



The Argo

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Cross-Country Tramples the Competition

by Mark Markowski

The cross-country team has just completed their most successful year in an extremely long period of time. From the onset of the season, over twenty new prospects showed up for practice during the summer. After many hours of running hills and what seemed to be thousands of miles of endless terrain, the top seven varsity runners stood out from the pack. Led by seniors Scott Yelity, Simon Messing, and Josh Rosen, the team established early on that they were going to be a force to be reckoned with. Jarett Sutton, Gavin Riley, and Dan Chelel helped form a solid nucleus of an athletic team.

The girls were led by Liz Alexander and Jackie Sienkiewicz. Aisha Griffith and Emily Wilson also made their presence felt on the varsity level. Both the guys

and the girls trampled the rest of the Prep A and Prep B teams with relative ease. Both Prep teams breezed through conferences with a landslide victory and kept their eyes focused on the State meet at Blair.

By the time the state tournament rolled around, both teams were physically and mentally prepared for a challenge. At the end of the day, Prep cross-country had swept both the conference championships and also the state championships.

Coach Dougherty and Coach Goldman have done a tremendous job with all the runners of the team. Although many seniors will be leaving, the future of the cross-country program will remain strong and very competitive.

MERCY!

by Denis "no Vince Lombardi" Tsesarenko

Another Senior-Faculty Football Game, another overwhelming victory for the faculty, and another embarrassing defeat for the Seniors. However, this year's lopsided score of 35-0 really does not tell the whole story and this deep-rooted and historic grudge match. The Senior's below average and frankly heinous play did contain a few bright spots.

Josh Rosen emerged as the game's MVP and earned himself a new nickname, "Rudy." Josh's unprecedented feat of 14 catches for 329 yards is even more impressive considering that he played in dress code and overcame an excruciating pinkie injury. Many spectators on the sidelines commented that his play was reminiscent of Lynn Swann. Sam Hartman and Keith Forney split the quarterback duty and even though Keith showed his

versatility, they achieved little success. Continually they were baffled by the faculty's different defense packages and looked as confused as New York Jet coach, Rich Kotite. Mark Markowski attempted to play center, but after twenty minutes his snaps still did not reach the quarterback.

Scott Fleisher, Prep's version of Deon Sanders, was the Senior's lone spark on defense, covering the field like a hawk searching for its prey. Jay Golon and Frank Cesario, better known as the "Steel Curtain," looked more like the "Tin Foil Curtain" on this day. They were met by the mean offensive line of the Faculty which was led by Mr. Kendall, who, using his elbows, injured about half of the Senior squad. Unfortunately, the Senior's quarterback protection was ill-equipped to endure the suffering inflicted by the

faculty. Dave Schueler, who was dubbed early as the "Secret Weapon," lived up to the expectation and provided leadership and motivation never before seen on the frozen tundra.

The Senior squad also included six girls, who were involved in about 2 and 1/8 plays and spent the rest of the game shivering on the sidelines. This sorry collection of imitation football players was rounded out by Denis Tsesarenko, who courageously declared himself coach of this motley group. After their demising defeat, Denis, surprisingly optimistic, said, "We didn't win, but that is OK. All the players left their hearts out there, and for that I am proud. Like life, you can't win everything, but if you are losing with a winning attitude, you are one up on the game."

Look Inside

- ◆ Spotlight on Dani Metzger and Scott Yelity
- ◆ Girls' Basketball Team Picture
- ◆ Do we do the school justice by not having an adequate Choir Program?



MECA'S Diversity Day

by Aisha Griffith

At first glance, one might wonder what the purpose of workshops on different cultural topics for the Upper School of Rutgers Prep could be. Isn't it true that everyone in RPS gets along? What the Multi-Ethnic Cultural Association hoped to demonstrate was that, although that statement may be true, the diverse group of people at RPS were not completely aware of each others' backgrounds and lifestyles or the backgrounds and lifestyles of others who they will come into contact with upon leaving high school. MECA hoped to change that lack of awareness as best as possible with Diversity Day.

After much preparation by MECA, Diversity Day finally arrived on December fourth. MECA was not only gratified by their personal success achieved after weeks of hard work, but also by the fact that the entire school community ap-

preciated the day. To see students taking part in and enjoying the workshops made all the work worth it.

The day began with a thought provoking speech delivered by Reverend Dr. Hilliard who took the vague word of diversity and transformed it into something with concrete meaning. He proved to the audience that diversity is needed in all of our lives. At the end of the assembly, a few students approached him to shake his hand, thank him, or ask him questions.

Following the assembly was a luncheon set up by MECA. While students were enjoying their nearly hour long lunch, hosts, guests, and faculty feasted on sandwiches, ethnic dishes, and plenty of desserts. Every member of MECA brought in food to provide for the luncheon so it was a big success.

Speakers were excited about being in-

volved in a workshop with Rutgers Prep students and were well prepared for them. Afterwards, students made comments like: "I learned a lot," "The Tibetan genocide guy rocked," "Who thought up *Life as a Foreign Student*? It was a really good idea," and "The Homophobia speakers were really good." It was evident that the speakers efforts were noticed and appreciated by students. For those students who missed this day, MECA has tapes available with footage from various workshops.

When the day ended, MECA was faced with the aftermath: dirty dishes, signs on every door, a huge table in front of Mrs. Gooen's window, and lots of papers. Although there was a huge mess to be dealt with, it was all worth it because the club had accomplished more than it had hoped for.

successfully.

The story of this play ingeniously combines outrageous comedy and ridiculous situations with heavy, complicated emotions and serious treatment of social issues. The cast portrayed this brilliantly, from the confrontation between middle-class young woman and an aristocratic widow, to the mutual love between two rivals, both terribly confused about the other's feelings. Although the varying situations of this production demanded a variety of emotions, all actors were in character, and were cast very well. Besides the superb acting, the technical aspects of this show, under the direction of Ron Kelly, awed the audience.

Following the success of the fall production, the drama board has already begun to organize this year's winter show. This show consists of student organized and directed productions, and various other artistic endeavors. With the recent success of the fall show, the drama program looks forward to a very successful year.

Can Drive A Success

by Henri Renard

Although this year's can drive took off to a slow start, it ended up being a tremendous success. As a result of the hard work of co-chairs Katie Crisafulli, Amanda Rabinowitz, and Henri Renard, a total of one thousand three hundred and thirty cans were collected and donated to the Franklin Food Bank. Every year, School Council organizes this event for the purpose of helping out less fortunate people around the holiday times. Once again, Prep students showed their giving spirit and brought in either ten cans on the first deadline of November twenty-first or fifteen on the second deadline of November twenty-fifth. In appreciation of the support of most of the student body, school council rewarded those students who brought in their cans with a dress down day on December third.

The cans which were collected had to be

brought over to the Franklin Food Bank on November twenty sixth. However, on that day can drive supporters were pressed for time because the food bank was closing at three o'clock. With the kind help of four seniors, Craig Feinberg, Nicole Finner, Simon Messing, and Henri Renard, who unselfishly gave up their lunch break to transport the load of cans to the food bank, the cans made it on time. Also, they received help from the peer leaders and their advisors who helped to move the remainder of the cans into Craig's car, allowing them to bring over to the food bank just in the nick of time. Thus, this year's can drive came together in the end and was a success because of the efforts of, not only the entire prep community, but also a select few who unselfishly gave their time and energy.

Success: The Fall Drama Production

by David Schueler

From the 20th to the 23rd of November, Rutgers Prep's drama program put on the theatrical rendition of Jane Austen's nineteenth century novel *Pride and Prejudice*. Director Cora Turlish explained that the adaptation used for the performance was a combination of a few available scripts, with modifications added as needed. The adaptation, though, was mainly based on the one published script that takes place solely in the Bennet house.

The cast featured a large body of returning actors from previous Rutgers Prep plays. These returnees included seniors Jay Golon, Jennifer Conrad, Erin Leeder, Scott Buchanan, Gideon Dabi, and Nicole Finner; juniors Jane Needleman, Whitney Case, Beth Meszaros, and Jeremy Wang-Iverson; and sophomore Isaac Chalal. Newcomers Sam Hartman, Melissa Needell, Minesh Patel, Samantha Simon, and Kristin Checchio have leapt into the fray and started their Rutgers Prep acting careers quite



R.P.S. & the '96 Model Congress

by Susan Slim

The game was Concentration, and Mrs. Wacker is the undefeated champion. The exact rules are unknown, but people sit in a circle snapping their fingers; the person at the head of the circle gets to choose the topic. People playing Concentration have to give words under that topic, and while the students chose movies and foods, Mrs. Wacker chose world capitals. No one could beat her. This is what the delegates of the 1996 Princeton Model Congress did on their journey down to D.C. Well, a few delegates played: most others slept.

Model Congress works towards emulating our legislative system. Since there are so many delegates, Princeton splits the delegates up into three congresses: red, white, and blue. In each Congress, there is both a house and senate. Within the house and senate, there are committees, such as Judiciary, Intelligence, and Ways and Means. In each committee, there are generally about twenty delegates, and each delegate is responsible for sponsoring a bill and presenting it to the committee. If the bill is passed, that delegate

will introduce it to their full house or senate, consisting of approximately one hundred delegates. When awards are handed out, gavels go to the most convincing delegate in both committee and full session, and honorable mentions are awarded to two people in both house and full session.

Model Congress lasts four days and three nights, and in between long meetings, the RPS delegates had free time to go shopping in Georgetown, to visit their favorite politician, or to take in a quick college interview. One of the more educational things the delegates had a chance to partake in was sitting on the floor of the United States House of Representatives to watch Senator Pat Schroeder speak.

Rutgers Prep also had a member of their delegation, Allison Albino, accepted into press corps. In their eternal quest to emulate the real press, they pounded down the door of the elected president, strumming up his alleged affairs with secretaries, and receiving leaks from their very own "Deepthroat," hinting of an Indogate scandal.

In a full Red Senate

meeting, Senator Maureen Benitz created a stir in response to a sexist senator, who hinted that his distinguished colleagues women should remain in the bedroom and the kitchen. Senator Benitz stood up in front of a crowd and proclaimed with passion, "I didn't know we were dealing with Hitler!" The room erupted into resounding applause in support of her bold statement.

On Sunday, November 24th, the delegates congregated for the last time to receive awards. As usual, Prep was included among the recipients. Ken and Laurie Tashman were a success as a family as they both received honorable mentions in committee: the former in Energy and Natural Resources and the latter in Banking, Finance, & Urban Affairs. Allison Albino did Prep proud with an honorable mention in press corps, and Susan Slim received an honorable mention in the full Red Senate.

Whether members of the R.P.S. delegation received awards or not, each student learned something, be it how to speak in front of a crowd, or how to get to Union Station and back in forty-five minutes.

Wheelchair Basketball

by Justin Auciello

On Friday, November fifteenth, the Rutgers Prep school community took on the tough New Jersey Wheelchair Basketball Association (NJWBA) team, and walked away winning 101-94. The win, however, was aided by a large addition of points each quarter to make the game more competitive. Although the NJWBA team lost the game, it won by receiving over \$400 in charity proceeds.

The field house was packed with families and students excited to see their teachers and peers compete in wheelchairs against the strong and experienced NJWBA team. Jay Golon and Frank Cesario were on hand to provide entertainment for the crowd. The desire to win was evident from the lower school "cheerleaders" who were loud and anxious to see some of their teachers play. The teachers are usually a main driving force that attracts students; where else can students see the faculty attempt to play basketball in a wheelchair?

Regular crowd favorites include Oke and Mr. Hordijk, who both played a solid game. However, the charging attempts by the Rutgers Prep side couldn't stop the cogent style possessed by the NJWBA. The quickness and skills that the handicapped players showed were extremely impressive. They played with pride and grace and obviously put their disability behind them.

Another incentive given to donors was that if you donated blood, any one in your family who needs blood in the future will get it for free. As always some first time donors were a little shaken up by the loss of blood, but all in all the event went very smoothly. The organization will be back in April to run another drive and hopes to have a high success rate again.

The Argo

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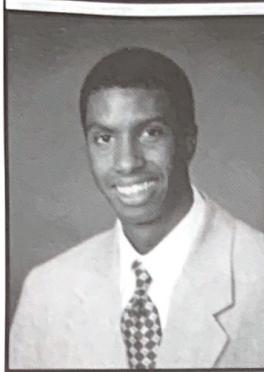
The Annual Blood Drive

by Scott Vafai

The annual blood drive, which came and passed on Wednesday, December 11, proved a successful event indeed. The event was sponsored by school council and was chaired by sophomore Babi Das and junior Angela Lin. The event attracted sixty seven donors of which only fifty were allowed to donate. Among the reasons that some people could not donate blood were overly high blood pressure, irregular hemoglobin counts, and exposure to an exotic location, like Mexico or the Nile River. This made it too risky for them to donate because of possible

exposure to foreign diseases which could contaminate the blood. The drive also attracted quite a few first time donors among whom were many of our own seniors. There was an extra incentive for seniors to donate blood this year. If our school had the highest donor to senior ratio all the donors and volunteers who worked on the blood drive would get free tickets to a Yankee game and would be presented a banner by the Yankees. Senior Maureen Benitz, a first time blood donor found the experience worth while and fun. The group which comes to Prep to collect

the blood took extra care with first time donors. After a person gave their pint of blood, they were served cookies and an array of juices, in order to compensate for the lost blood.

**Spotlight on:****Scott****Yelity**

by Mark Markowski

Scott Yelity has gone through four years of rigorous training throughout his cross-country career. He has taken a team from mediocre to state championships in only a few seasons. Throughout this season especially, Yelity has given everything he had to give while on the trails. He struggled through a nagging ankle injury to win six races during the regular season.

Scott also provided a sign of leadership for the freshmen on the team who pondered why they were putting themselves through all the pain of running. He never complained, never cut any corners, and never gave up. He forced himself through many finish lines with the pain showing in his eyes, limping as he crossed the white line.

Scott wrapped up his career with a second finish at conferences and a third place in states. Scott Yelity is a tremendous athlete, a dedicated worker, and the visual personification of courage. He will be very missed by the team next year.

Oke's Final Campaign

by Zach Solomon

The 1996-97 edition of the boys' varsity basketball team is looking to send coach O'Connell out on a winning note. As Oke's final campaign as coach, and with 700 wins breathing down his neck, there is immense pressure on the team to strive. Because the team lost only two players, they are full of optimism. Returning co-captains Joe Ziznewski, and Jason Maikos lead a strong senior group. Other returning seniors Mark Markowski, Joe Fuoco, and David Weitz look to provide leadership to a relatively young team. Returning Juniors Will

Papst, Zach Solomon, and Ian Ligget are looking forward on expanding their roles from last year. The lone returning sophomore Jarrett Sutton has matured, and will be a major contributor in this year's team. Newcomers Dominic Esser, Dan Chelel, Nakul Reo, Rene Gbewonyo look to add extra firepower, and to provide a deeper bench. After playing excellent basketball in their scrimmages, the team is primed for the start of the season. Look for a strong season out of the boys' varsity basketball team.

Coed Swimming

by David Schueler

The Rutgers Prep swim team has experienced an unexpected jump in membership this year. With thirty members, the depth and variety of this team has almost doubled overnight. Although these numbers also mean less space in the practice pool, Coach Forney has devised several methods of alternation.

He comments that the Cook-Douglas facility is a blessing compared to the hotel pool the team was practicing in about ten years ago, which was less than the standard competition size and barely provided three lanes. Moreover, he reinforces that he is always encouraged by more numbers of the team.

Concerning competitive strength, the team has suffered the loss of five valuable graduates, namely Matt Needleman, Sid Singh, Corrie Graham, Meredith Riley, and Chris

Pink. However, a slew of freshmen, a few sophomores, one new junior, and three returnees have joined to make up for the loss. Coach Forney stated that his expectation for the team was that those who have never swam competitively before will "catch the bug" by the end of the season.

The team swam its first meet, a triangular, on Thursday the fifth of December at Montclair Kimberly Academy. They started off the season with one win against West Orange, and one loss against MKA. Captain George Cox has high hopes for the team in the upcoming season, saying that they will "take it all the way to the Easterns." (Easterns is the interstate swimming competition to which Rutgers Prep usually sends only a select number of team members.) Success is inevitable for the Swim Team this year.

Varsity Wrestling

by Eric Lemmo

This year's varsity wrestling team is off to a great start under the excellent direction of Coach Dougherty, Coach Santowasso, and Coach Lamb. Many of last year's champion wrestlers plus some new faces are working hard to make this season a winning one. Sea-

soned veterans, Craig Feinberg, John Vicari, Khanjan Nagarsheth, Henri Renard, Marvin Quesada, and Jim Russo are back and ready to go. The coaches and the captains of the team, Craig Feinberg and Henri Renard, have been patiently teaching their winning skills to the new

members of the team, Andrew Venezia, Andrew Hobbs, Jon Berkeley, Eric Lemmo, and Fred Kim. The wrestling season opened on the tenth of December. The season looks to be exciting and the team encourages people to come out to watch the team.

Boys' Soccer

by Scott Fleisher

Although the boys' soccer team fell one win short of its quest for ten wins, they had one of their best seasons in years. The team finished 9-7-2, with one of the wins coming in the Prep B state tournament over PDS. By the end of the season, every player was playing up to their potential. Captains Evan Siegel, Jason Maikos, and Frank Cesario kept the team emotionally ready for every game knowing that they were playing their last season of high school soccer. As the season progressed, Prep strikers and mid-fielders were able to find the back of the net more often. Junior Goalie Alon Tabak was able to hold his in the net.

One thing that must be mentioned are the players who were injured, giving it their all in games during the soccer season.

Ben Feldman suffered a tragic, season-ending spinal injury before the season actually began. Ben's ability to play on the front line was greatly missed. Dennis Tsesarenko, possibly the team's fastest man, also suffered a season-ending injury when he went down with a broken knee against Immaculata.

Next year could be tougher because Prep will lose many seniors who are primarily the starters. Look for players like Nathan Holt and Andrew Venezia to step up for the next three years. Prep will have the solid goal keeping of Alon Tabak next year, and look for him to win more awards for being an outstanding keeper. Under the guidance of Coach Szeles, the team should enjoy many years of continued success.

Girls' Tennis

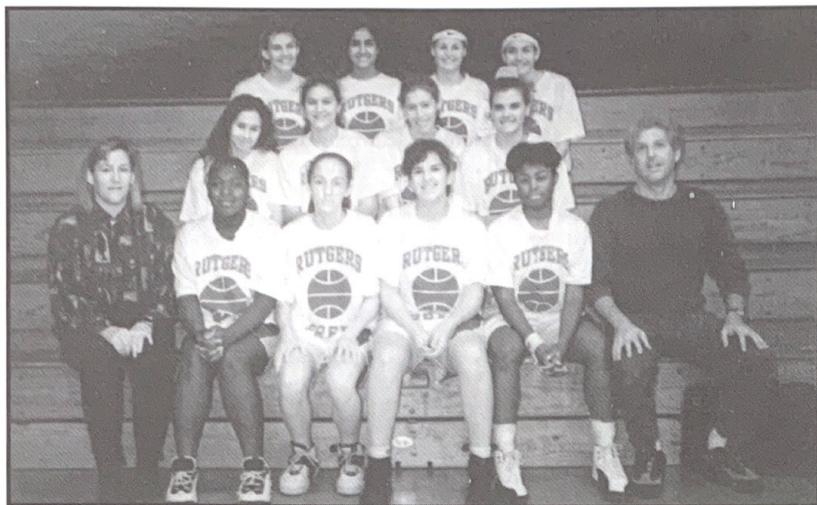
by Maura Pritchard

The tennis team returned to the courts this year without five of their starting players from the year before. Veteran athletes Heather Driver and Natalie Mantell worked to build a new team. The team's winning record of 5-4 shows their success in this pursuit. Natalie, Heather, and junior Rachel Sarill filled the three singles positions. In addition, they provided leadership for their team. Juniors Angela Lin and Aarti Patel, both experienced varsity singles substitutes, combined their talents successfully in the first doubles positions. Completing the starting line-up as second doubles were new varsity athletes Laurie Tashman and freshman Jen Lipman. This team had a winning season and was seeded second in the State Tournament. Freshman Gina Tarlton, who was intended to play second doubles with Jen, suffered an ankle injury at the onset of the season. She did, however, recover in time to play a singles match in the State Tournament.

Rounding out the varsity squad as the team's two alternates are sophomore Kim Brown and freshman

Julie Ann Miller. Both show great promise as full-time varsity athletes for next year's season.

With sound defeats over Morristown-Beard and Peddie in the first two games of the season, the team exhibited the skills and determination necessary to win. These games foreshadowed a successful season for Rutgers Prep tennis. With each win, the team strove to maintain their intense level of play. Their several losses could not crush their spirit or determination. Their efforts were rewarded with a winning record and a wonderful season. Each success contributed to the athletes' sense of teamwork and unity. In Natalie's opinion, their team experiences helped to promote a "complete bonding" between teammates. Although the team will miss Heather's contribution and leadership next year, the returning varsity athletes, as well as several talented rising JV players, will undoubtedly maintain a winning spirit. Hopefully the 1996 season will serve as a springboard for an equally successful one in 1997.



High Hopes for the Lady Argonauts

by Charlene Davenport

As the Girls' Varsity Basketball team begins a new season, they have high hopes for what they can achieve. With 4 of the 5 starters returning to the line up, they have a solid foundation to build on. The returning starters include Catie Somers (honorable mention All-State Prep B), Jackie Sienkiewicz (2nd team All-State Prep B), Liz Alexander (1st team All-State Prep B), and Maureen Benitz. Also returning is Jasmine Orders, who will bring leadership into the upcoming season.

The Girls Basketball team also has many promising players coming into the program. Jennifer Franklin, a junior point-guard from Piscataway High School, will help with scoring and will bring great experience to the team. Other new players joining the team in-

clude Alyssa Botwinick, Emily Wilson, Risa Peterson, Rachel Kendall, and Jessica Piraneo. As the season progresses, their skills will improve greatly. They will contribute valuable minutes for the team, and will help them towards their ultimate goal of a State Title.

On December 6 and 7, the team participated in the Gill Tip-Off tournament.

They remained the defending champions of this tournament. The team defeated Morristown Beard in the first game and then went on to defeat L'Academy in the championship round. The Lady Argonauts will also host a holiday tournament on December 20 and 21. The teams who will participate in the tournament are Blair, Timothy Christian,

and Lakewood Prep. The Basketball team hopes to be victorious in defending their championship in this tournament as well.

Both Coach Shifman and Coach Klinger have high goals for the team, and they believe that the girls can improve on their great record of 18-4 from last year. They have tough games on their schedule including Mt. St. Dominic, Franklin High School, Wardlaw Hartridge, and Princeton Day School, but everyone is optimistic. They are an exciting team to watch and are sure to contend for the conference, county, and state championships.

One: We are the Spikers

by Allison Albino

The Rutgers Prep girls' volleyball team is overflowing with spirit this year. Lead by captains Allison Albino, Nicole Fiumefreddo and Susan Slim, they are determined to win the state championship. Coach Susan Tidd and newcomer JV Coach Ables have been working hard to make every practice "intense" and "game-like" so that the girls will carry out that intensity on the volleyball court with aggression and strength.

They won their first home game against St. Elizabeth and played a stunning six games at the Rutgers Prep Spikers Tournament of which included a victory against

Lawrenceville Prep, a Division A school and a formidable opponent. On Saturday Decemebr 14, they faced another tough tournament, which they placed third in, at Morristown Beard School.

One could see the maroon balloons at the corner of the gym carried by every single member of the volleyball team at their first home game. One could hear the screams and the cheers from on the court as well as off. It is undeniable that this fresh team has enthusiasm, drive, and the potential to capture the championship and maintain their reputation as one of the most energetic athletic teams.

Girls' Soccer

by Vanessa Abreu

Rutgers Prep Girls' soccer, coached by Mr. Nichols and Mrs. Zboray, had an extremely successful season this fall. They ended their season with a record of 15-5-1. The team made it to the second round of counties, but lost to Franklin. In the Prep B State Tournament, the girls lost to Gill St. Bernards in the semifinal round by a score of 3-2.

Although the team did not bring home a title, many of the players made All-Area and All-State teams. Senior Daniella Metzger, who shared the position of center mid-fielder with Alyssa Botwinik, was selected to the first team All-Somerset County. Sophomore Alyssa

Spotlight on:

Dani

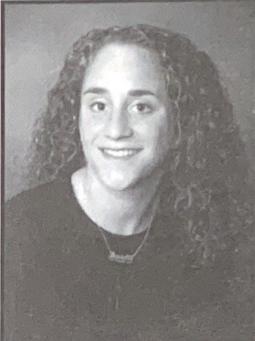
Metzger

by Maureen Benitz

The Varsity Girls' Soccer team could not have finished its season with a record of 15-5-1 without the strong performance shown by senior captain mid-fielder Dani Metzger. Her experience in the past came through this season in helping her team do so well this fall. Dani was a vital link in the team's performance this past season.

Dani finished her last season at Prep with 20 goals and 24 assists. In many games, Dani connected for 2 goals. Unfortunately, she was never able to get a hat trick. In games against Blair, Wardlaw Hartridge, Ranney, L'Academy, Solomon Schechter, Saddle River and Timothy Christian Academy Dani scored twice. In the games where she didn't score, she was an intricate part in getting the other goals scored. Many times, she was able to get 3 assists in one game. Against Wardlaw Hartridge, Ranney (twice), Purnell, and Newark Academy she helped people score three times.

Dani's hard work paid off in her being selected for the Group B All Star First Team, along with fellow teammates Alyssa Botwinik, Nicole Fiumefreddo, and Priya Radhakrishna.



tion to being selected to the All Star Team, Dani was voted on to the Somerset Country First Team. This is quite an accomplishment considering the tough public school teams in Somerset County, such as Bridgewater, Franklin, and Hillsborough.

Although the girls made it to the state semifinals, they lost in a very close game to Gill St. Bernards. Dani's dedication and hard work for the team have enhanced the squad greatly. Her efforts have led the team to one of their most successful seasons in recent history. The members of the team returning next year will have to find capable people to replace Dani, along with graduating seniors Catie Somers, Nicole Fiumefreddo, Archana Kansagra, Linda Condon and Jane Seymour. Returning veterans such as Alyssa Botwinik, Beth Germinsky and goalie Priya Radhakrishna will have to step up to compensate for the loss of the seniors.

Congratulations to the entire team on a very successful season!

Botwinik, senior Nicole Fiumefreddo (midfield), and junior goalie Priya Radhakrishna also made the first team in the Prep B Division. Senior Catie Somers (sweeper), senior Jane Seymour (stopper), and senior Linda Condon (defender) all made the Prep B Second Team. Fiumefreddo, Somers, and Radhakrishna also made the Second Team All Somerset County.

The team will have to

rebuild next year due to the loss of the many seniors. Sara Preschel, Beth Germinsky, Vanessa Abreu, Charlene Davenport, and Rachel Kendall will all be needed next year to step up to take the place of the seniors.

The team would like to thank senior Maureen Benitz, sophomore Jill Nudelman and junior Erica Becker for attending every game and serving as the team's managers.

Riches Untapped

by Jay Golon

Since I arrived at Prep as a freshman just over three years ago, I have picked up on certain "rites" that accompany different times of the year. The two to three weeks preceding the holiday break have historically been some of the most painfully stressful weeks I, and many other Prep students, have to face each year. Like clockwork, every teacher starts to feel that he or she needs to squeeze in at least one more paper or test before the vacation, athletes become drained as the thick of the winter season sets in, and a general air of chaos reigns as the generous and compassionate feelings of the upcoming Christmas are severely dampened by crazed and sleepless students doing their best to push through the final weeks of the calendar year.

An oasis, however, does exist. Though it falls during the heart of this busy season, the Upper School choirs provide not only a much needed release for its members, but for all those who have the fortune of hearing them. Lately, however, I can say that singing in the men's choir has been a discouraging affair. Though it has always

been suspected, it has become abundantly obvious to every choir member that the Upper School choir program has to settle for the leftovers of the Rutgers Prep schedule and is given little priority. The sheer lack of respect given to the choirs in terms of time and working space can be summed up in one word: shameful.

A curious paradox has been developing in the years I have been at Prep. Every year choir membership swells along with the enthusiasm of its members. Membership in the men's choir alone has quadrupled in the last four years. Last year, not only were both the men's and women's choirs praised at the Somerset County Teen Arts Festival, but the Madrigal Singers were ranked "outstanding" by the New Jersey American Choral Director's Association, a ranking earned on no more than forty-five minutes of rehearsal per week. Oddly enough, the policy towards making time for these tremendously talented choirs has been one of pacification, rather than progress.

To its credit, I am very pleased to be attending a school where I can take a

class in modern drama, or advanced physics, or Japanese. The variety of courses we have always brings about jealousy on the part of my friends who don't attend Prep. By the same token, however, I am equally jealous to hear about other schools where madrigal groups and choirs meet daily in a regularly scheduled class. Though Prep choirs can equal these schools in talent, we can never compete on the same level with them because of their ability to sing more difficult music as well as to "fine tune" their performances. Prep choirs, on the other hand, are relegated to the twice a week insult known as "E-period". This period, conceived in the deepest pits of hell, is a thirty-five-minute, hundred-yard-dash of a rehearsal. Choir warm-ups should take thirty five minutes, not whole rehearsals. Keep in mind during this year's winter concert that though the choirs sound very good musically, they are singing songs that are below them. They are talented enough to sing more difficult music, but are handcuffed by their own rehearsal schedule. Even the Madrigal

Singers, who do sing very difficult music, can only rehearse during activity periods. Its ranks are depleted, therefore, whenever a School Council, Drama Board, or Excelsior meeting takes place. When I perform with the Madrigals, I honestly feel that a small miracle takes place whenever we sing a song well considering the amount of time we work together as a whole group.

Perhaps Santa will be good to us this year and bring us a new rehearsal space as well. The Men's Choir, which has outgrown Mrs. Szeles's room, has been practicing in Baldwin (certainly not to be confused with Carnegie) Hall and the often loud and uncomfortable student lounge where songs are interrupted by people walking through the tenor section on the way to class.

I respect the people who make the decisions that define Prep both as people and as educators. Because of this respect, I don't feel the need to stress that music can and should be just as important as any Science, History, or English class to obviously intelligent people. Music puts people in touch with their

souls; such an experience should stand on the same ground as balancing a chemical equation or memorizing all of our presidents. Sadly, the current time allotted for music is not even close to equaling the time provided for other subjects deemed "more important" by traditional standards.

If a full-time choir or madrigal period is offered to next year's students, they must feel safe in choosing that course. Choir classes have been offered before, but students were afraid that they would have to compromise their regular schedules. Somehow, a balance must be struck so that choir members can participate in a full-time choir without dropping important courses. Regardless, the tremendous energy put forth by Mrs. Hunt, Mrs. Szeles, and every singer is betrayed by the "glass ceiling" which currently exists at Prep.

If nothing changes, a new, more embarrassing event will become common to Prep around this time of year as choir members will have to ask themselves: What if we had more time? How much better could we have been?

An Opportunity Missed

by Sara Preschel

Diversity day was set up to prove the old statement that America is truly a great melting pot. We have been told since the third grade in Social Studies that America accepts all races and nationalities. Diversity Day gave students an opportunity to learn about Eastern, Western, and African cultures on a first hand basis. It allowed students to compare morals, ethics, and ethnic backgrounds.

Unfortunately, this opportunity, which was so generously granted by MECA, was missed because of the widespread and disturbing apathy of the students. Whether this apathy was based on ignorance concerning other people's cultures, or whether students felt that they did not have the time and energy to expend in participation makes no difference. The end result of either excuse was a missed opportunity to visit a cultural environment different

The Secularization of Schools

by Heather Adi Crossner

Religion in this country has become a very sensitive issue. Schools are afraid to recognize one holiday over another and as a result our December vacation, which happens to be centered around Christmas, is now called "Winter Break." (Maybe we are getting two weeks off just to celebrate the new cold air.) There is

so little acknowledgment of any holiday that it takes an announcement by a Freshman student (no offense intended) for anyone to even mention that a religious holiday is being celebrated. It seems that religion has become taboo and its very mention by a school authority is a crime against society.

Many readers, by now, might decide that I am a devoutly religious person who wants to institute prayer in all schools. I am, actually, a person who is not very religious at all and believes that the celebration of religion in schools is completely inappropriate. I do, however, believe that though religion should not be celebrated in schools, it cannot be ignored either. To pretend that all people have the same beliefs is to promote ignorance and misunderstanding, which in turn leads to the biases that cause fighting between people of different cultures. It is the reality of this world that only by learning about our differences, and not ignoring their very ex-

istence, are we able to take the step and move beyond our prejudices. The fact is that schools are designed for the education of its students and the understanding of other people is a pivotal part of that education. It is easy to say that religion has no place in schools, and in the idea of practice I agree, but simply learning about other religions (which can be a large part of who a person is) becomes essential in understanding and learning about others.

Having said this, I also recognize the fact that there is practically no extra time in school that could be used for this education, and for this reason Diversity Day was so important; it served as a start for people to learn more on their own time. In the two classes I attended, "Similarities and Differences Between Major Religions" and "Spirituality," people were really beginning to talk and not just dismiss the classes as a waste of time. Real discussions were started and questions were raised (many of which had no sat-

isfying answer) and for this surprised interest, shown by people who had expected to learn nothing, Diversity Day really was successful. In some way, the day began as an exercise for a school to be politically correct and ended by accomplishing what the people of MECA had set out to do—provoke everyone into thinking and questioning and wanting to learn more about others. There will always be the old complaints from people who say the day was a waste of time, but with an open mind, Diversity Day was a great opportunity to learn about religions and cultures and attitudes other than a person's own.

Maybe someday, through this education, the point can even be reached when instead of the denial of all religions, a school can dare to mention the important celebrations of two or three, which happen to take place around the time of our "Winter Break."