students performed at a lower level during the second semester, losing about one-third of a point on average.

This is a community based on trust and respect. Adults need to be alert to potential problems and to evaluate student work in a wide variety of ways. A student whose daily work cannot match within reason his or her performance on tests and exams may need to meet with the teacher. A student whose work done at home is significantly better than that done in class may likewise raise questions. However, in neither case need there be an assumption of wrong doing, and a thoughtful teacher can probe carefully to reach an informed conclusion.

While teachers need to be aware and concerned, we also must expect that students will be alert and express their concerns as they arise. Academic honesty needs to be supported by all parts of the community. Creating an atmosphere of mistrust and challenging students to overcome newly created security measures would send the wrong message to our students and to those who will follow. A few people may let us down, but most people go beyond what we think they can do to support the community. ■

Letter to the Editor: Ralph Avella

When Dr. Loy and Mr. Karman explained the incident of a student stealing keys and exams my reaction was one of sadness and hurt. I was sad that a student I enjoyed teaching and talking to would not be able to complete his senior year at Prep. I was hurt that the trust we as members of the Prep community work so hard to build was undermined.

My mind raced to the hundreds of times I had loaned my keys for a student to make a photocopy or a phone call or to get something out of my room. Do I now have to worry about handing my keys to a student? That they might make copies? I hope not, but what happens the next time a student asks for my keys? Do I say, no, I will open

the door for you? If that happens then I have lost trust. Does one student's poor decision mean that all people are to be mistrusted? No, but the doubts will remain.

Throughout life we are faced with choices, sometimes we make the right ones, sometimes the wrong ones. This student made a wrong decision, one that he and the rest of the community must live with.

What price do we pay for trust? If we fail a test or an exam, yes it does hurt our grades or our chances to get into the college of our choice. However, a poor grade can be improved, but what can I do, what can I say, how long does it take to earn back trust? ■

Letter to the Editor: David Mazza

I have stayed at Rutgers Prep for 25 years because I like it here. I like it because of the people. I often brag to others about our students. The Argo article "The Keys to Success" caused me considerable distress because some of the students quoted made me doubt the picture I had in my mind of RPS students.

I have some serious questions for the community of students. Are most of you really "...unfazed by the theft of exams."? I am very fazed. I do not respect thieves and cheats. I want people to respect me and my work. I want to earn that respect honestly. I thought most of you agreed with me. Am I wrong?

According to the article, "Many upperclassmen know a student who had access to stolen keys or who had a copy of an exam." If you knew, you should have done something about it. If you didn't, then you assented to the thiev-

ery and invasion of privacy that resulted. Once you know, you do have a part in it. You agreed to allow it to happen by your inaction. If a car in the Prep parking lot was being burglarized, would you just ignore it? Do you see some sort of line between these two behaviors

Bad things don't just happen... they happen because many other people don't speak up and they let them happen.

that makes one acceptable and the other unacceptable? Bad things don't just happen because of bad people, they happen because many other people don't speak up and they let them happen.

My office at school is a home away from home. I have

many school items here but I also have personal things. I used to believe that these things were relatively secure in a locked office but now that is not true. I find it hard to believe that things had changed and students don't care. Is this true?

I have always tried to see this school as a community that included both students and faculty. If we care about each other, then the loss of trust between students and faculty should affect both groups. If I must accept a new atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion, then I will feel a terrible loss. I'm not ready to accept this loss. I'm waiting to hear from others in the student body. I believe it is not enough to avoid participating in the wrong activities, but we also have a responsibility to oppose what is wrong. The Argo article made me wonder how many students agree with me.

I'm listening. ■

Students' Reactions to "Keys to Success"

Not Our Fault

by a member of the class of 1998

The recent events at Rutgers Prep are unfortunate, but the article on this issue does not represent the true problems with the current situation. As an alumni of Prep I am just as upset at this incident as the rest of our community, but I am not shocked or surprised. Nor should anyone who knows Prep.

First and foremost the article seems to unfairly blame the members of the class of 1998 and I am writing to defend my class. I cannot claim to have had no knowledge of what was going on. It is true that copies of keys existed and that members of the school had them or had direct access to them. But the purpose of the key was not to break in to school, it was more of a "status symbol." "Legacy keys" are nothing new to American high schools (for those of you who remember that 90210 episode), and it should not come as any surprise to the administration at Prep that these keys exist here. We were not the first class nor are we likely to be the last class to have the key. In fact, this is not the first time a student has been found to be in possession of such a key. In the past two years, keys have been found in the possession of currently enrolled students. While I understand that in this situation someone was found to have used the key to gain access to the building, the fact remains that the administration knew the possibility was out there.

I suppose this would lead to the question of trust. While I wish the conscience of all students would tell them not to steal, even when presented with the opportunity, I know that is not the case, and so does the school. Every year in mid-January and early June Mr. Karman closes the copy rooms to students, even those students with legitimate reasons for needing to make a copy. The reason: to prevent students from being put in the awkward situation of being near "sensitive material." In other words, it is not fair for a faculty member to allow the student to go into the

copy room and be subject to seeing exam material. Although the teacher trusts the student, when given the chance even the most honest person in the world may be tempted to sneak a peek.

So rather than pass the blame to former members of the community, maybe members of the current community should look at each other to find an answer. It was far too easy for students to cheat while I was a student at Prep, and I doubt much has changed in one year. Teachers use tests from previous years, they give the same exam twice in a day without even changing the order of the ques-

It was far too easy for a student to cheat while I was a student at Prep.

tions, they leave exams lying around before and after the test, and they are indifferent to what is going on in the room during a test. While it is still wrong for a student to take advantage of such a situation, it is just like the copy room. By not taking combative measures against cheating the teachers make it too easy to cheat. It would not be the hardest thing in the world to make a different exam from year to year, or at least from period to period. If students knew that there wasn't a filing cabinet full of already-made exams sitting in each classroom there would be no need for the legacy key to even exist. I am not claiming that the individual student is free of all blame. In fact, it is ultimately his or her choice to cheat. However, the situation could be made easier for everyone involved if the teachers followed the lead of the administration and took notice of potential situations instead of assuming that the students won't cheat.

Getting back to the present situation, I am not about to say that I was unaware of what was going on at Prep. Despite signing the honesty pledges every September, I

knew that I would probably cheat at some point during the year. Whether it was getting questions from an earlier section of the same class or "stretching" our necks during a multiple choice test, we all cheated. And for those who claim that they never took part in these activities, they cannot claim that they never witnessed them. Last year the Argo editors conducted a survey among the students at Prep. While only 50% admitted to cheating, an astounding 95% said they would not turn anyone in for cheating. This should have been a sign. Yet it seems that now that someone has been caught (I mean beyond "wandering eyes") the administration is acting shocked and surprised.

In response to the recent events a member of the class of '99 has been asked to leave the school, but what is relevant now is how the school will respond outside of the disciplinary sphere. There is no need to conduct an interrogation of our class. The school had already contacted a member of my class who is away at college. It seems unfair to me that we should have to worry about what is going on at Prep while we are in the middle of a very tough time as freshmen in college. Especially since we are not the source of the problem. Think about it. When Prep questions the members of the current class, of course they will mention the names of students who had just graduated. Can you really expect someone from the class of '99 to know who was cheating in the class of '91? No. Nor can you justify calling a member of the class of 1970 and asking him explain a rumor that he cheated on his chemistry final as a junior in high school. It is absurd.

I understand how important it is to Prep to keep a clean image. Besides being a school, Prep is a business. People choose to come to Prep. When a prospective family is looking to send its children to a private school there are many fine institutions in the central New Jersey area. While this incident looks bad for Prep, a full fledged investigation into the 233 year history would probably turn up enough dirt that Prep would lose a lot of that respect that comes with being a "Blue Ribbon School," as is so proudly displayed throughout campus. It would be best for Prep to look at this incident as a low point in school history; then move on and try to prevent these things from continuing to happen in the future. The key here is that Prep should look to the future not to the past, whether it is one year back or 200 years. Remember, we are "building tomorrow." ■

Forum on November 12

There will be a forum on the evening of November 12 in the Upper School to discuss the issues brought up in this paper.

Further information will be included in all school mailings.

Everyone is invited to come.

Can We Really Make Mistakes?

by Jessica Dallas

Can we really make mistakes? From the time we are young we are taught that it is all right to make mistakes. Is that true or were we lied to by our parents and teachers?

Recently a fellow student was forced to withdraw from our "community." He was an honor role student, captain of two teams, and a peer leader. He was the kind of student that RPS looks for when enrolling students. He, like everyone else in the world, made a mistake. It was the kind of mistake that changes a life. Not only was his life forever altered, but also the lives of the people around him. One could say that his punishment was too harsh and others

could say that it was not harsh enough. At any rate, there were other options available. He could have had his privileges taken away for the year, or been required to serve extra community service hours or Saturday detentions. Any or all of these punishments would have sufficed. So why was he forced to leave? Did they make an example out of him? Were they just looking to blame someone because they could not find all parties involved. I'm not really sure, but I know that people make mistakes, some worse than others. Does someone learn from them even when not given the chance? ■

Crime and Punishment

by Lon Zimmet

Two years ago after his sophomore year, a student was "asked not to come back," a term which at first glance seems like nothing more than a euphemism for being expelled. His only crimes were receiving demerits for dress code and a GPA which, although low, was not anywhere near failing.

A senior this year was "asked not to come back," a term which I now know is nothing like a euphemism for being expelled. His only crime was breaking into the school after hours to steal some tests with a master key.

Few, if any, people at Prep will say that they have anything against this senior. He was a nice guy, a good athlete, and an honor roll student (although, commending him for his grades now is analogous to applauding an athlete on steroids for his gold medal.) Teachers liked him, and he has received few detentions in his three years here.

Only a handful of people maintain that his fate was warranted, while even less say

that his punishment was a gift. Most students, especially seniors, assert that he got screwed; he was used as a scapegoat, an example to scare the rest of us. Apparently, he didn't deserve his fate because he was a great guy. I suppose that before you read my next statement, you should know that I had nothing against him. I didn't know him at all.

He absolutely did not get what he deserved.

He did not deserve the same fate as the student who left two years ago. The senior broke into school, broke the honor code, and committed a felony. The school let him off easy.

I am not going to say, however, that the administration should have done something more. It did what it had to do. The school, in fact, was gracious about the topic and courteous toward him, despite the general consensus. The administration did everything in its power to protect him after the fact. ■

The Argo wants to Know What You Think

If you have a reaction to any of the issues brought up in this issue of *The Argo*, please contact an editor.

Look for a possible email address and/or mailbox for submissions to future issues in the Upper School.

The opinions expressed in this issue are not necessarily those of *The Argo*.

Club News

by Lauren Michaels

Like virtually every other student at Prep, I look forward to Activity Period. It's a chance to just hang out and forget about the stresses of academics. However, joining a club can be an equally enjoyable experience. Because there wasn't a Club Fair this year, many of us were denied the opportunity to find out about the many clubs offered this year. So here it is, your handy guide to Prep Clubs:

Bicycling Club

This new club's advisor is Ms. Berrien. According to her, students will be doing mostly "touring" (streets), but if there is enough interest the club may try some mountain biking. Because there is not enough time after school, the club will most likely have rides on Saturdays or Sundays.

Dance Club

The Dance Club is another of the many new clubs at Prep. Started by Jaydalia Jones, its main purpose is to "...give students an opportunity to get to know each other in a more relaxed atmosphere and to just have fun." Students will have a chance to demonstrate their talents for peers. The goal of this club is to learn about different cultures through various dances, including reggae, Spanish, Indian, and hip-hop. Participants of all skill levels are invited.

Drama Board

The Drama board is a group of students who figures out the nitty-gritty details regarding the Play. Contrary to popular belief, you do not have to act to be on the Drama Board. It always welcomes new members and fresh ideas.

Excelsior

Excelsior is the school's literary magazine. The theme of the fall issue is Sleep and the Unconscious. Excelsior accepts submissions in poetry, prose, art, photography, etc and submissions can be put into the Excelsior box in the office. All submissions are discussed in

meetings, with a written feedback provided for the author. Everyone is invited to meetings, which are held most activity periods.

Forensics

This club deals with public speaking in all its forms. Club members compete in the performance of skits, debates, poetry, etc. Mrs. Hoffman is the advisor.

Juggling Club

Mr. Lamara, rumored ex-clown, has been happy to showcase his talents for anyone who asks. The newly found juggling club is a chance for students to improve or showcase their juggling skills. Hopefully, the club will perform at an upcoming Disabled Children's Carnival.

Key Club

The Key club is a great way to not only have fun but get community service as well. This club runs open houses and helps show potential students around.

MECA

MECA is a club whose goal is to educate and make others aware of different cultures. This year it is teaming up with SADD on a few projects including a sleep-over. The club is also planning a fund-raiser for a Mexican school.

SADD

SADD, which stands for Students Against Dangerous Decisions, has different focuses each month. This month's focuses include Teen Suicide, AIDS, and Breast Cancer Awareness.

School Council

School council is planning a lot of exciting things, including Career Day on November 11. The Great Adventure Fright Night trip, a success last year, has also been planned. There will be a Spirit Day coming soon to psych up our Fall athletes and a Forum to discuss issues directly affecting the school community. Another possible activity is a council Dating Service. ■



The Man Behind the Sculptures

by Dan Meagher

Recently, along with the grand opening of the new facilities, several sculptures were put on display throughout the campus. These sculptures portrayed a baseball player, a small band, a red, white and blue figure holding an American flag, and a group of lizards.

Many people at Prep, however, do not know the remarkable life story of the man behind these sculptures, Tihamer Binner. Mr. Binner grew up in Hungary, and as a small boy, showed incredible ingenuity in science and tech-

nology. For example, he devised a three-way light bulb a decade and a half before first seeing it in America. In 1967, Mr. Binner and his wife made a daring escape to America, via Yugoslavia and Italy, at one point running across an open field to escape danger. When making sculptures, Mr. Binner uses many recycled materials and PVC, since PVC is "flexible, durable, and easy to repair." His sculptures have been shown in many art studios, and have been on television a couple of times as well. Mr. Binner also works on re-

modeling homes, including his own, to be more energy efficient by installing solar powered panels.

This is a man who has clearly done many things with his life; he has been an inventor, engineer, and an artist, among other things. So what are the goals of a man who has accomplished so much with his life? "I hope to one day have my art be shown on national television." A goal that is not by any means outrageous when considering the man who aspires to it. ■



Dodge Poetry Festival

by Sean Cannon

On Thursday September 24, sixteen Prep students experienced the privilege of going to the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival in Stanhope, New Jersey. Mr. Kendall and Mrs. Herzberg took students who had written a few paragraphs explaining why they wanted to attend.

The festival involved at least 1000 eager students from as far away as Pennsylvania, who participated side by side with Prep students. The festival was set up around Waterloo Village, combining actual colonial buildings with massive tents situated around the large area. One could easily get lost

by taking a wrong turn and heading up a serene nature trail. The general atmosphere was tranquil, motivating many students to sit out on the fertile grass and compose new poems.

The opening events began at the Concert Tent, which was the largest facility. Poets Lucille Clifton, Mark Doty (The country's poet laureate), and Robert Pinsky read poems, followed by performances by Jesse Bruchac, Yass Hakoshima (who did a mime act) and a traditional Meso-American band known as Yanna. This event was broadcast live on national television. Later in the day, winners from

the New Jersey High School Poetry Contest read their poems in the Concert Tent.

Beyond the Concert Tent, there were over twenty poets who students could visit at various places around the village, and in the afternoon, three different poetry groups opened. Students were arranged in a circle and whenever people wanted to read a poem they had written, they stood up in the center of the group and read. Students from different schools, from a wide spectrum of races, read poems that were as varied as the students who wrote them, some deep, some hilarious.

By the end of the day, everyone was exhausted, but it had been a productive day. ■

Election Results

Senior class officers:

representatives: Amanda Rabinowitz
Katie Crisafulli
secretary: Nakul Rao
treasurer: Carol Lu
vice president: Maura Pritchard
president: Kevin Mallon

Junior class officers:

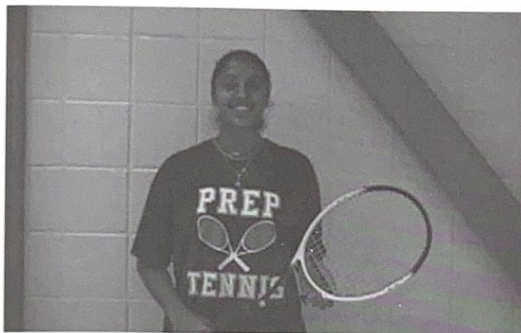
representatives: Fred Kim
Ari Harkov
secretary: Francine Hyman
treasurer: Ross Albert
vice president: Shaunessy Lockett
president: Alison Prince

Sophomore class officers:

representatives: Jason Dalal
Dan Meagher
secretary: Marissa Karl
treasurer: Abeeb Hossain
vice president: Kunal Kapur
president: Brent Carpentier

Freshman class officers:

representatives: Aaron Chahal
Pamela Gruttman
secretary: Julie Sheinan
treasurer: Wamique Chowdhury
vice president: Annie Werbler
president: Justine Seligman



Tennis Team off to a Good Start

by Deepti Anbarasan

This year's Girls Tennis Team started out its season with a positive attitude. Fortunately, with a 2-2 record, the team is still maintaining this spirit and has already achieved unprecedented goals. Although the tennis team lost their first game against Peddie, they put up a good fight until the end of the match, showing their dedication. They were soon able to prove this at the Wardlaw-Hartridge tournament.

Last year, the Prep team placed third out of the four teams that participated. This year's varsity fared much better, bringing home the championship trophy. Junior Hanny Studer and senior Kim Brown

won second doubles while sophomore Daniella Accurso and senior Jessica Belser took first doubles. Sophomores Megha Rao, Mallika Tarka, and Deepti Anbarasan provided Prep with a clean sweep of the singles matches.

On Saturday, September 26, at the Somerset County tournament, singles player Megha Rao and first doubles team Daniella Accurso and Jessica Belser reached the semifinal round of the tournament, a remarkable accomplishment considering that no player on this team had ever won in Counties previously. On October 3, Megha won the semifinals and placed second in the finals. ■

More Than Just A Win

by Ari Harkov

On Saturday, September 26, 1998, the varsity boys' soccer team won a vital game against Lakewood Prep on the day of the new building dedication. The team had suffered some early season losses and were winless, but believed that they could turn their season around that day.

Everything went right for the first twenty minutes while the Prep team was virtually unstoppable. A team that had barely scored all season opened the game with two early goals. Unfortunately, what seemed like the start of a rout was not to be, as the Prep team slowed down and reverted to its lackadaisical play. Lakewood came back to score two successive goals and tie the game at two apiece going into half-time. But Prep opened the second half with the same determination and intensity with which it had opened the game. Prep attacked and took a one goal lead. At that point the flow of the game began to slow as the referees took center stage for the remainder of the contest. The referees made frequent calls, constantly stopping play

and restraining any hope of rhythm in the game.

The game of September 26 was more than just a win in goals scored. The Prep Varsity Soccer Team presented the school community with a mature, committed team that showed sportsmanship and integrity, and everyone looks forward to success in games to come. ■

Home Games of the Fall Sports

Girls Soccer

10/17 Wardlaw Hartridge
10/23 Gill St. Bernard's
10/26 Lacordaire Academy

Cross Country

10/16 Bound Brook/
Lakewood
10/21 Ranney/Penn/
Lakewood/
Solomon Schecter
10/27 Morristown Beard

Girls Tennis

10/17 Wardlaw Hartridge
10/21 Blair Academy
10/23 Lakewood Prep
10/26 Pennington Prep
10/28 Bound Brook

Boys Soccer

10/15 Solomon Schecter
10/17 Wardlaw Hartridge
10/28 Pennington Prep

Cross Country

by Shrooti Singh

Last year's girls Cross Country team walked away from the season with a State Championship trophy in hand, with three girls becoming All-State athletes. The boy's team came in a close second place to Gill Saint Bernards.

This year, the Cross Country team hopes to win the State Championships in both girls and boys competitions, even while losing some key runners. Under the training of Coach Bob Dougherty and new Coach Lamb, the team is sure to be in good shape for States. This year's captains, Emily Wilson and Kelly McWilliams,

hope to lead the team through a successful season.

The first meet demonstrated the team's strength. At the Newark Academy invitational both the girl's team and boy's team came in second place to two Prep A Division teams. In girls, junior Emily Wilson, came in eighth place. In boys, sophomore Adam Goetz came in fourth place, senior Jarrett Sutton came in fifth place, and junior Dan Markus came in sixth place. Prep later won meets against the Princeton Day School and Saddle River. Overall, the season looks to be successful. ■

Student Spotlight: Megha Rao

by Minesh Patel and Heather Crossner

Congratulations to Megha! Varsity Tennis Player Megha Rao placed second in County Finals, the first time a Prep player as done so since Mr. Ackerman has been the Varsity Girls Tennis Coach.

Megha began playing when she was eleven years old. She had wanted to play before then, but her father would not let her begin until the age when Nikki, her brother, began

to play. Megha says that there are many people she looks to for inspiration, including her older brother. When they play tennis together, Nikki's remarks about her play often get her mad and inspire her to play better.

Megha also looks up to Jose Torres, who she says is an excellent player who never gives up on a ball and returns shots other people would not have even reached. Megha also looks

up to many professional tennis players and often watches them on television.

Two years ago, Megha played on a Junior Olympics team and helped her to win the gold medal. Her parents have always supported her tennis, but Megha has no plans to make it a professional career. She does say, however, that she will probably continue to play in college.



Girls Soccer

by Alyssa Botwinik and Jill Nudelman

The girls soccer team, coached by Walt Nichols, Jody McCoy, and Matt Feliz, looks forward to a prominent season. With returning starters Alyssa Botwinik, Jill Nudelman, Beth Germinsky, Sara Preschel, Vanessa Abreu, Rachel Kendall, Megan Scully, Kristen Carlo and Erin McKay-McElroy, the team has remained strong and the skill level will continue to improve as the season unfolds.

The incoming freshmen, sophomores, and even juniors enabled the team to prevail over one of its biggest foes, Morristown Beard. Freshmen Jessica Wilson and Selma Studer helped lift the team to

victory over Purnell and Timothy Christian, each scoring her first varsity goal. The girls showed great intensity and heart in the Morristown Beard game. This, by far, was one of their greatest wins of the young season. Seniors Beth Germinsky and Jill Nudelman tied the game, scoring off of corner kicks. With three minutes remaining, senior Alyssa Botwinik added the winning goal on a penalty kick to spur the Prepsters on to a 3-2 victory. This team looks to be one of the top competitors in the Prep B division. Based upon the team's performance so far, the state finals are an attainable goal. ■

Give me Sean Cannon or Give me Death

by Andrew Venezia

The *Argo* staff members are open to any suggestions concerning possible articles, surveys, or other features. If you are interested in contributing to *The Argo*, please contact one of the editors.