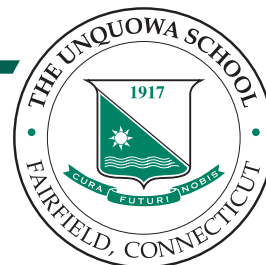


About U.S.



A Publishing Tradition
of The Unquowa School

There is a bitter-sweetness to being human. The bitterness comes from the reality of our limited time on earth, but the sweetness comes from allowing that awareness to help us live every day to its fullest and best. It is the rare adult who has never expressed despair at being over-scheduled or at having misspent time, but it takes a lot of work to keep the sweetness of life as one's focus. Learning to model such lives ourselves and then to teach our children to live valuable lives is not easy. I believe, however, that it can start with something as simple as the notion of editing, and I was reminded of this by a recent encounter with a simple rose garden.

The roses in question had been planted in our school's courtyard three years ago but, for some reason, had missed their mid-summer pruning this year. By mid-October they still had hundreds of blousy pink blooms, but the bushes themselves had become far too large for their place in the bed and were threatening the boxwood and hydrangea near them. To improve the overall well-being of the bushes and to make their stay in this particular spot possible, I had to cut back these magnificent blooming branches.

The thorns were threatening and the task took hours - not just because it was dangerous but also because I had to edit thoughtfully so that the pruned bushes would be well-shaped and healthy.

Editing, a word which most folks associate with writing, is not just a skill; it is a habit of mind. It is about correcting and improving, true, but it is also about the more difficult task of reducing - even when it means reducing good things, like a healthy branch of roses, a beautifully written sentence or the number of interesting activities in one's life - to end up with a better result. We live in a world whose fast pace encourages the acceptance of mediocrity and whose abundance - both of things and opportunities - encourages over-scheduling, over-accumulating and settling for less than the best. From first

awkward paragraphs to an over-whelming number of life choices, adults must model and encourage children to edit - that is, to care about the quality and quantity of what they produce, the surroundings in which they live and the acceptance or decline of options available to them in the world - if they are to be able to say, at the various checkpoints of their lives, "I am trying to use every precious moment I've been given well."

Writers and gardeners often share the terms edit and prune. Every writing teacher worth her salt knows that the growth of a writing student comes in steps that spiral over and

over as children grow and improve. First they learn to correct - they correct spelling and punctuation and grammar. Then they learn to improve - they choose a more precise word or make a better transition. But the leap that is toughest to learn is to reduce - to prune the beautiful sentence or carefully honed paragraph that they worked so hard to craft. Reduction - learning to hear when a piece of writing is better with less - is the skill that separates weak writers from strong ones. It is also one of the toughest life lessons we all need to



*Mrs. Lamb, Upper School English teacher, and
Andres Ayala, eighth grader discuss editing.*

learn. As a school, we work to send out that message of editing or pruning for quality when we have students work for weeks on a single piece of art in the studio, rather than churning out daily projects. We do the same when we guide students as they research and produce multi-discipline historical projects worthy of display in a museum, and we give this same message when we encourage athletes to pick one sport per season and to devote themselves to its team effort.

From the quality of that first beautiful sentence that came from learning to correct, improve and reduce to the multitude of options that bombard our children every day, we can model and guide them to discern one from the other, and in the process learn to lead more joyful lives ourselves.

Sharon Lauer

Student Docents at the Aldrich

As part of our ongoing collaboration with The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, half of this year's eighth graders attended four training sessions at the museum to learn how to guide tours of the exhibits during the month of October. The museum exclusively shows contemporary artists and only has one permanent exhibit, *The Camera Obscura*. This makes it a great resource to continually discover new and upcoming artists who are pushing the boundaries of what we consider to be art. The Aldrich's Student Docent philosophy revolves around teaching an "inquiry-based" method of conversation about the artwork, where the docents lead their peers in discussion rather than simply delivering information. This involves everyone in the process of "looking" and teaches that in aesthetic conversations there are no wrong answers, only valid opinions.

During the class tour, each pair of docents had a group of five to six students from grades six, seven, and the other half of eighth, with whom they engaged in meaningful and insightful conversation about the art. By focusing on personal interpretation rather than artists' statements or factual information, the docents were able to cull interesting reflections and commentary from the students through a series of carefully-worded open ended questions. It is amazing how a simple inquiry such as, "What do you see?" can become a lively conversation in which everyone participates. In addition to the tours, the students participated in an art project inspired by Ambreen Butt's multi-layered work, *The Hunt*. Each student created his or her own book of images on transparent paper, which added depth and dimension to the learning experience. It was a fantastic morning rich in aesthetic conversation and art appreciation.

In the Spring, the other section of eighth grade will participate in the docent program and lead tours for the fourth and fifth grade students. We are continuing to find ways to expand our association with this wonderful museum and give our students opportunities to engage in thoughtful conversation about artists' work. It is incredible what can be discovered when you take the time to slow down and really look.

Krissy Sabol

The Unquowa School Garden Program

Our gardening program emphasizes sustainable practices including composting, mulching, companion planting and organic methods of pest control. It provides students with hands-on experiences in planting, nurturing, and harvesting and gives them many opportunities to observe nature's cycles in an outdoor setting. Farm-to-fork field experiences enhance student awareness of making healthy food choices and the benefits of eating seasonal organic vegetables that are locally grown.

Many of our students visited Sport Hill Farm during September and October and toured through fields of Swiss chard, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, and other vegetables that thrive in cool weather. With small shovels and rakes, they dug up fingerling potatoes and were delighted at their interesting shapes and sizes. Lessons were further extended at school by Chef Dan who shared many interesting nutritional facts about potatoes and provided a number of varieties for the students to compare.



Fall was a busy time in our garden as well. Students returned to find sungold tomatoes and tomatoberrries surrounded by basil and marigolds, cucumbers, heirloom radishes, squash, giant sunflowers, arugula, Swiss chard, and raised beds of herbs. Students sampled radishes, harvested sunflower seeds, and created lovely arrangements of lavender, nasturtium, and marigolds for the dining room. They also made observations in the garden during plant studies and helped maintain it by watering raised beds, weeding the lavender border, and removing runners from strawberry plants. It will soon be time to harvest the sage for our Thanksgiving feast and put the garden to bed for the winter. We look forward to resuming gardening and farm-to-fork field experiences in the spring.

Mary Curran

In Memory of Maria Taylor

On Tuesday, November 17th, St George Albanian Orthodox Church in Trumbull was filled beyond capacity with family and friends who came to honor and celebrate the life of Maria Taylor, whose untimely death occurred the week before. Maria was the mother of Christopher in seventh grade, Ryan, class of '06 and wife of Dr. Kevin Taylor, President of our school's Board of Governors.

Everyone who knew Maria Taylor can attest to her joy for life, her unfailing spirit of volunteerism and her ability to make everyone feel included and important. As a member of The Unquowa Parents Association and its board for the past twelve years, Maria held every conceivable role - from overseeing room representatives to hospitality to, most recently, overseeing the athletics banquets. Maria was in the stands for every game her sons played and her enthusiasm for the entire team's success was a model for every parent.



Most important to our school, Maria touched the lives of so many other parents during her twelve years here at Unquowa. She welcomed new families and made them instantly feel like part of the community. One new mother emailed us after hearing the sad news to say how much Maria had done for her in the short time she's been at our school. She could not imagine how folks who'd known Maria for many years must be feeling.

Maria was a source of endless laughter and kindness. She understood the importance of tradition and helped, in ways large and small, to make sure that the traditions of the Unquowa community were celebrated. She has left an indelible mark on Unquowa, her spirit will always be part of our school, and she will be sorely missed by our entire school community.

Gator Walkers

The Gator Team raised over \$2,700 and joined the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk at Sherwood Island.

Thanks to everyone who supported our walkers with donations! Picture below in the back row: Diane Butler, Wendy Grosso, Michele Barbieri, Anne Cain, Rosemarie Sullivan, Chriss Gombos, Tricia Murphy, Shannon Cain; front row: Krissy Sabol, Laura Baytos, Lynn Chapin, LaVern Burton.



From the UPA

The September "Fun"raiser, Good to be Green, was a fantastic event for the entire family. All in attendance feasted on a wonderful meal after which the music began and the children were engaged in a host of games, dancing and, last but not least, face painting. Kudos to **Helene Dworski and Peggy Scianna** for organizing this event.

In October, we concluded our Jeaninne Fundraiser on a successful note. Thank you for your participation, especially in light of the current economic climate.

In late October, Upper Schoolers participated in two socials. The fourth and fifth graders enjoyed themselves after school in the gym, while the sixth through eighth graders had a great night at Bounce U. Thank you to **Tami-Lyn Morse, Peggy Scianna, Lisa Knopf, Deb Cooke, and Sally Cadoux** for organizing such fun-filled events for the students.

The Teacher Appreciation Breakfast in November was the perfect thank you for our faculty and staff. Thank you to **Newell Carapezzi** and to all who contributed to the delicious breakfast.

Marcie Lapido & Irene Brennan
UPA Co-Presidents

Fifth Graders Create an Outdoor Classroom While Removing Invasive Species from Our Woods



Nature is an inspiration. For the scientist it abounds with opportunities to explore, observe, and dissect. For the historian it can be a place to lose him or herself in a forgotten time by creatively transforming a place in the woods to a Native American village, or perhaps a pioneer outpost by the river. The artist may marvel at the beauty of nature's design, and how it lends itself beautifully to every genre of art. Geometric designs created in nature may be explored by the mathematician. The woods can also be a quiet place for losing yourself in a great novel or journaling without the distractions of the man-made world. It is for these purposes, and many others, that our fifth grade worked hard to create an outdoor classroom in our school's woods.

The woods beyond our playground are the perfect environment for an outdoor classroom. We worked with Audubon Director, Carol Kratzman to determine what invasive species would be removed with as little impact as possible to the woods and wildlife. Once the site was chosen and the plants tagged, the project was introduced to the students.

The excitement was apparent from the beginning. During a fifth grade science class, students learned about invasive species. We discussed how their introduction into a habitat can be harmful and the proper way to remove them. Examples of the three plants designated to be removed, Japanese Barberry, Winged Euonymus, and Multiflora Rose, were shown to participants during the presentation.

The following day the work began. Students, parents and teachers cut back plants and built a brush pile with the clippings which will provide shelter for wildlife during the winter months. Ms. Lauer also joined us and was very impressed with the enthusiasm of the students. Conversations between students included some of the following quotes: "Wow! This is awesome. This brush pile is going to be huge!", "I didn't think pruning would be so much fun!" and "When are we going to come out here again?"



Mary Faulkner

Authors Visit our Book Fair



We were fortunate to have 6 authors join us at our fall book fair. **Julie Mughal** (Sophie and Zachariah's mom) is the author of *The Land Without Hats*; **Lauren Baratz-Logsted** (Alum, Class of '76) and her husband, **Greg Logsted** are co-authors of the *Sisters 8* series; **Jennifer Morse** (Isabella's mom) is the author of the *Book of World Records*; **Carolyn Ebbitt** (Abbie Russo's aunt) wrote *The Extraordinary Princess* and **Carol Boas** (friend of the Abate/Stevens family) wrote *A Room of My Own*.

Thank you, Mrs. Lietuvninkas; Mrs. Schietinger, Book Fair Chair; and the Friends of the Library for another great book Fair!

Welcome Rick

We are pleased that Richard Senft has joined our Facilities staff. You'll see him working with Mr. Bob in the afternoons helping to keep our school clean and germ-free!



Welcome, New Unquowans



Jeremiah Starke, grade 8, has a new baby brother! The Starke Family welcomed baby Elijah on October 3. He weighed 7 lbs. 6 oz.



PreK-4 teacher, **Rachel Beninati** and her husband, Joe, are proud parents of Maya Blu who was born on October 22. Maya weighed in at 7 lbs. 6 oz. and has a gorgeous head of dark hair to match her inky chocolate brown eyes.

Congratulations to the Starkes and the Beninatis!

Fall Sports Recap

We are just finishing up our busiest and most exciting sports season. Our student athletes displayed passion, a competitive spirit, commitment and great sportsmanship.

The field hockey team has been in plenty of tight games and responded with determination. Eighth graders Kai Burton, Peta-Gay Clayton and Katherine Viteretto have been great leaders and wonderful role models for our younger players. Katherine Halas has developed into a fantastic goalkeeper and dedicated athlete. Morgan Hansen, Tatum Hughes and Gemma Lein-McDonough were our most improved players and we look forward to them leading the team next year.

The JV soccer squad has been full of enthusiasm all year. They were led by the offense of Olivia Seymour, Jackson Stalowir and Jae



Stuhlman and the defense of Nora Brennan, Kailey Lauter, Chris Ryan and Derek Grabe. Devin Blanchette continued his strong goal play.

The Green Varsity Soccer Team has been one of our strongest ever. They have been led by the goalkeeping of Parker Diamond and defense of Danny Leszczynski, Justin Blanchette, Brienne Simmonds and Erin Reilly. Sydnee Blanco and James Roland have been our offensive stars.

The White Varsity Soccer Team seemed to be in a "barnburner" every game. We could always count on strong leadership from Tristan Schietinger, Marc Thomas Greenawalt, Mackenzie Murray, Davis Baer and Grace Carapezzi. Charlie Jersey and Bailey Cooke are accomplished athletes who led us in scoring.

Finally, I would like to say thanks to all of our loyal fans! Your support has meant so much to all of us. We look forward to seeing you at all of the basketball games this winter.

Coach B (Boccamazzo)
Athletics Director



Upper School goes on an "Adventure"

Unquowa students in grades 6,7 and 8 attended the Adam Kreiger Adventures Program, an exhilarating six hour ropes course, at Hopkins School in New Haven during the month of October. Our students successfully participated in team building activities that promoted cooperation, listening and problem solving. Working together and working out of one's comfort zone was also the challenge of the day. Students in grade eight participated in the "zipper exercise" where they had to free fall into the arms of friends from a



five foot ladder drop while standing backwards. The trust was well founded as students were successfully caught by their peers.

Both seventh and eighth graders continued to test their confidence, comfort, courage and trust as they climbed twenty feet high into the air to wires and logs which they had to cross. Everyone was successful, but it is always inspiring to watch those who really had to find that extra something within to complete the exercise. It was also a pleasure to hear teammates cheer one another on.

Sixth graders braved a chilly yet memorable day as they strategized to balance the "whale watching" plank with all 16 students. They were impressive as they listened and adjusted their strategies with every attempt. Other games and challenges highlighted the need to listen and adjust throughout the day. It was wonderful to witness each student's sense of team effort and spirit.

LaVern Burton



Russian Dance Troupe Spends the Day with Us



Rossijanochka, the award-winning youth folk dance troupe from St. Petersburg, Russia spent the day with us on October 13. The morning began with a performance by the dancers (ages 8 to 20 years old) - magnificent costumes, incredible dancing, and even some audience participation! After the show, the Russian students visited some of our Lower School classrooms, conducted dance workshops for older students, and joined us for lunch in the dining room. Sharing cultures and providing an opportunity for students from around the world to make connections is the goal of Creative Connections, the organization which brings us these performances each year. The person-to-person intercultural interaction that results is priceless!

Professional Development

Janice Shannon, our PreK-3 teacher and winner of the Virginia F. Birdsall Faculty Award, recently spent a week in Reggio Emilia, Italy. She completed an in-depth study of the Reggio Emilia approach as an educational philosophy focusing on preschool and its relationship to the Primary Grades. This approach puts the natural development of children, as well as the close relationships that they share with their environment, at the center of its philosophy. She shared the opportunity with 65 other teachers and consultants from all over the world — 10 from the U.S. — and is excited to bring back all she has learned to our faculty.



"I am so very grateful to Unquowa for this rich opportunity of a lifetime. 'Gracie!'"

Sixth Graders Uncover the Geological Mysteries of Sheffield Island

On a beautiful 70 degree day sixth graders boarded the RVO (Research Vessel Oceanic) at the Maritime Center in Norwalk, and headed to Sheffield Island to study rocks. Rocks may not sound too exciting, but after finding some flint and trying to make it spark and learning that some of the boulders we were sitting on probably came from an ancient volcano in Ridgefield, we all have a new respect for these minerals.

How did the boulders of Sheffield Island get to this location? Students learned that the two mile high ice sheet that covered the area during the last ice age was probably responsible. We saw the direct results of erosion by comparing the appearance of two different sides of the island. Students also had a short history lesson about Sheffield Lighthouse and learned how the light-house keeping worked before automation.

On the return trip, the marine educators on board helped us examine some of the diverse sea life we had caught earlier in the day. A mantis shrimp and blue crab were two of our favorites.

Rosemarie Sullivan



Alumni News

Alumni Enjoying Founders' Day

Our annual Founders' Day barbeque was a huge success this year. The rain held off and it was a glorious day of yummy food, fun activities provided by the eighth grade, the alumni soccer game and catching up with old friends. We hope you will all join us next year!



Classmates from the Class of 2009: **Matt Kresch, Max Martone, Marissa Leggiadro, Catherine McNeela, Taylor Lopez-Balboa, Mark Watson, Kamau Burton**



Sharon Lauer catching up with **Jean Winton ('34)**



Classmates from the Class of 2007: **Connor O'Brien, Larissa Corriette, and Crisara Smith**

Heard at Founders' Day

Connor O'Brien ('07) is a sophomore at Fairfield Prep where he is currently in rehearsals for a theater production of *Don't Drink the Water*, which will be performed at the Quick Center. Connor was on the Cum Laude Honor Roll all last year at Fairfield Prep - his mother Kip says, "thanks, in great part, to his educational start at Unquowa, of course!!"

Lauren (Lolly) Winer ('68) is practicing law. She and her husband enjoyed the Founders' Day festivities.

Coaches Boccamazzo and Burton caught up with some of our more recent alums and got the following athletic updates:

Doug Brown ('08) plays nose tackle on the varsity football team at Greenwich High.

Taylor Lopez-Balboa ('09) is on the field hockey team at St. Luke's.

Catherine McNeela ('09) plays on the soccer team at Lauralton Hall.

David Novitzky ('08) is on the varsity football team at Fairfield Prep.

Nadia Makhraz ('09) made the varsity soccer team at Lauralton Hall.

Kamau Burton ('09) is learning to play squash at St. Luke's.

Seth Samowitz ('09) is on the football team at The Gunnery.

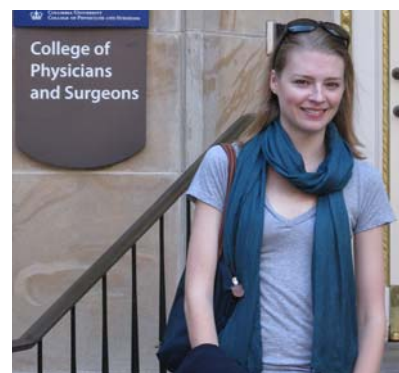
Javante Cameron-Sheffield ('09) is on the soccer team at Marvelwood School.

Max Martone ('09) is fencing at Hopkins.

Josh Knopf ('09) is playing football at Hopkins.



Kristen Thorkelson ('85) is living in Aliso Viejo, (Southern) California with her husband Mark and their two children, Lars, (age 2) and Anika (6 months). In addition to taking care of her children, she finds the time to participate in a couple of triathlons each year and teaches pilates.



Reagan Sayles ('99) is pursuing graduate studies at Columbia for Physical Therapy. She is living in Washington Heights in New York City while she completes her degree. Congratulations, Reagan!

Keep in touch!

Please contact Kate Haviland in our Development & Alumni Office!
khaviland@unquowa.org



THE UNQUOWA SCHOOL

981 Stratfield Road, Fairfield, CT 06825-1697

*Cura Futuri Nobis ~
The Future is in Our Care.*



Founders' Day 2009