

In this issue:

[Letter from Head of School](#)
[Educational Change in the Air](#)

[Academics](#)
[Learning Through Questioning](#)

[The Bay School Outdoor Program](#)

- [News & Events](#)
- [Fall Athletics](#)
 - [October Book Groups](#)
 - [Mindfulness for Educators Seminar](#)
 - [Admissions Office Update](#)
- [October Events Calendar](#)

[Print Version \[PDF 494KB\]](#)



Letter from Head of School



Malcolm H. Manson

Dear Friends

It is hard not to gloat.

Two reports, one a straw in the wind and another of great potential significance, came out this week.

The first continues a trend: Scarsdale School district and Haverford School in Philadelphia joined the parade of schools which are opting out of the Advanced Placement program, a program about which the Bay School has had serious reservations from the beginning. (Will some of our students take some AP's? Of course they will, and have, but AP exams will not become an obsession.)

There are two possible long term outcomes if this trend continues: one, that the colleges will go back to using the examinations as placement tests—their original function—rather than a part of the admissions selection game; the other is that a new series of AP examinations will be developed which help measure the sort of depth over breadth courses that Bay and many other good schools emphasize.

The second comes from a faculty report on core curriculum at Harvard. Noting that a large number of their graduates go on to professional schools in Business, Law, and Medicine, they make it clear that the undergraduate degree—the final liberal arts degree—should include some basic content areas. These—wait for it—should include science, technology, religion, and ethics. One colleague wrote to me, “Harvard—the Bay School of the East.”

While it is gratifying that what seemed to us self-evident five years ago is supported by the conclusions of such a high-powered institution, it also raises a peril about which I have written before. In the whirlwind of building the curriculum, attracting students and faculty, and living out the mission, are we taking the time and making the effort to ask the question “Now, what?” What are the new changes and challenges we had not known about five years ago, and what are we doing to understand and address them? What will Harvard do five years from now to vindicate our careful and forward-looking thinking today?

Moreover, the number of hours in the day remains at twenty-four.

Comments as usual are enthusiastically received.

All best wishes,

Father Malcolm

[NYT: Demoting Advanced Placement](#), October 4, 2006

[CNN: Harvard Committee Recommends Returning Religion to Curriculum](#)
October 4, 2006

Another recent article of interest:

[SF Chronicle: After years of teachers piling it on, there's a new movement to ... Abolish homework](#), October 8, 2006

Academics



Ryn Blecke-Fleisher
Academic Dean

Questions Form the Foundation of Engaged Learning

One of the core tenets of our academic philosophy is to encourage Bay School students to build confidence in addressing complex, multifaceted issues. In order to gain this type of confidence, students require both a solid base of knowledge and the opportunities to examine difficult questions that require them to apply what they are learning. As we near the mid-point of the first trimester, the time when most courses have dug in deep, a challenging spectrum of questions frame the curriculum across all disciplines.



Our ninth grade students in Mr. Brody's Humanities I class, while beginning to study India, are addressing the question, "To what extent does environment affect human behavior and the development of societies?" In Writing Workshop freshmen are being asked, "What is it that you believe?" as they construct, edit, and critique personal essays to be submitted to NPR's project, "This I Believe." In Chemistry, sophomores have recently begun a unit based on the question, "Why are some chemicals good for us while others are toxic?" As they explore organic chemistry in pursuit of the answer to this question, they learn through constructing molecular models, investigating the physical properties of the molecules. These same students, for an assignment in their Humanities II class, are prepping an essay to address the question, "How are Muslim values challenged in a secular state?"

In Math III, which includes both 10th and 11th grade students, teacher Andy Shaw

recently asked whether it is possible to create an equation that can model the San Francisco tide cycle, and then asked his students to construct that equation. In the midst of a unit studying slavery in early America, 11th grade U.S. History students are being asked to formulate and support their own opinions on a current topic of considerable debate among historians: "Is slavery a result of white racism, or is racism a result of slavery?" Juniors enrolled in Biology II are investigating through laboratory study: "What is the relative effectiveness of various antibiotics and disinfectants? How easily along a chain of people will bacteria be transferred?" as the current E.coli outbreak surrounds them in the news.

These types of questions are not only being asked in science, math, and the humanities. In Spanish V, for example, the students are constantly exploring complex social issues within the framework of Spanish-speaking films and literature. In Video Production students are considering difficult questions about the nature of their art—asking their peers these same questions through the process of critique. As the academic year progresses, we look forward to highlighting each discipline in more depth—examining the questions (and answers!) that our students are working on every day here at Bay.

Ryn Blecke-Fleischer
Academic Dean

The Bay School Outdoor Program



Spence Stevens

Launching The Bay School's Newest Club

The Bay School Outdoor Program took its inaugural trip to Lake Sonoma on the weekend of September 29th – October 1st. Three Bay School faculty members accompanied eleven Bay School students for a fun weekend of canoeing and camping.

Our enthusiastic group arrived at the Yorty Creek Boat Ramp in several waves after everyone finished their academic and athletic commitments late on Friday afternoon. The canoes were quickly loaded and we headed out to our first campsite across the lake degree—the evening paddle made more exciting by the fact that we had to complete this trip in the darkness, under the light of a beautiful half moon. The calm, still waters of the lake, combined with the silhouettes of the trees, made for a surreal paddle out to the campsite. (The calm only periodically interrupted by a metallic 'clunk' as two aluminum canoes paddled into each other!) The group quickly and effectively set up camp, and everyone settled into some evening snacks, hot drinks, and shared stories.



We rose to find an overcast morning on Saturday and after breakfast, the group working together, quickly broke down camp and loaded up our boats. A leisurely hour-long paddle to the next site included 'running gates' through trees in the water and quietly passing several fishermen. Saturday afternoon was filled with several relaxing activities: reading, card games, napping, fishing, and canoe swamping! Several of the students learned how to successfully "T-rescue" a swamped canoe and others discovered that simply sitting in a swamped canoe was fun in and of itself. Saturday's dinner of Hobo Stew, cooked in aluminum foil in the coals of the fire, was a hit! And, to no one's surprise, there were very few leftover s'mores. The paddle back to the boat ramp on Sunday was a cinch, again due to the great efforts of all the students.

The Lake Sonoma trip was a great start to the Bay School Outing Program. We look forward to offering at least one, and maybe two, 'series' of trips during the year – each trip featuring a different mode of transport/activity to expose students to different sets of skills. This year during the first series we have included canoeing, backpacking, and snowshoeing. In addition to offering students exposure to a variety of outdoor and wilderness experiences, the outings provide memorable opportunities to learn in venues outside the classroom in which they can build friendships and challenge themselves. On the last weekend in October we will head up to Point Reyes for a 3-day, 2-night backpacking trip and on MLK weekend in January we will travel to the Sierras for a weekend of snowshoeing or XC skiing. More adventures are in store.

Spence Stevens, Outdoor Program Advisor, Biology and Chemistry Teacher

News & Events



Stephanie Hamilton

Fall Athletics – Bay Athletes Giving It Their All!

The launch of the Bay School fall sports season has been a huge success for students, parents, faculty, staff, and the Bay School community as a whole. Heading into our 7th week of school, we have met and surpassed every goal for our first season of varsity sports. Girls' varsity and JV volleyball, boys' varsity and JV soccer, girls' golf, and last but definitely not least, boys' and girls' varsity and frosh-soph cross-country, have kicked off the year with a true Bay School Breaker bang!

Our girls' varsity volleyball team is 5-1 in our league; and has given last year's league

Assistant Athletic Director

champions a run for their money. The varsity girls are currently 11-3 overall with 6 games to go before the post-season championships begin. In addition, we are proud to announce that our varsity girls' volleyball team brought home the Bay School's first-ever trophy, winning the last two games against Athenian and Immaculate Conception at the Lick Wilmerding Invitational on September 16th. The girls' JV team is in the midst of a winning season at 7-3, and has made leaps and bounds since the beginning of the season due to their constant and unfaltering team spirit.



The Bay boys' varsity soccer team is at 3-3 in our league, having contended with some of our region's top teams. Boys' JV soccer has come a long way as a team, and continues to display amazing fortitude and determination with 6 losses and 1 tie. The Bay School's very first girls' golf team has shown amazing prowess and dedication, competing in their first tournament last week. The cross-country team has grown from just 5 athletes last year, to 35 athletes competing this season. Recently our Bay runners placed 6th overall as a team in the BCL Challenge West run, in competition with 17 other schools from throughout the Bay Area.

The Bay School Athletic Department is extremely proud of all our teams' accomplishments so far this year, and would like to thank all the athletes for kicking off the most exciting and significant season the Bay School has seen to date. We would also like to thank all our spirited supporters who have cheered us on through victory and defeat alike.

GO BREAKERS!!!

Stephanie Hamilton, Assistant Athletic Director



Rachel Shaw
Librarian

Library and Book Group News

The 2006-2007 academic year is off to a busy start in the Bay School library. New artwork graces our walls, new data bases and reference books have greatly expanded our research section, and our print collection has expanded to more than 3,000 titles.



Most exciting of all are the large numbers of students who visit the library throughout each day to take advantage of research materials, a quiet place to study, and a relaxing place to unwind enjoying the magazine reading room. Students in the Foreign Policy course have been doing research on current foreign policy issues as well as histories of specific countries, utilizing both our current article databases and our print sources. Because Juniors have a free block now when they don't have to be in supervised study hall during their flex periods, they have been utilizing the library like never before. We generally have more than fifteen students in the library during most blocks.

We continue to need and welcome volunteer help in the library from Bay School parents. Please contact parent volunteer coordinator Leigh Stackpole at: e208sf@earthlink.net or 415-552-8892 if you are interested in helping out.

Rachel Shaw, Bay School Librarian

[October Book Group Reading List](#)



Teah Strozer

Mindfulness for Educators Seminar

On Saturday, September 30th, Bay School Chaplain, Teah Strozer, presented The Bay School meditation and ethics program at a day long retreat for teachers and educators co-sponsored by the Association for Mindfulness in Education and UCLA's Mindful Awareness Research Center held at Spirit Rock Meditation Center in Marin County.

Bay School Chaplain



There was a great deal of interest in, and praise for, the Bay School program and a sense that our school is at the forefront of a growing nationwide understanding that the regular practice of sitting silently in meditation is helpful to students of all ages and to educators in many important ways. Recent research has shown that meditation is helpful in improving attention and focus, thus strengthening academic performance. Because meditation also facilitates internal self-reflection and self-acceptance, it assists students in dealing with their emotions, their relationships, and in how they participate in their home and communities.



Annie Tsang
Director of Admission

The Fall Admissions Season at Bay

Greetings from the Bay School Admissions Office! This year, our admissions process is particularly exciting, as the freshman Class of 2011 will complete Bay's founding student body. Since the beginning of our admissions season in September we have met curious, energetic students from all over San Francisco, Marin County, and the Peninsula and feel confident that this year's eighth grade group will be valuable contributors to their high school communities--hopefully here at Bay!



The Bay School Class of 2010

We expect that the Class of 2011 will be our largest and most talented yet. This year's current freshman class represents more than forty Bay Area zip codes, coming

from more than twenty public and private middle schools. Our commitment to a textured student body fuels outreach to as many different local communities as possible. Our commitment to an intimate and thoughtful process allows us to meet and get to know each applicant in person by interview, and we hope that students will take advantage of our relaxed, comfortable interview style to ask questions and share their personalities and interests with us.

We invite you to come to know the Bay School better through many possible options—by visiting our website (www.bayschoolsf.org), requesting admissions materials, attending one of our three remaining open house events, and by scheduling student shadow visits on our campus in the Presidio. Bay School visits are particularly enlightening for prospective students as they offer insight into “a day in the life at Bay,” with opportunities to visit classes and to attend our unique morning meeting.

The fall season is filled with interesting Bay events and activities. Our fall play performances are scheduled on November 9th, 10th and 11th at 7:30 pm on campus. Varsity volleyball is more exciting with each new game as we move closer and closer towards a division championship with a current record of 11-3! Please join our community in celebrating these events. We are eager and proud to share our school with you.

Annie Tsang, Director of Admission

Events Calendar

October & November Events Calendar

Wednesday, October 18th	Admissions Open House, 7-9 pm.
Thursday, October 26th	9th grade parent conferences, noon dismissal.
Friday, October 27th	9th grade parent conferences, no classes.
Thursday, November 9th, 10th, 11th	Fall play, 7:30 pm on campus.
Sunday, November 12th	Admissions Open House, 1-3:30pm.
Monday, November 20th	Faculty Work Day, no classes.
Tuesday November 21- Friday, November 24th	Thanksgiving Holiday, no school.

© 2006 The Bay School of San Francisco