

# ASK GAP:

## You Asked, We Answered

*Note: all of the questions below were copied directly from actual questions placed in the drop-boxes. Keep the questions coming, and see them answered in upcoming issues!*

Dear GAP,

I made a big mistake by breaking up with my boyfriend. But I was hooking up with his best friend. I felt guilty. What do I do? I still love him!

-Confused

Dear Confused,

When you say you still love him, does that imply that you loved him even as you were hooking up with his best friend? It sounds like you are not yet mature enough for a serious relationship. You have already caused this boy enough pain, and if you "love" him, you should stay away for his sake.

Dear GAP,

I constantly feel that my body is still undergoing changes even though I'm almost sixteen. Is there something wrong with me?

-Concerned

Dear Concerned,

There is probably nothing wrong with you. Although you did not indicate whether you are a girl or a boy, each person's individual experience with puberty can be highly variable. The end of puberty can be considered the point at which maximum height is achieved: for North American and European girls, this occurs at about 14.5 years of age, and for North American and European boys, it is about 17.5 years. However, these numbers are merely averages, meaning a large number of adolescents finish growing much earlier and a large number finish much later. At 15 years old, even if you are a girl, you are still within the normal, healthy range. If you have further concerns, see the article below or consult a physician.

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puberty>

Dear GAP,

Do you think The Gap is angry that you stole their name?

Dear Reader,

Institutions like The Gap cannot feel or express emotions like anger. People can, like Patrick at The Gap on Greenwich Avenue, who is not angry: "I honestly don't think that you're stealing our name. I think it's creative on your part. Gap is a really powerful name worldwide, but it's short, and it works for you." Thanks, Patrick.

Source: telephone interview

Dear GAP,

Why does GA consume my life?

Dear Reader,

According to the Greenwich Academy Mission Statement, the goal of this institution is to "provide a challenging, comprehensive educational experience

grounded in a rigorous liberal arts curriculum...with the objective of developing independent, resilient, women of achievement, courage, integrity, and compassion."

Although that process does not, by definition, necessitate complete consumption of your life, the realities of the highly competitive and achievement-driven society in which we live require an unprecedented amount of



Place your questions in the Ask Gap box. Photo: Nicole Bozorgmir

time, energy, and dedication on the part of adolescents who are simultaneously trying to cling to their last days of childhood.

This arrangement is, clearly, not ideal. Try to get through your last few years with a healthy perspective and a commitment to spend as much time as possible doing things you enjoy. Graduation will come eventually and then you will be free, so use the time you have here to your advantage. Academic achievement is important, but not as important as your health and happiness.

Source: <http://www.greenwichacademy.org/aboutga3/mission.asp>

Dear GAP,

My parents love my brother better than me and say they hate me a lot. What should I do?

-Mad

Dear Mad,

Ask your brother for tips and try to become more loveable.

Dear GAP,

I've been concerned with this boy at school. He is sometimes nice but he swears a lot. Is this bad?

-Concerned

Dear Concerned,

Although this depends on your definition of the highly ambiguous "bad," I think it is not. There are many reasons this boy might be expressing himself with profanity, none of which necessarily indicate a flaw in his char-

acter or intelligence. The only thing that sounds "bad" about this boy is that he is nice only "sometimes."

Dear GAP,

It has come to my attention that GA has yet to accept any boys into the school. What is the reason for this? Are you scared of boys?

-Anonymous

Dear GAP,

Make people stop writing dumb emails.

-Annoyed

Dear Annoyed,

Many would share your opinion. Unfortunately, GAP does not have the power to control emails such as "I've lost my pink i-pod" or "Look for my gray sweater," but perhaps you could send out an email discouraging dumb emails...even though that may fuel the fire.

Dear GAP,

My friend hates me! What should I do!

-Unwanted

Dear Unwanted,

Anyone that supposedly hates you can't really be a friend. Maybe find out if there is a reason behind this hatred and mend your mistakes. If not perhaps you should seek some new friends.

Dear GAP,

I just met this guy online who I want to meet, but his name is Rudolph which I think is sketch. However, we have so much in common, like T.S. Eliot and old fashioned diners. We both love The Doors. He is 20 and is an interior decorator with one cat, and he lives with a roommate who still is in college (Rudolph graduated a year early).

I talked to the roommate on the phone and he is nice and plays chess with the cat. Should I meet Rudolph?

-Cautious but Curious in New Canaan

Dear Cautious but Curious in New Canaan,

It's always great to meet someone who shares interests similar to yours. To have a common love for poetry and music is a rare thing. It is also very helpful that you get along with his friend(s). Meeting Rudolph could be a good move but make sure to meet in broad daylight with a friend...a local Starbucks perhaps.

Dear GAP,

My friend is constantly asking for favors and I can't take it anymore! How can I say 'no' nicely?

-Pushover

Dear Pushover,

It's very hard to refuse a friend when he or she asks you to do something; however, you can try presenting it in a nice way, e.g. "I have a lot going on right now, I'm sorry." If the message doesn't get across, sometimes "no" is the only answer. Part of being a friend is being someone that can be depended on. However, there is always a limit and obviously this friend has reached his or hers.

Dear GAP,

What is GAP?

-Clueless

Dear Clueless,

GAP is an abbreviation for Greenwich Academy Press, the well-crafted GA newspaper that is in your hands right now! GAP aims to provide fun and fresh news to the GA student body and keep them up to date on school affairs.

# Greenwich Academy Press

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## Mrs. Dietzel to Retire

Victoria Stockman  
Editor-in Chief

After fifteen years at Greenwich Academy, Mrs. Sharon Dietzel, the current head of the Upper School, announced her resignation. Yet this is not the first time G.A. has mourned Mrs. Dietzel's departure. "I resigned in June, 1996", Dietzel said. "But in September 1998 I responded to a frantic phone call from Mrs. [Meryl] French to help fill in for two weeks as a teacher of fifth grade history."

In accordance with Mrs. Dietzel's passion for the academic field, "the two weeks turned into a full year and in the middle of that year, I agreed to return to G.A. as head of Upper School."

Mrs. Dietzel has had a most impressive career at G.A. "She is an amazing lady," said Mrs. Molly King, Head of Greenwich Academy, "It makes me smile just to think about her because when Mrs. Dietzel talks about the GA

girls, it is with such enthusiasm as the pride of a parent."

Mrs. King recalled the time Mrs. Dietzel was speaking at the Admission Open House. "She shared a poem that a student had given her, and it was clear how moved she was by the words. Her



Mrs. Dietzel talking seniors, Heather Black and Amber Ducksworth. Photo: Victoria Stockman

delivery was so compelling, a complete demonstration of how much she cares for her students, that most of the adults in the room got teary, I included."

Since Mrs. Dietzel's arrival, much has changed in the design of the Upper School. "When I first came to the Upper School we had fewer than 200 students

in a crowded, dark, dreary (and very smelly) building," Mrs. Dietzel commented. "But now we have a little over 300 in a roomy, bright, cheery, light-filled building with no built-in odors."

Students also have much to say about Mrs. Dietzel. One of her advisees, Annie Weinberg, XII, commented, "When I was in fifth grade she promised us she would build us a new Upper School, and she did."

Another advisee, Amber Ducksworth, XII, recalled when, "in fifth grade Mrs. Dietzel substituted for our English teacher. From that very moment I knew she was special, and she will always hold a special place in my heart."

Arrangements for the structure of the Upper School for next year have not yet been announced. Mrs. King commented, "It's tough to picture the Upper School without Mrs. Dietzel. She has set up an incredible process and structure for the work for the Upper School head, and we can count on her to support the transition."

After her retirement, Mrs. Dietzel plans on spending more time with family and friends and enjoying a more relaxed lifestyle. However, she admits, "I have absolutely no idea what my future plans are, and the pace of my present job doesn't allow much time for planning."

## Caffeine: Wake Up to the Truth!

Kate Preziosi  
Editor-in Chief

This morning when I walked down the steps of the Patsy G. Howard Upper School, I was struck by how many girls seemed to have cups of coffee in their left hands. When I pointed it out to one of my friends, she picked up hers, which had been hiding next to her foot on the floor, and declared that she never started her morning without her Starbucks.

Over this past school year, I've been hearing more and more people proclaim their addiction to either coffee or diet soda. And more than one account starts with "I really didn't like it in the beginning, but I drank it to keep me awake while I studied."

We always hear about the negative effects of excessive caffeine: it stunts your growth, it makes you more tired, etc. So why do we love it so much?

One might say that there's always been this many girls drinking coffee regularly, and I've just been living under a rock. But it turns out that the number of teens drinking coffee in restaurants and cafes has increased by 12% since last year, joining the some 90% of Americans who have at least one cup every day.

Researchers attribute this sudden spike of intake among teens to the Starbucks' Frappuccino and the Caribou Cooler, which provide a better-tasting way to get a caffeine fix. But let's not forget the soft drink industry, which feeds the growing addictions of plenty of GA girls with a one-dollar bill at the vending machine. In the past twenty-five

years, soda consumption has doubled. Now, the average American drinks 585 twelve-ounce cans of soda annually.

But we can't help it. In a fast-paced environment such as this one, the drive to keep up with school, with sports, and with life in general tends to accelerate



A student falls prey to caffeine in the library. Photo: Nicole Bozorgmir

with each new school year.

So what else is there to do when five hours of sleep just isn't enough? Naturally, we are going to feel inclined to seek some other temporary substitute for rest. When life is always go, go, go, sometimes you need something to jumpstart the morning.

As it turns out, caffeine isn't all bad. Studies show that if you drink coffee, the caffeine will temporarily increase your short-term memory retention while you prepare for something that requires memorization, such as a vocabulary quiz or biology test. And there is no research to support the idea that caffeine stunts your growth. So for those of you aspiring WNBA players, drink away.

While caffeine certainly isn't all bad, it isn't good when taken in excess.

Doctors tell us that we shouldn't exceed 100 mg. of caffeine a day. That sounds like a lot, but there are 34 mg. in a 12 oz. can of Coca-Cola. If you think diet is better, think again: there are 45 mg. in the same 12 oz. can. Now comes bad news for the Starbucks addicts: 5 oz. of brewed coffee has 115 mg. of caffeine in it. That means that there are 276 mg. of caffeine in a Tall, 12 oz "Coffee of the Week."

Obviously, having a cup of coffee after a late night isn't the healthiest option, but it's still a legitimate choice for the every-once-in-a-while case. What researchers keep stressing for teens our age is consuming caffeine in moderation. It is often chosen by students who need a substitute for a lack of sleep, which interestingly enough can make us more tired than we were in the beginning.

Because caffeine directly affects the central nervous system, it causes an immediate increase in heart rate. For the habitual consumer, this can mean serious sleep deprivation problems when the heart has been continually forced to speed up unnaturally. Then you'll have more trouble staying alert in class than you did before you started drinking the Diet Pepsi.

Be wary of becoming dependent on caffeine in your everyday routine. Drink it once or twice a week to stay awake in chemistry, or to study for a history test. But just know that excessive consumption could eventually do more harm than good.

Sources Used:  
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