

Construction Transforms Middle School

Kristen Schnackenberg
Staff Writer

Walk into the new Middle School and you will come out amazed by the transformations that have taken place.

In just three short months, the old Middle School building has been modified and altered until the inside is no longer recognizable.

Gone are the cramped hallways, tiny lockers, and crowded classrooms. The students of the middle school now enjoy spacious, wide halls lined with enormous lockers. The classrooms have been expanded out towards the pond significantly. A new air conditioning system assures that learning will be possible even in the hot spring months at the end



Photos: GA Plaidnet
Left: frame of the new Middle School, standing next to GA's Upper School in the distance
Right: Close-up of construction site

of the school year.

Soon, Middle Schoolers will no longer have to walk to RWC for classes, due to the addition of seven new classrooms in the upstairs space that will be able to accommodate the growing student population.

Said Middle School Head Mrs. Becky Walker, "The new space has transformed Middle School life. The

new sense of unity embodying Middle School life."

The students' reaction to their new building has been very positive. The girls are appreciative of the expanded lockers and are excited about the drastic changes the building has undergone.



Although the construction is not over, the work is ahead of schedule and should be completed by June 2008.

One of the unique aspects of the building is that it is completely green. During the renovation, all waste was

recycled and components of the new carpets, paint, and furniture were made from recycled materials.

Solar panels on the roof capture sunlight to power many lights in the building, and the girls will be able to see exactly how much sunlight is being captured on a special monitor.

Because of these innovative and environmentally-conscious aspects of the building, Greenwich Academy will be one of the first schools to receive a special LEED certification for schools. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design and is a government program that works to regulate the construction of new buildings in terms of how they perform in five areas of human and environmental health.

The Middle School will receive the silver level of certification upon the completion of construction. Overall, the Middle School has undergone an exciting change that has transformed Middle School life.

Mixed Reaction to '07 Yearbook

Kelsey Collins
Staff Writer

This fall, as we re-entered GA to begin a new school year, the 2006-2007 yearbook was distributed. As students flipped through this more than 400-page commemoration of last year, there were numerous discussions on the quality of this year's edition, and many people shared their opinions of it with GAP.

As in past years, there were criticisms of the timing of the yearbook publication. Recently, the yearbook staff decided to push back the publishing date in order to be able to include graduation and other spring events in the final product. Unfortunately, this change has made a lot of people unhappy. Many people have voiced their displeasure of receiving it in the fall.

As Caroline Blake, XI, pointed out, "The whole point of changing the yearbook to include graduation was to make it more about the seniors—it was supposed to be for their benefit. Now they don't even get to see it at all because by the time it comes out they're all at college. It makes zero sense."

Kelly Whelan, XI, added, "Helen [her older sister, class of '07] was really bummed that she didn't get to see her yearbook. It's unfair that seniors don't get to see the yearbook from the year they graduated, which is when it matters most."

And it isn't only about the seniors. Even underclassmen find it strange to receive the yearbook the following fall. Bridgette Taylor, XI, said, "I liked getting them on the last day of school and being able to look back on the year. When I get it right now, I don't even want to look at it because I don't care

about last year anymore. It's over—I want to move on to this year."

Katie Alisberg, XI, admitted that she still hasn't even looked at her yearbook. When asked why, she replied, "Because it's last year! It feels like a long time ago. I don't care anymore. Maybe in like ten years I'll go through a mid-life crisis and then I'll care. I'll look at it then."

Diana Willkie, XI echoed these sentiments, saying, "The only time you want to look at your yearbook is at the end of the year and maybe like in fifty years when you want to show your



Photo: Serrena Iyer
Ashley Fisher reading the 2006-2007 yearbook

grandchildren. But right now it feels so random."

It does seem odd to be flipping through pictures of last year's seniors riding into school on scooters on their first day. While it would have been funny or maybe a little nostalgic to have seen those pictures at the end of last year, the memories now seem too distant and removed, knowing that those same

girls are now scattered throughout the country at their respective colleges, far away from GA.

Despite these complaints, the responses to the quality of the yearbook have been mostly positive. The yearbook staff clearly worked hard on it and made some improvements on the format from past years.

A few notable changes have been made, the most evident being the change in the color of the cover from the traditional hunter green to this year's white. This has elicited mixed reviews from the students. Some, such as Caroline Blake, "despise the white color," while others, such as Micaela Dudley, XI, "think it's really cool."

Other changes included the addition of pages illustrating the year's events in pop culture and politics, fashion and style trends, and students' favorite bands and movies over the past year. Issy Chammah, XI, said of this addition, "All that fashion stuff was a little weird... I saw a picture of Lindsay Lohan and I was like, 'What the heck? Why is she in the yearbook?'"

However, as English teacher Mr. Jeff Schwartz pointed out, "It could be nice to be able to look back when you're older and remember what was happening in the outside world while you were in tenth grade."

The one change that everybody seems to be happy with is the dramatic increase in candid shots included in this year's yearbook. They truly are candid, unlike the awkwardly posed pseudo-candid shots that are often featured on the GA website and in the magazine.

The yearbook staff clearly worked hard to get action shots of what seems to be every single school event. The photos featured in the yearbook go well beyond the standard class and team pictures. Many aspects of school life are covered that in the past have been forgotten or excluded from the yearbook, including getting ready for dances, summer trips, field trips, sports practice, and even just eating lunch and doing homework in the library.

Head of School Mrs. Molly King said of the photos, "I loved them! They really captured the feel of everyday life at GA." The yearbook staff also tried to include as many images from different areas of GA as possible, from including increased amounts photos of Lower School events to dedicating pages to displaying copies of student's art work.

Marlise Jean-Pierre, XII, co-editor-in-chief for the yearbook, said, "It was our goal to display how wonderfully exceptional and different we students have been in the fields, the classrooms and the stage, and one trait that our staff had found compelling was the extreme focus that everyone exhibits when juggling workloads and extracurricular activities. Our goal was to incorporate this theme in our cover and throughout the book, and we hope that you view the yearbook as a celebration of your extreme concentration both in and out of school."

Features

GAP Welcomes New Teachers

Sophie Kleinert and Caroline Blake
Staff Writers

This year, the GA community welcomed seven new teachers to the faculty. GAP interviewed them so that students could get to know more about them.



Mr. Matt Dresher is the new substitute art teacher. He also coaches varsity crew, Middle School and JV squash, and helps with the lacrosse program.

Why did you decide to come teach at GA?

I decided to teach at GA because it was a great opportunity. I am able to work in both academics and athletics, two of the most important and lasting aspects of my life thus far since I have only just finished college, and I have played sports my entire life.

What was your favorite part of high school?

My favorite part of high school was hanging out with my friends in the upper school lounge and in Commons Hall, our cafeteria.

Friends are incredibly important to me, and high school is where I met many of my best friends. I have such fond memories of practical jokes both at lunch and in the student lounge.

Did you have any concerns about coming to GA?

Most of my friends and family were joking around with me over the summer saying that people would probably mistake me for a new Brunswick student -- something I was convinced would never happen. However, during faculty orientation and the first few days of class it was a funny joke which quickly became a reality - more often than not, people thought I was a Brunswick student.



Ms. Samantha Lane teaches sections of 9th and 11th grade English and is the JV soccer assistant coach.

What did you do before coming to GA?

Before coming to GA I worked at the CBS Early Show as Dave Price's assistant. In addition to booking his flight reservations (of which there were many) and walking his dog, I had the opportunity to travel with him, write scripts, and oversee the production of many of his live shots.

Why did you decide to come to teach at GA?

I came to GA because I knew I wanted to be a teacher in a small, close-knit community like this one. I really liked everyone I met on the day I interviewed, and I have to admit I was a sucker for this beautiful campus. I am also a strong advocate of single-sex education (having attended an all-girls school myself for 13 years) and at the same time am fascinated by the coordination program.

What was your favorite part of high school?

My friends. I graduated with a class of 43 girls and we were all extremely close ... many of us still are today. I was particularly fond of our traditions: our winter concert (I sang in our a capella group all four years and loved it), graduation, Thanksgiving assembly, etc., and the time spent with my friends in our class lounges - particularly senior year when we had a karaoke machine.

After we all got into college we definitely attended more lounge dance parties than classes (not that I'm condoning that behavior).



Mrs. Christine Mangone, GA's new Drama Coordinator, was previously director of the theatre program at Pennsylvania State University.

What do you like most so far about teaching at GA?

I LOVE the students. I have met just so many nice, smart students. It's just so fun and rewarding to work with you all!

What is one word that you would use to describe your own high school experience?

Alongtimeago

Do you have any concerns about teaching at GA?

I worry a bit that the students are doing too much, but so far, from what I have seen, they seem to be handling it quite well.



Mr. Quam Sodji, a new member of the Tech team, comes to us from the Apple Store in the Westchester Mall. He is a soccer fan whose favorite team is Liverpool.



Mr. Tom Sullivan is teaching two sophomore English classes and two senior English classes, including the elective "The Criminal Mind."

What did you do before coming to GA?

I was an English teacher for eleven years at Trinity School in Manhattan. I've also sold hot dogs at Fenway Park (happily), analyzed stocks for a hedge fund (briefly), and edited guides for SparkNotes (ironically).

It goes without saying that I was desperate when I took the SparkNotes job. It only lasted nine days.

What is one word that you would use to describe your own high school experience?

Self-martyrdom

What was your favorite part of high school?

This sounds nerdy, but I liked learning a range of subjects all at once. Once you head off to college, you find yourself leaving behind subjects you liked--European history or math or art. You end up learning one subject OK and leaving the others to rust.



Mrs. Melissa Anderson joins us from the Middle School to teach American history and assistant coach varsity lacrosse.

How is teaching in the Upper School different from the Middle School?

In the Upper School, the students are more independent and classes can be a little less structured. The Middle School was great, too, because we spent so much time with the students and therefore got to know them well.

Which building do you like teaching in better?

I love the great natural light in the Upper School, as well as the proximity of all of the classrooms to each other and to the offices. I did enjoy having a dedicated classroom in the Middle School where we could decorate with maps and posters.

What has been your favorite part about teaching in the Upper School?

Eating lunch whenever I want, and occasionally twice!



Mr. Chris Conley comes to GA from Tabor Academy where he worked in the science department and coached the sailing and basketball teams.

Why did you decide to come to GA?

I taught at Tabor Academy for nine years with my wife, who taught math there. My wife was then accepted into the Yale nursing program, so we decided to move to Connecticut, and I began to look for jobs in the New Haven area.

What do you like most about GA?

I love the tremendous energy of the school and the positive atmosphere. Lots of people talk about a hectic pace, but everything seems to be done with a purpose and the right outcome in mind. Everybody from Mrs. [Molly] King to my advisees has been unbelievably welcoming.

What has been the biggest change from working at a boarding school like Tabor?

Well, at Tabor I was living in a dorm room right on the water. Right now, though, the hardest part of my day is getting to work since I am living in Bridgeport, and I have to commute, which can often be difficult and tiresome.



Mr. Mitchell Elinson comes to GA as an Algebra I, Algebra II, Pre-Calculus, and Calculus BC teacher.

Why did you decide to come to GA?

The private school I was working in was not functioning well. I had applied to teach at other schools, but none impressed me as much as GA. Mrs. [Julia] Guggenheimer did a great job selling the school to me.

What was your favorite part about your high school experience?

I enjoyed my math classes, the wrestling team, and graduation. My high school was very large, much bigger than GA.

Where did you work before coming to GA?

I taught for several years in a public high school in New York City (where I worked with Mrs. Guggenheimer) and for two years in a small private school.

Photos: Coffee Pot (Dresher, Mangone, Sodji, Conley)
Serrena Iyer (Lane, Sullivan, Anderson, Elinson)