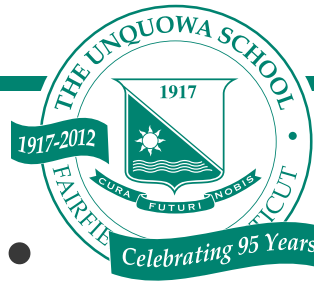


# About U.S.



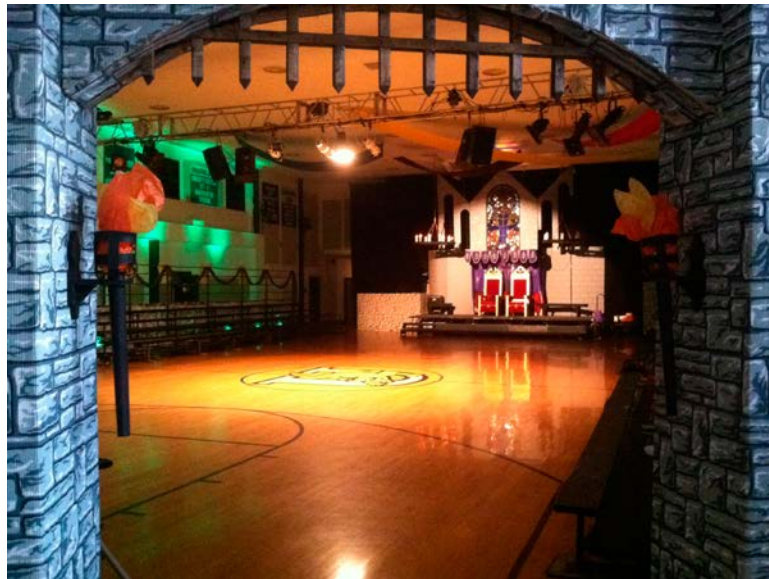
A Publishing Tradition  
of The Unquowa School

## A Message From the Head of School

We've all been in those adult conversations - at parties, at conferences or simply in our everyday lives - where we felt that as we spoke everyone was simply waiting for us to take a breath so that they could barge in to say what they were thinking. And if truth be told, most of us have probably also been on the offensive end of that scenario. It sometimes feels like no one seems to care if they get a meaningful response because everyone just needs to speak, but I can't help but wonder what the world would be like if more of us were, as creativity coach Artie Isaac suggests, educated as children to lead "a listening life".

Our country's celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation brings renewed focus on our sixteenth president and the proclamation's author, Abraham Lincoln, not only for his accomplishments themselves but also for the habits of mind he possessed that led to his historic decision. Lincoln's well-known characteristics seem as fresh today as they did when those of us who are "Baby Boomers" first learned of them in our elementary classrooms decades ago - his resilience, his forbearance, his emotional intelligence and, connected to all of the aforementioned, his ability to listen thoughtfully and to consider all sides of an argument before speaking or making a decision. Lincoln often traveled to battlefields to visit Union troops during the Civil War, he held office hours in the White House to receive common citizens and hear their concerns, and he was well-known for listening to and respecting the advice of a wide range of people, including those who did not agree with him, all before making a decision.

As the leader of a nation, Lincoln listened thoughtfully and used the insights of others to confirm a decision that impacted the fabric of society from that day to this. Though most of us are not in the position to make such nation-changing decisions, I would argue that there is no ordinary person whose impact, personal or otherwise, would not be greater if they were able to focus less on yearning to be heard and more on needing to listen.



The silent Winter Festival set awaits its 32nd version of a carefully curated tradition.

This very important habit of mind is a necessity in our own small school world here at Unquowa, where we are constantly managing the delicate balance between protecting tradition and encouraging thoughtful change. For tradition to be meaningful, it must be actively constructed and constantly curated, not just passively handed down. Because we know that children yearn for a school experience that finds that balance of comforting tradition and personal meaning, we

must include them in that process of constructing and curating - and that means learning to listen, learning to consider and then learning to make thoughtful choices.

"The world becomes what we teach," says humane educator Zoe Weil. Learning to listen more than we speak is a very difficult task, even though, as the hackneyed adage goes, "We have two ears and one mouth for a very good reason". But if we as adults were to set a goal this year of modeling honest listening and then encourage our children to also lead thoughtful, listening lives, how might it impact our families, our schools and our larger world? I think that Mr. Lincoln would say, after listening thoughtfully, "Go for it!"

*Sharon Lauer, Head of School*

## Trimester I Honor Roll

### Unquowa Honors

(no grade below A and no effort grade below 3)

#### Grade 5

Sophia Fitzsimonds  
Lucille Panagos  
Jessica Price  
Karli Vare  
Ava Vinton

#### Grade 6

Benjamin Chapin  
Akash Jyothish  
Siddharth Sunder

#### Grade 7

Conner Calzone  
Elizabeth Halas  
Kailey Lauter  
Marissa Proto  
Olivia Seymour  
Alexander Stein

#### Grade 8

Grace Haviland  
Tristan Murray

### Honors

(B+ average and no grade below B, no effort below 3)

#### Grade 5

Paul Blanco  
Chloe Coseglia  
Anne Marie Dooher  
Zelle Halloran  
Tess Haskel  
Ann McNeela  
Zachary Sherman  
Robert Graham Smith  
Maxwell Victor  
Miriana Wasserman  
Charlotte Yin

#### Grade 6

Rachel Albenze  
Collin Baker  
Nora Brennan  
Hannah Calzone  
Mary Crooks  
Hannah Eldh  
Mae Fleischmann  
Clara Horton  
Olivia Hughes  
Hailey Hughes  
Zander Jehle  
Stuart Martin  
Gianna Pinto  
Carson Solaz  
Charlie Waghorne

#### Grade 7

Claire Abate  
Sara Adriani  
Austin Allen  
Devin Blanchette  
Elysse Cadoux  
Amelia Fitch  
Talia Fleischmann  
Derek Grabe  
Kyra Inston  
Maria Katsetos  
Ayana Klein  
Alexander Morse  
Delaney Murray  
Madelaine Register  
Jackson Stalowir  
Patrick Watson  
Daniel Wisdom

#### Grade 8

Sydnee Blanco  
Michael Brennan  
Ian Chapin  
Abigail Knopf  
Katherine Phelan  
Paul Pinto  
Rebecca Ryan  
Evangelina Scianna  
Annie Lyn Sheketoff  
Brienne Simmonds  
Spencer Solaz  
Colin Spadinger  
Lily Stumpf  
Max Waghorne



Can you name the Five Founding Families of

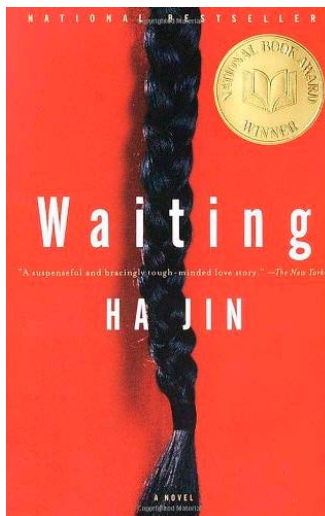
The Unquowa School from 1917 —

95 years ago?

Answer on page 10

## Unquowa Community Read

### *Waiting* by Ha Jin



"There is something about reading another writer for whom their first heard language was not English that makes words appear particularly magical. *Waiting*, by Ha Jin, is a novel where everything happens while nothing changes. For any immigrant, the idea of place is of paramount significance – the places that are not inhabited but only visited, and the ones which are inhabited but rarely possess the spirit. ... *Waiting* is, simply, the affirmation of a small story with enormous and universal reach, beautifully spun by a writer who understands that a home can be created out of words just as surely as it can out of bricks and mortar."

Review by Ru Freeman  
Author of *A Disobedient Girl*

Enjoy reading this 1999 National Book Award winner and join us at school in the evening of April 18th for a discussion.

## 49% of Last Year's 4th-8th Graders Qualified for the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth

Each year the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth conducts a search to identify students who score in the 95th percentile and above on a National Standardized Test such as the ERBs. Mrs. Sabatini, the coordinator of the CTY program at Unquowa, is pictured with 38 of the 47 Unquowa students who qualified last spring.







## Final Phase of Projects

### New Performing Arts Space

Professional stage, sound and lighting with wings

### Dining Room Renovation

Bay windows and glass wall to gym

### New Performing Arts Classroom

### Music Room Renovation



## Greenberg & Panagos Matching Challenge

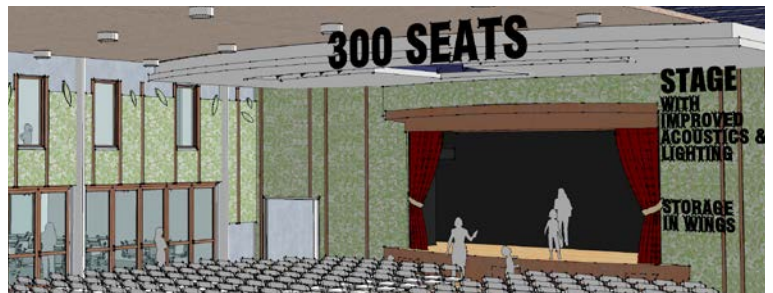
A CHALLENGE ...  
WE'LL MATCH YOUR GIFT!

## Double Your Impact!

\$300,000 matching challenge

Dollar for dollar match of NEW commitments

Until June 30th



Concept renderings by Centerbrook Architects and Planners

Watch our progress and make your 3-year campaign pledge today!  
Contact Kate Haviland in the Development Office or go to [www.unquowa.org/the-campaign](http://www.unquowa.org/the-campaign)

## Knitting with Purpose



In January, the fourth grade class proudly donated hats, scarves and blankets to the Mercy Learning Center. Jane Ferreira, President of the center, visited our class to receive the donations. Previously, our class visited Mercy Learning Center at Thanksgiving with food donations collected from our Unquowa families. After a wonderful Q&A session, our students gained a deeper understanding of the

center's goals — "educate a woman ... educate a family." They were so excited to know their hand knit items would be so deeply appreciated.

*Pat Bruno, Grade 4 Teacher*



## PEL Fellows Leave Their Mark at Unquowa



Creating a life size kaleidoscope? Studying poems about McDonald's? These are just a few of the creative lessons and projects our four Progressive Education Lab (PEL) Fellows did during their months at The Unquowa School this fall. Working closely with their mentors, Fellows Hallie Herz, Aspen Golann, Sam Egilman and Dana Wolfson jumped right into their classrooms.



Mr. Egilman worked in PreK-4 where he not only led morning meeting every day but also taught lessons on shapes, including the properties of those that are 2D and 3D. Ms. Herz taught in the Upper School English classes where she led reading groups and discussions and taught a unit on poetry. Ms. Golann worked with the Lower School art classes on a variety of projects including the design, crafting and installation of a life-size outdoor kaleidoscope. Ms. Wolfson worked with our environmental science program throughout the Lower School and designed lessons on everything from making vegetable soup with the kindergarten to Botony On Your Plate with the third grade and composting with the fourth grade.

These aspiring teachers are the inaugural group of Fellows in our PEL teacher

training program - a new collaboration between The Unquowa School, The Cambridge School of Weston, The Calhoun School and The Putney School in Vermont.



## Our Visiting Student from Guatemala

Geraldine, our 12-year-old visiting student from Guatemala, couldn't believe how big The Unquowa School was compared to her small, bilingual school in Guatemala City. Geraldine, more affectionately known as Geral, never imagined how many new experiences she would have during her eight week stay at Unquowa and with her host family, the Wassermans.

Geral recalls most fondly her excursions with the Wassermans to Boston, New York, Yale, Harvard and Washington D.C. At Unquowa, she experienced several monumental cultural firsts: Halloween, Thanksgiving, playing in the snow and the magic of Winter Festival. Looking back on her experience, she is most thankful for her host family, her teachers and the many friends she made at Unquowa. She admits that, in addition to missing the Unquowa community, she will miss the delicious food — especially the pasta. She will not, however, miss the homework!

Geral was not the only one to benefit from the exchange. She naturally lent authenticity to Spanish classes, often serving as an assistant. Her presence motivated students to learn and grow in their language studies. Many students commented on Geral's courage in traveling alone and reveled at her ability to make it through her days in English. Geral showed the fifth grade students how to make beautiful Guatemalan bracelets and shared a presentation about her life in Guatemala with the seventh and eighth graders.

We were sad to see Geral leave us in mid-December, but thanks to technology and globalization, we know that this departure did not signify the end of anything more than her visit. Her Unquowa friends continue to reach out to her via email and Skype. Her host sister, Mira, even contemplates a visit to Guatemala in the future! We are all so grateful to have participated in this program and hope to continue this bicultural exchange next year.

*Katie Brenna, Spanish Teacher*





## Museum Collaboration

### Fairfield Museum & History Center



Museum educator Christine Jewell discusses the Emancipation Proclamation exhibition with Unquowa and New Beginnings students.

For the past several years, Unquowa's eighth graders have participated in a program called Our Nation's Generations in cooperation with the Fairfield Museum and History Center and this year the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art joins the project. Each year the project focuses on a new topic and includes researching, writing, and creating an exhibit which is displayed at the History Center each spring. For the second year, we are partnering with New Beginnings Family Academy in completing this project.

This year the focus is the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. In preparation for the project, students studied the Civil War and the events leading up to the writing of the proclamation. Students from both schools read the speeches "Are Women Persons?" and "I Have a Dream" and have been studying



current events and considering "Who is an American?" and "What will America be like in the future?" The discussions surrounding these questions are thought-provoking and cause students to consider the direction in which the United States is moving and what they can do, if they wish, to affect the future of our country. The exhibit will be displayed at the museum for a few months beginning in mid-February.

*Debbie Leidlein, History Teacher*

## Connecticut Audubon Society

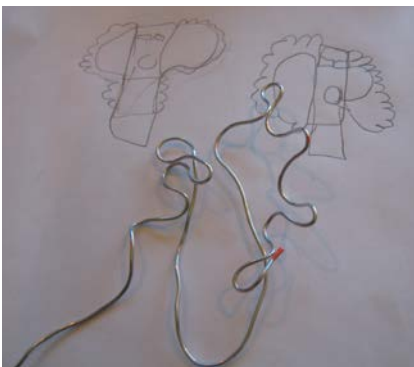


As a culmination of a unit on weather and climate, the fifth grade visited the Fairfield Audubon to participate in a pilot program on habitats and weather. Students went on a hike and observed three different habitats: a meadow, the woodlands and a swamp. They were then asked to observe and record in their field journals the unique physical features of each habitat, to describe the weather and how it influences the habitats and to consider why certain habitats depend on each other. The students were also asked to take and record air and soil temperatures, wind speed and direction and to note any precipitation. After all the habitats were visited, the class discussed why they thought readings were different in each habitat. The students' conclusions were spot on and they learned a lot.

*Mary Faulkner, Grade 5 Teacher*

## Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art

The first graders recently took part in a workshop at the Aldrich Museum that focused on the "element of the line." They looked at lines in architecture, nature, food, and paintings.



The first graders discovered that there are lines all around us! The class went on a line collection in various galleries throughout the museum and talked about how lines can also show feelings and emotions.

Each of the first graders created a continuous line drawing based on one of the exhibits, followed by creating a wire model of their drawing.

*Maureen Becker, Grade 1 Teacher*





## Winter Festival 2012 Solves the Mystery of the Gator

From the coronation of our Winter Festival king and queen, to the “knighting” of our first graders and the announcement of the second grade partridge for the *Twelve Days of Christmas*, Unquowans prepared throughout December for our 32nd annual Winter Festival.

*Winterfest Awakening: Return of the King* told the story of the Kingdom of Unquowa which had been under an evil sorcerer's spell for 95 years. The king had been banished, the children transformed into an impassable thicket of briars, and the townspeople and royal family put into a deep sleep! With the help of a brave knight, a duo of wizards, and a loyal kingdom guardian who was, by chance, turned into a gator, our tale unfolded with plenty of magic, music, and merriment! This year's Winter Festival carried on the time-honored traditions of medieval celebration and spectacle, with an entirely original story that - at its core - shared the important themes of kindness, integrity, and respect and the importance of loyalty and strength for which we discovered our beloved gator mascot stands.







## Winter Festival Preparation: Constructing Meaning From Tradition

In preparation for this year's Winter Festival, Queen Elizabeth and King Alex were crowned at assembly in the beginning of December by last year's king and queens. They wore the gorgeous new capes created for them by Alison Bevan, costume designer and mother of 5th grader Dylan McCormick, throughout the school day. A few weeks later they then presided over the first grade knighting ceremony; our first graders spent weeks leading up to the event earning their knighthood and choosing an appropriate adjective to describe their personal strength. The last official Winter Festival announcement came from second grade teacher, Mr. Ross-MacCormack, who announced that Zachariah would have the honor and responsibility of being the partridge during the *Twelve Days of Christmas*.





## Testing for Limestone



The first grade scientists have been learning about rocks and minerals and studying each of the three rock families: igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic. One common type of sedimentary rock is limestone. It is made from shells and other sediments that have fallen to the ocean floor. Because of this, it contains a large amount of calcium. When calcium reacts with vinegar, it makes bubbles of carbon dioxide. The first grade scientists dropped various rocks into containers of vinegar to check if the rocks being observed contained limestone based on their observation of “bubbles” or “no bubbles”. They recorded their answers on an observation sheet. Way to go, scientists! Science rocks!

*Maureen Becker, Grade 1 Teacher*

## What is Wind?



PreK-4 students have been busy learning about transportation vehicles. They sorted and classified vehicles by where they travel — in air, in water or on land, and they explored what makes vehicles move and why certain vehicles look the way they do. For example, why are wheels round?

Along the way, our preschoolers had fun figuring out what wind is and how wind makes vehicles, such as hot air balloons and sail boats, travel!

*Teresa Hsiao, Grade PreK-4 Teacher*



## Winter Sports Update

This year we have sixty-eight participants in the basketball program — the most we have ever had! We are juggling gym space, playing time and coaching power, but we are excited to have so many active and enthusiastic players in our program. Our schedule is full, as we have added both games and practices to our season.

The Girls' White Team is a competitive and cerebral group that loves team play and competitive games.



We can always count on the Boys' White Team to bring high energy to every game and practice. They are such a talented group.

The Girls' Green Team is off to a fantastic start, with all of the girls playing aggressive defense with strong teamwork.

The Boys' Green Team has great balance, as we have a solid mix of experienced players and new players ready to learn the game.

I would like to thank all of our fans for supporting us at away games and having standing room only crowds at our home games. Go Gators!



*Al Boccamazzo, Athletics Director*



## Suellen Hansen Retires After Thirty Years of Serving Unquowa

When I first arrived as Head of Unquowa on a sleepy July 1st in 2004, many of the staff were off on vacation, so a skeleton crew gave me a warm greeting. I remembered Suellen Hansen, Admissions Director and Dean of Faculty, from our time together that past spring, and I was thrilled that we would finally have some quiet summer time to get to know each other. Suellen had been at Unquowa for twenty-one years at that point and was an Unquowa parent and a fifth grade Unquowa teacher before her current life



Suellen Hansen, her husband Bill and grandchildren Morgan '11 and Will '17 at Morgan's graduation

in admissions, so she had much to tell me. Somewhere in one of those many conversations that first summer Suellen cautiously warned me, "Now, you know that I will not be here for many more years. I am thinking of retiring soon."

Well, I'm glad that I didn't panic at that news because I have been lucky enough to have Suellen by my side for eight and a half years at this point. I have started approximately fifteen hundred school mornings by poking my head into the admissions office at 7:30 am, where Suellen would usually be half way through her morning crossword

puzzle. I would always mean to just say, "Good morning," but would usually stay to chat about what the day would hold for us or review things that happened the day before.

I know from having met them that there are many Unquowa alums who credit Mrs. Hansen with lighting the spark of their love for science. I know that there are many Unquowa alums who would thank Mrs. Hansen for helping them to navigate the waters of finding the perfect fit for high school after Unquowa. I personally thank Suellen Hansen for being an ever-steady sounding board to my every thought, for being an expert pair of eyes and ears to keep us on our mission's path and for promising me "a few more years" when I arrived at Unquowa and yet giving me almost nine years of her experience and friendship.

*Sharon Lauer, Head of School*



Mrs. Hansen as a sixth grade teacher in 1983



Mrs. Hansen with her fifth grade Science students in 1985

## Day of the Dead Skeletons Prove Lively!

The third graders learned that the traditional Mexican holiday "Día de los Muertos" (The Day of the Dead) is a time to pray for and remember friends and family members who have died. Students then created original skeletons using their own designs and colored paper to cut out clothing and accessories. The wide variety of backgrounds were made by using a layering technique to create additional color and texture. Among their skeleton creations were a peacock, a cheerleader, an artist, a hockey player and a skeleton holding his own head. Such imaginations!

*Alice Desgranges, Lower School Art Teacher*



## From the UPA

We've had a busy first half of the school year topped off by a spectacular Winter Festival. Our thanks to all who were involved in this magical annual event! From set-up to costume design to the delicious dessert at the end of the show, it was amazing.

Thank you also to Lisa Albenze and Suzy Calzone who coordinated this year's holiday community service project. The *Gator Giving Pond* was filled with wish lists from local families in need and provided the Unquowa community with the perfect way to give back.

We are looking forward to the rest of the school year and have a number of events planned:

On **February 22, we have a Pot Luck Dinner** for Unquowa parents in the gym. Watch for more details on the parent dashboard in "MyUnquowa."

We have also rescheduled the **Wine Tasting for Saturday, March 9**. The event will be held at school and will feature a selection of fine wines and light fare for the Unquowa community.

Finally, we are "off to the races" on **Saturday, May 4 for our Annual UPA Auction and Gala**. This event is the UPA's biggest fundraiser of the year and allows us to continue to support, underwrite and give to the school in many ways that directly impact our children. This year the auction will be held at the Fairfield Museum and History Center and the theme is the Kentucky Derby (hats welcome!). We will also be honoring Suellen Hansen, Unquowa's newly retired Director of Admissions. Mark your calendars!

And if you haven't already – check out the curricular tanks in the Science Lab! They were provided by some of the funds raised last year by the UPA.

*Mindee Blanco, UPA President*

## Taking On a NASA Challenge

Inspired by the recent landing of NASA's Curiosity rover on Mars, the sixth grade took on the challenge of navigating a simulated Mars terrain in our technology lab.

They programmed their robotic rovers to reach five specific



locations to mimic the collection of soil samples, just as Curiosity did. In addition, the students faced a simulated "unknown" terrain where they were forced to adjust their rover's speed to prevent it from being damaged.

The students did an excellent job of applying the math and science needed to complete this challenge!

*Lloyd Mitchell  
Technology Director*

## UPA Auction & Gala



Our annual auction and gala is a blast...and the UPA's biggest fund raiser of the year! It is also a community effort, so we always count on parent volunteers to help organize it and to solicit donations for the live and silent auctions. Join us and work with other Unquowa parents to support our children's school!

### Volunteers Needed

- Invitation Management
- Decorations and Setup
- Live and Silent Auction Procurement
- Silent Auction Displays
- Program - Writing, Ad Sales and Lay out
- Teacher Projects
- Helping with check-in/out that night
- And more...

### Donations Needed

- Vacation and Travel Getaways
- Spa and Fitness Certificates
- Restaurants and Catering Affairs
- Theater, Concert, Sporting Event Tickets
- Handbags, Jewelry and Fashion Items
- Golf and Boating Outings
- Priceless Experiences
- What would *you* want to win? Let your imagination run wild!

Contact Mindee Blanco at [mblanco2@metlife.com](mailto:mblanco2@metlife.com)



Find us on  
**Facebook**

IQ answer: Stoddard, Hincks, Grippin, Brewer, Hawley



## Alumni News

### Winter Festival Alumni Reception

Over fifty alumni returned to Unquowa for the annual alumni reception before the evening show of the 32nd Winter Festival. They gathered in the library to catch up with old friends and to visit



with their former teachers. Many of them checked out their old classrooms, including the new renovations to the science lab, before enjoying the show.

Due to a record size audience, the alumni graciously and without a single word of protest agreed to give up their reserved seating section to the parents who had not been able to find seats. It was a generous gesture made in the true spirit of Winter Festival! These loyal alums still stayed for the show and watched while standing and catching glimpses through the crowd.

During the traditional closing songs, they joined our students and faculty in singing and dancing to "The Lord of the Dance" and "Hanukkah". Their visit continued through the Royal Dessert after the show and many lingered, talking for hours.

*Kate Haviland, Director of Development & Alumni Affairs*

**Amy '86 and Esther '88 Brieness** visited Unquowa with their father Harold, their children and Esther's husband. They were delighted to see two of their former teachers, Pat Bruno and Suellen Hansen, both of whom had clear memories of them as students.

After studying theater at Hampshire College, Esther's work as a chef, entrepreneur



and teacher of English as a second language took her from NYC to Italy to Asia and back to Italy where she currently lives with her husband and two young children, Daniel and Emily.

Amy completed her Masters in Fine Arts at Columbia University and performed in NYC, LA and in international film festivals. She also wrote, produced and performed in a short film that was screened at the Asheville Film Festival and published a young adult novel. When her young daughter Oona gets a little older, Amy hopes to continue her study of drama therapy.

Amy and Esther are eager to pull together a reunion for Unquowa alums from the 1980s...more news on that to follow!



**James Van Valkenburgh '44** reached out to say that, while he is sorry that he and his wife will not be able to come from Texas for his Unquowa reunion this spring, he sends his best to his former classmates. He has very fond and clear memories of his years at Unquowa.

After graduating from Columbia and briefly considering the teaching profession, he put his strong background in science to use building a long career in "plant quarantine" and worked at numerous USA ports protecting against possible infestations from imported plants and agriculture. He has many entertaining stories of his adventures at airports and harbors from Boston to Texas!

## Condolences

Our condolences go out to the family and friends of two Unquowans who passed away recently -

**Robert deCecco '53**

**Harvey Hobbs '45**

### Alumni from the 1940s & 1950s - Your reunion is fast approaching!

Come visit the school and reconnect with each other

Friday, May 10 & Saturday, May 11

Please RSVP to Kate Haviland at [kate.haviland@unquowa.org](mailto:kate.haviland@unquowa.org)



# THE UNQUOWA SCHOOL

981 Stratfield Road, Fairfield, CT 06825-1697

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

## Summer Farm Camp

June 17-July 12



## Take-A-Look at Unquowa

Our Admissions Department hosts Take-A-Look Days for small groups of prospective parents to visit and learn more about Unquowa.

The tours provide the opportunity to see our classrooms and get a sense of our school's atmosphere. Ms. Lauer meets the group to answer any questions. Take-A-Look Days begin at 9:00 a.m. and last about an hour and a half.

**Thursday, February 14**

**Thursday, February 21**

**Thursday, March 7**

For children entering grades PreK-4 through grade 6  
Registration forms available on our website starting February 1