

The Other Side

Winter 2010

Putting the “Green” in Green Vale

Over time, global warming has become a greater issue. Many countries are currently reshaping their industries to reduce pollution. In the US, companies and institutions throughout the states are also making environmental protection an important part of their business. This year, Green Vale has made environmental conservation a major priority. Recycling, along with minimal paper usage and distribution, has been an evident process going on throughout the campus. Although Green Vale is doing an excellent job protecting the natural environment, there is one area of the school in which it is not so “green.”

I am talking about the first day of school and the supplies they require you to bring in for your academic year. I have realized, throughout my many years at Green Vale, that the school supply list is very environmentally unfriendly, demanding, and excessive. Most of the graph paper notebooks or excess folders end up in student’s backpacks and cubbies untouched for the entire school year. I remember cleaning out my homeroom last year and realizing the magnitude

of unused school books, utensils, and even calculators that had remained isolated. In most math classrooms, calculators are already present in a number suitable for the class size. Although most teachers are aware of this fact, the school list still asks students to go and purchase a highly expensive graphing calculator. The amount of batteries and other harmful elements that

compose these sophisticated tools pose a serious threat to our very fragile environment. The recycling process at Green Vale is, however,



extremely efficient and conserves most of the paper that is used. Other programs and students’ attitude towards environmental conservation is exceptional. Aside from all the excellent environmental friendly programs, the school supply list lacks conservation. Although this may be a problem that has yet to be resolved, a very simple solution lies to the issue. A few changes to the school supply list could make Green Vale an even more environmentally friendly place.
-Reed M.

Davis' Book Nook: *Prep* by Curtis Sittenfeld

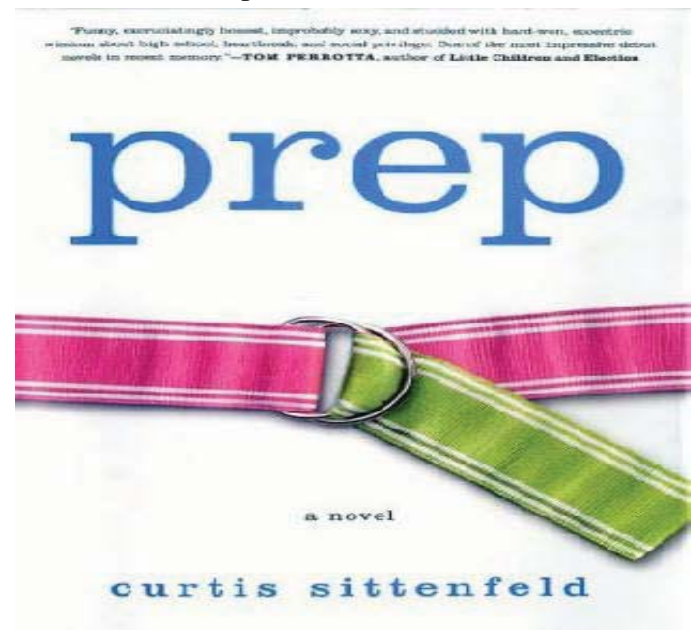
Lee Fiora is a modest girl from the Midwest, blessed by luck and hours of effort, who has won a place and a scholarship to the Ault school, a prestigious Northeastern boarding school. Vineyard Vines, Ralph Lauren and J. Crew labels are everywhere to be seen, while the school demands more academically than Lee has ever experienced. Awed and apprehensive, Lee begins her Ault career, unsure of her place in this affluent, preppy world. As the weeks and months continue, Lee becomes progressively more alienated, feeling friendless and very much an outsider. She is not privy to East Coast slang, the favorite brands; her hair is not long and sleek, her body not completely soft and slender. The novel follows Lee for her four years at Ault, during which time she becomes hardly more integrated. She spends the overwhelming majority of her high school years feeling self-conscious and rather miserable, because she feels that any thought, expression or action outside of the norm will alienate her further and cause others to think badly of her.

I liken this feeling of being scrutinized to the concept of the “panopticon,” in the book *The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau Banks*. A panopticon is a circular jail, arranged around a central well so that the prisoners could be watched at all times. Because of the constant assumption that they were being watched, the prisoners behaved and little watching ever really had to occur. In *Prep*, and in *The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau Banks*, the boarding school atmosphere makes for a sort of panopticon—an environment in which everyone feels as though they are always being watched, and behave accordingly. For Frankie, in *Disreputable History*, the panopticon serves to fascinate her and spark a rebellion within her. In *Prep*, the panopticon makes Lee miserable, for she feels as though her every move must be calculated to follow what the popular students are doing, and she spends more time desperately trying to fit in than she does nearly anything else. Life with a desperate and masochistic motivation such as this is not a happy one; Lee is constantly miserable and ends up allowing herself to be used sexually by a popular boy, for after wanting so long to be wanted, she grasps at the first possibility. Lee acts for almost the sole motivation of wanting not necessarily to be accepted—for being dif-

ferent is never desirable—but included.

Prep was written by Curtis Sittenfeld, sort of as a memoir. Sittenfeld attended a very prestigious boarding school as a teenager, and changed the name and a few key facts in the book, in order to somewhat protect its identity. Knowing this as I read was a little sad, for Curtis, alias Lee, has such an awful time in the text.

Prep is the bittersweet story of a girl who enters into a lavish world that seems ideal to her, but quickly learns that the pressure to be the unattainable elite is suffocating, and she finds herself barely gasping for breath over the four years of her life there. The really sad thing was that by the end of the novel, Lee does not seem to have really learned anything. She has not decided to be true to herself, or not care what others think of her. Perhaps this is more realistic, but it is still



rather melancholy. *Prep* is basically a depressing read. And though the insights on life at such an institution as Ault were interesting and well-explored, often the book lagged in Lee's despair and alienation.

Although I cannot say that *Prep* was pleasurable to read—it is certainly not uplifting—this was probably on purpose, for the author's intentions clearly were not to make the reader gleeful. What the book did do was make me think, and I am always glad for a literary opportunity to do so. It concerned me a bit as well, for I am in the midst of applying to schools like Ault for high school, and *Prep* made me fear that a cold, elitist world is the one I am about to enter. All in all it was a pretty good, if unsettling, read. I give *Prep* a three out of five evil daggers.

9th Grader Interview of the Month!!

This month's 9th grader that I interviewed was Jon Patrick B., also known as J.P. J.P was born on November 3rd, 1994. He is 15 years old and has no other siblings, but has many pets (too many to list). His favorite kind of animal is fish. J.P also told me he likes photography which is one of his hobbies, and one career he wants when he grows up. He likes nature photography. Speaking of nature, his favorite subject in school is science. J.P plays clarinet at school and that is the only instrument he currently plays. He doesn't have a favorite song or band but he does like to play hockey. J.P's favorite sport is hockey and he plays goalie. His favorite sports team is the Islanders. That is all for now. Stay tuned for next issue's 9th Grade interview!!!!!!

-Koroosh Leibowitz

All County All the Time!

During the long weekend of January 18th while most of you were having fun with friends and playing video games, a select few of Green Vale students decided to expand their musical abilities and enroll in the All County Music Festival. In the spring time, Katherine H., Maria R., Caroline H., and Jonathan C. were judged by their musical ability. Katherine, Maria and Caroline were required to sing a song from a list that they had been practicing for a while and Jonathan played a song on his clarinet. They then were given a sheet of music notes that they were required to sight read for the judge in the classroom that evaluated us. Our teacher (Mrs. Peltzer) accompanied us for the first part on piano when we sang our song, but was asked to leave once the judge gave us the sheet music, the same circumstances for Jonathan. We received our results in the fall. Our scores were based on how we read the sheet music, breathing control, how we projected the song, how we played

the song, etc.. The scores were out of 28. Maria and Katherine got 27, while Caroline got 26. We were very excited to hear this fall that we all had made it! Just last Wednesday we started practice with about 300 other singers. A while back we had received 6 sheets of music which we would be performing.

We would practice those songs in our singing lessons with Mrs. Peltzer in the mornings and nearly memorize them before our practices. Practices were held at the Baldwin Middle School. Each practice was 4 hours, on Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and then the overall concert on Sunday. We all thought that the practices were lengthy and that the food they served during our half hour break was not food we had wanted during our practice. We thought it was imperative that we get good food so we would have enough energy for the rest of the long practice, but with this food...none of us were satisfied. Jonathan's conductor was Mr. Joseph S. Horner. Maria, Katherine and Caroline's conductor was Dr. Susan Glass. We all thought that she got very into the songs. During one of them she even made us dance! After the hard practices we were much relieved to finally have the concert! We performed at CW Post's Tilles Center. We sang to a crowd of nearly 3,000. The songs we performed were Dream Keeper, Ask the Moon, Tue Tue, Tallis Canon, Dance of the Willow and Give Us Hope. Jonathan performed Afterburn, The Red River Valley, March Jambalaya, and Greetings from the NMEA President. Overall, being a part of the All County Music Festival has been a really great experience!

By: Caroline H. and Katherine H.

*Tilles Center (where we performed)



Ten Facts You Might not Know About Hamsters

by Mary B.

Hamsters can remember their relatives.
Hamsters can be taught how to come by name.
Once baby hamsters are a week old, the parents most likely will not eat them.

In the wild, hamsters dig extensive tunnels beneath the ground - extending as far as three feet in depth.

Syrians have four toes on the front feet and five on the back feet.

Syrian hamsters are considered endangered in the wild.

Hamsters eat their poop to absorb nutrients that were not previously digested!

Hamsters can carry half their body weight in their cheek pouches.

The native habitats of hamsters are the deserts of Asia.

A human year is 25 hamster years.



Green Vale Faculty Running for a Cure

This April, visiting scholar and Green Vale faculty member, Ms. Ifode will be running a marathon in Paris to raise money and awareness about leukemia and lymphoma. A large bake sale was held on Tuesday, January 26th to help her raise the funds necessary to run her race. We wish her the best of luck and congratulate her for her commitment and devotion to such a noble cause.



Will T. (8th grade) is all smiles at Tuesday, January 26th's bake sale, while food brightens the day of Carolina M. and Anne P. (below). The proceeds went to the leukemia/lymphoma society. (Photos by Caroline Z./Wren W.)



Views on the Definition of Art

For thousands of years the world has been producing plastic art. Be it painting, embroidery, murals, pottery, or sculpture, art has always been an undeniably important element in every culture, race and creed. Great geniuses, such as Michelangelo, Raphael, Friedrich, Van Gogh, and Monet, have all presented wondrous works to the world, dazzling mankind with their gift of ingenuity.

And so, for many centuries, the artists and the notion of realist beauty went unchallenged.

However, the early 20th century saw a change in the previously established aesthetic inertia. And sure enough, in 1917, a Frenchman by the name of Marcel Duchamp put a urinal on a pedestal, wrote the letters “R. MUTT” on it, and then proclaimed it as a great work of art. Another strange creation of Duchamp’s was an upturned bicycle wheel propped upon a stool, which he christened simply “Bicycle Wheel.” Duchamp was the leader of an artistic movement known as “Dadaism.” The movements challenging the notion of art also posed a new question: Can a message or emotional idea be conveyed with abstract art instead of realist art? Can dehumanization be effective—are we able to appreciate the beauty of an image without necessarily being able to picture ourselves within it? The Dadaists and their many contemporaries, such as the Surrealists and the Futurists, sought to redefine art and to show that art is a matter of perspective: if a urinal is art, then is the Mona Lisa art, as well? Why is da Vinci revered as a great genius? What in the world is art?

This question cannot be answered definitively to this day. Ultimately, art in and of itself does not have a universal formula which would allow us to place works of art into a hierarchy.

The Dadaists stated that man cannot know what art is—he can only create what he thinks to be art.

-Phillip D.

“Bicycle Wheel”—Marcel Duchamp, 1913



Mr. Simonds

“Art is that in which the head, the hands, and the heart go together.”

Ms. Van Lith

“Art is an expression of an individual’s vision in a form that adds something to the reality of existence.”

Mr. Q

“Art imitates life.”

Mrs. Vachris

“Art is something which stimulates one’s emotions.”

Mr. Zaloom

“Art is an expression of reality using the medium of preference.”

Mr. Zanone

“Art is how one expresses their creativity.”

Mr. Watters

“Art is in the eye of the beholder.”

Dr. Pasquale

“Art is beauty in the eye of the beholder.”

Davis L.

“Art is anything that anyone says it is.”

Ms. Ressa

“Art is any personal expression of thought.”

Ms. Copp

“Art is anything with color, line texture, shape, patterns, or anything which can take on form.”

Mr. Wood

“Art is everywhere; art is nothing; art is everything.”

Mrs. Higgins

“Art is an expression of oneself.”

And of course, let us not forget:

Gracie L.

“Art is Julia S.”

Did You Drink Water Today? If So, Uh-Oh!

Attention GreenVale students: Did you know that the water from your sink at home or in your bathroom may be dangerously polluted? Well, according to a New York Times analysis of federal data, more than 20 percent of the nation's water treatment systems have violated key requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act over the last five years. These laws require communities to supply safe tap water to the town or city. Unfortunately, since 2004, the water provided to more than 49 million people has contained prohibited concentrations of chemicals like arsenic (a steel-gray poisonous solid element that is a brittle crystalline metalloid. This substance is used to harden lead.) or radioactive substances like uranium (a heavy silvery white radioactive metallic element occurring in three isotopes. This supplies nuclear reactors and weapons.), as well as dangerous "super-bacteria" and viruses often found in sewage systems.

Regulators and volunteers working for the Safe Drinking Water Act were informed of each violation – yet failed to file reports that should have gone to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), who has ultimate responsibility for enforcing standards and regulations and also, can fine the towns and cities failing to cooperate with the strict laws. Studies show that drinking water contaminants are linked to millions of instances of illness within the United States each year. Some scientists say that some drinking water can lead to the contagious virus of H1N1 (swine flu).

According to Charles Duhigg, a writer for the *New York Times* and an activist for cleaner waters in the United States, the Owls Head Water Pollution Control Plant, located in Brooklyn where much of its sewage is treated, failed to follow laws issued by the EPA and ended up contaminating Upper New York Bay and the Gowanus Canal. Many local residents complained of untreated feces and industrial waste coming through their shower heads, toilets, and kitchen and bathroom sinks.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Congress distributed over \$60 billion to cities to enforce the laws made by the EPA, and also, to make sure what is supposed to

go into toilet, sink, and shower water goes into the toilet, sink and shower water. Also, Congress issued the money to ensure that industrial drains, street grates, and other areas that hold toxic wastes, would not jeopardize human health and well being. The money had been given to major cities, such as San Diego, Houston, Phoenix, San Antonio, Philadelphia, San Jose and San Francisco. All of these cities, and many more, have violated countless amounts of laws issued by the EPA, and some used the money for other projects. But hey, it's just the world's eco-system at stake – not a big deal.
by Antonia B.



Hannah B. drives against tough LuHi defense in a demanding girls' basketball game. (Photo courtesy of Caroline Z./Wren W.)

The Other Side Looking for Talent

This is a call for all aspiring writers, artists and photographers! Want to contribute to a staggering piece of intellectual supremacy? Of course you do! Therefore, feel free to write or contribute other skills to *The Other Side*. Simply email Mr. Quinlan at rquinlan@greenvaleschool.org and offer your submissions. This is open to all grades and all interested parties. Thank you for your interest and the commitment to keeping *The Other Side* great!