

# The Sequoia Source

Sachem Central School District

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Winter 2009

## "The Final Countdown"

By: Courtney Arena

Well, Sequoia, that time is once again upon us, the time to abandon the books for the beach, and the stress for the sun. However; also upon the horizon loom final exams. For many a student, these two simple words can cause a reaction akin to rapid blood pulsing through their veins and stress weaving itself through their life. In order to ultimately prevent or alleviate these results, one must follow a minimal guideline of simplicity and ease. In order to succeed, simply reflect on the four P's: Preparation, Prevent Pressure, and Pace. Decide on an definitive target and always keep it within view.

First, one of the keys to triumph lies in preparation. Break your studying time into small fragments each night, as opposed to resorting to last-minute cram sessions. Personalizing your studying to suit your own individual necessities is of the utmost assistance. Creating personal review guides for each unit is also a superb way to generate organized and effective study sessions. A second step to take upon your journey to academic success would be to prevent pressure. Stress is an unwelcome visitor which only makes this time of year more difficult. With the proper preparation, testing will become less stressful. While taking the exam, remember the importance of time management. Pace yourself when it comes to implementing the test. Endeavor not to race through the test; as an alternative take your time. With these four points, victory is imminent.

Before succumbing to the *summer-mode mentality*, take a brief moment to consider the final exams ahead. For now studying is in order, but soon enough, summer thoughts will prevail!

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### Renaissance Report:

St. Baldrick's - Shaving the Way to a Cure

By: Courtney Arena

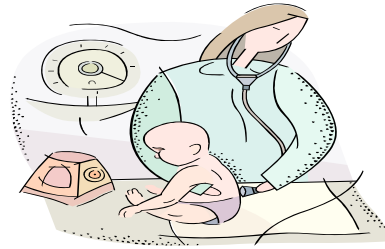
On Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, Sequoya held its second annual St. Baldrick's Day Event to benefit Pediatric Cancer. Its participants, which numbered close to 40, included students as well as staff members. Over \$17,000 was raised! As not many are aware, the month of September is nationally recognized as Pediatric Cancer Awareness Month. It highlights the fortunate survivors, as well as the breakthroughs towards discovering a cure. As the Renaissance Community Service Club believes this issue to be of the utmost importance, a letter and a petition were sent to Dr. Murphy, Superintendent of Schem Schools, expressing the club's wishes for the recognition of September as Pediatric Cancer Awareness Month on the Schem calendar. On behalf of the club, I'd like to take this opportunity to convey our gratitude for Sequoya's support of this worthy cause.



### Student Government

By: Olivia Lattanza

The Student Government has been taking part in many different events this school year that have benefitted our community. To highlight a few of our activities: most recently the Student Government, under the leadership of Ms. Walsh and Mrs. Rossi, has been raising money for autism awareness. Thanks to Sequoya staff, faculty, and students we managed to raise a large sum of money to donate towards this cause. The Student Government also went on a trip to Washington D.C. with 40 students, learning the stories behind many different monuments, memorials, and museums important to our country's history. The Student Government will also be holding the eighth grade dinner dance. This is always a memorable occasion to which the students eagerly look forward to attending, both to spend the time with their friends and say their final goodbyes to their middle school years. The Student Government has done a wonderful job this year with promoting various causes and providing many opportunities for Sequoya students to demonstrate their sense of community responsibility and school spirit.



### Upcoming Events

Students last full day of class  
Board of Education Meeting  
Regents and final exam week  
Last day of school for students

Tuesday, June 16  
Wednesday, June 17  
June 17—June 25  
June 25



### Fun Facts

By: Luke Candela and Michael Hammer



- In the Vietnam War, sometimes soldiers used Slinkies as radio antennas
- You can't say "toy boat" at least five times without creating a tongue twister
- It is impossible to blow butter out of a drinking straw
- It is possible to lead a cow upstairs ... but not downstairs
- a cardboard box has more nutrition value than a bowl of sugary cereal
- The average person laughs 15 times a day
- In England, the Speaker of the House is not allowed to speak
- The Nile River in Egypt is the longest river in the world
- An earthquake Dec. 16, 1811, caused parts of the Mississippi River to flow backwards
- Dogs and cats consume over \$11 billion worth of pet food a year.
- Google's name is a play on the word googol, which is the number one followed by one hundred zeros.

Editors-in-Chief: Courtney Arena & Olivia Lattanza

Assistant Editor: Jin Mi Sohn

Reporters: Alex Volpicello, Jason Zarate, Juliet Wenzel, Jeremy Kline, Kayla Miczkowski, Hifza Malik, Kelly Murphy, Soshanna Melis, Jillian Murphy, Jennifer Gazdick, Bryan Mahony, Daniel Devine, Drew Alfano, Tony Mulieri, Jenny Lam,

Horoscopes  
By Jenny Lam

Gemini (May 22-June 21)

Relationships will be challenging in the first week of June and you will need to find a high level of patience if you want matters to be resolved successfully, especially ones in friendship. As the month progresses these issues will ease and you will be able to focus more directly on certain projects that have your attention right now.

Gemini is the third astrological sign in the Zodiac, ruled by the planet Mercury. Considered a positive/extrovert sign, the Gemini is a lively, flighty, and one of the most communicable characters you'll ever meet. There are no animals currently associated with the Gemini, except the wolf twins Romulus and Remus.

In tradition, Geminis are charming, friendly, lively, eloquent, imaginative, adaptable, dual-natured, elusive, and complex. On the negative side, they can be two-faced and fickle. Geminis make good teachers and librarians, working in media, and communication fields are also very suitable. The symbol for Gemini is the Twins: favorable colors are green and yellow; lucky gemstones are agate, alexandrite and the pearl; compatible signs are Sagittarius, Aquarius, and Libra; famous Geminis are Michael J. Fox, Bob Dylan, Marilyn Monroe, John F. Kennedy, Anne Frank, Brigham Young, Johnny Depp, Donald Trump, Nicole Kidman, George H. Bush, and Harriet B. Stowe.

Cancer (June 22-July 21)

Someone who you would least expect to come to your aid will be very much on your side this month. When you find matters getting too much for you, they will appear with a number of helpful solutions. This may be the beginning of an important friendship in your life. Ruled by the Moon, Cancer is the fourth astrological sign in the Zodiac. Cancer is considered an introvert/feminine sign. The symbol for Cancer is the Crab, which symbolizes protectiveness (especially its massive claws) and longevity. Crabs come in a variety of 'styles' and species and are found in most of the oceans of the world, as well as in many inland waters, like the personalities of many Cancers. In general, Cancers are emotional, loving, and protective towards family members, close friends, loved ones, and especially their children. Cancers enjoy comforts of their home, whether big or small, as long as they are comfortable. Their favorable colors are silver and white; compatible signs include Taurus, Virgo, and Pisces; lucky gemstones include the pearl and moonstone and a few well known Cancers are George W. Bush, Ernest Hemingway, Tom Hanks, Julius Caesar, Tom Cruise, Princess Diana, Bill Cosby, and Gerald Ford.

7th and 8th Grade Art Club Keeps Sequoya Green



The 7th and 8th grade Art Club is helping to keep Sequoya green by creating a giant "polar bear head" for the top of a recycle bin. This recycle bin will be placed in the cafeteria to help promote the recycling of aluminum cans. The Art Club was able to get involved in this worthy cause thanks to a Teacher Center grant being awarded to Sequoya this year. The grant money was used to order the numerous art supplies needed for this project.

This is just one of the projects slated for the grant award that was written by Mrs. Phillips and Mrs. Kwartler of the Sequoya art department. Along with the art department, Mr. Van Kurin of the Sequoya technology department is also involved in the creation of the recycle bin. He will be responsible for the base that will be needed for the "polar bear head" to be placed upon.

The 7th and 8th grade Art Club was involved in designing the drawings for the polar bear head, as well as constructing the large head out of Paris Craft. The Art Club also painted the polar bear head with acrylic paints. The head will be attached to the wooden base where the recycle pail will be placed.

We all feel that the new recycle bin will help to promote the recycling of aluminum cans at Sequoya Middle School for many years to come.

Pep Rally 2009

By: Sheekha Upadhyaya



Rocking the Decades! We toured through the 1950's to the 2000's in our exciting 4th annual pep rally. Thanks to Mrs. Schaeffer, we enjoyed a fun-filled, spirited day honoring our student's achievements.

We had many talented musicians, dancers, performers, and teachers who helped make this pep rally so awesome, including participants from all grade levels. There were performances from the chorus, 8<sup>th</sup> grade orchestra, jazz band, cheerleaders, Arrowettes, gymnasts, rock band players, and even swing dancers. We had students and teachers perform several skits and dances including the *Hoedown Throwdown*, Mr. G. and his single ladies, the beach boys, bikers, and skaters. Also, there was the cha-cha sliders, cupid shuffle roller bladders, and the greasers. Ms. Wasdo was featured as Sequoya's own Barbie Girl, with Mr. Weiss as Ken. In all, this was one of Sequoya's best pep rallies.



### Frost Valley

By: Courtney Arena

What a trip of fun...and frost! Quite recently, in the dawn of April, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade accelerated science students embark on their journey to Frost Valley in upstate New York. Over a 3-day span, the students explored the wilderness on hikes and participated in Project Adventure activities. Within old wooden cabins and lodges, the students spent their cold nights. The trip was enjoyed immensely by all, and the only disappointment faced was the reluctance to depart.

### NYSSMA 2009

By: Olivia Lattanza

Congratulations to all NYSSMA participants. NYSSMA stands for the New York State School Music Association. On Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, the participating NYSSMA students went to Sachem East to be judged on their music skills. Students have to prepare a solo, a certain number of scales, and will be given approximately eight measures of music to sight read. The criteria changes and becomes more difficult as you advance to the higher levels each year. On Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, all piano students performed their piece for one judge inside a classroom, and on Tuesday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, every other instrument from the orchestra or band performed. Also on Tuesday, voice students sang their songs. From levels one to four the scoring system is out of 28 points. Then, levels five and six are based on a 100 point scale system. The points are based on things such as your performance, dynamics, articulation, tempo, etc. Great job to all those who participated. Now it is time to take a break because before you know it, NYSSMA will be here again!

### Editorial

By: Courtney Arena



After a superb and delightful year as one of the Editor-and-Chiefs of the *Sequoia Source*, it is my honor to pass the torch onto Jin Mi Sohn and Alex Volpicello. I perform this task with both reluctance and pleasure. As I cross the threshold to East and beyond, the significance of this experience at Sequoia shall be a lasting memory.

the person I am today, that I finally wanted to give back. So, in front of the whole school, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who not only participated in helping with the Autism Fundraiser, but also the people who have helped Dominick so far to make his life the great success that it is today! My whole family thanks you!

Dominick, if you are reading this, I am so proud of you and what you have accomplished! You will always be "my buddy!" I love you!



### Rob Dyrdek

By: Jake Taylor

Rob Dyrdek is a famous T.V celebrity, famous skateboarder, and an entrepreneur. His two T.V. shows (*Rob Dyrdek's Fantasy Factory* and *Rob & Big*) have been popular teen shows as of late. He has a 25,000 sq. ft. factory where he works/skates. His real house is in Los Angeles, California. Rob's movie that he produced, financed, and starred in called *Street Dreams* about his 40,000 sq. ft. Kettering Skate Plaza. He co-stars with Ryan Sheckler, Paul Dunn, and Paul Rodriguez. His fantasy factory is also in a video game, *Skate 2*. His clothing line, started with former Blink-182 drummer, Travis Barker, is called Rogue Status. Rob's career started when he first picked up a skateboard at the youthful age of 12. Within a month, he won his first competition and became the youngest member of the G&S skate team. At the age of 16, he became a member of the Alien Workshop.

### Do You Trust Me?

By: Juliet Wenzel

For half the day on pep rally day, students were privy to a presentation in the auditorium where they were introduced to the important concept of **trust**. Many demonstrations and a great speech given by our visitor, former Captain of the Minnesota Vikings, helped students to understand what trust is and ways you can determine whether you can trust someone or not. Who can you trust? Well, that's your decision based upon the development of your own values and morals. After the informative slideshow presentation, hopefully you learned the type of characteristics to look for in a person you think you can trust or want to trust. I think this presentation was a wonderful way to help the Sequoia students learn about character development and what is truly important in life.

### Autism Awareness

By: Ashley Iadanza

When I was about two years old, my life was completely changed forever. My brother was diagnosed with Autism. Autism is a mental disorder characterized by an individual experiencing great difficulty in communicating and forming relationships with others. Having to watch someone, especially my own brother, grow and develop with this mental disorder is probably one of the hardest things I have had to do in my life; starting right from the beginning of Dominick's diagnosis. What I mean by this is that it took Dominick about three years to say his first word, "mom." Meanwhile, my sisters and I were all speaking sentences before we had even turned one year old. Since it took so long for Dominick to be able to communicate verbally, we all had to learn sign language. Throughout kindergarten, my sisters and I had to attend a half-day program, while Dominick had to attend a full-day program in order to keep up with his education. My brother wasn't capable of understanding that this wasn't in a sense "normal," so he loved every minute of school. He always used to say to me, "Ashley, are you ready to go to camp today?" By camp, he meant school. But I didn't bother correcting him because otherwise he would start a fight over how only "big kids" went to school, and how he was "never going to grow up." But, as we indeed got older, more and more challenges arose with Dominick on a daily basis. In elementary school there were so many bullies targeting Dominick, that I was actually scared for him. Sadly, I learned how to fight and throw a couple of punches in order to protect him. People often tried to take advantage of the fact that he could not tell right from wrong. Thankfully, there were also the kids who were caring and understanding enough to try and be his friends. I'll never forget when he came and told me about his first best friend. He was so excited! My mom and I cried tears thanking God that he had finally been able to make a friend! This was in the third grade. Now, Dominick is an energetic seventh grader right here at Sequoia Middle School. He is an active participant in several clubs at Sequoia including his favorite, the Drama Club. He played "Sandie" in this year's production of *Annie Jr.* Dominick loved every moment of practicing, rehearsing and, finally, acting in the play in front of hundreds of spectators. He always says, "I want to be an actor just like Ashley, so she can be proud of me!"

Anyway, you probably did not want to hear about my brother's life story, but I think it will help you better understand where I am coming from in the rest of this article. Earlier in the year, I attended the first Student Government meeting advised by Ms. Rossi and Ms. Walsh. At that meeting, they asked for suggestions for various fundraisers in order to help run our club. I knew that I wanted to make some sort of difference in our school, no matter how big or small. This is when I thought of the "Autism Awareness Fundraiser." I talked to the advisors and was given permission to present my idea to the whole student government. We decided to sell Autism bracelets for \$2 each, and then provide an "Autism Fact of the Day" each day over the loudspeaker throughout the month of April. We decided to sell the bracelets specifically in April because April is national Autism Awareness Month. I was so excited to get started! So, as you all know, Sequoia's student government held their first successful Autism Awareness Fundraiser. With the help of Sequoia's wonderful staff and students, we were able to raise approximately \$1000.00, which was immediately donated to Autism Speaks! I was thrilled to be able to help out other people and families who share similar stories with my own family. Shortly after the fundraiser was over, Ms. Stanford asked me to write an article for the school newspaper explaining why I wanted to initiate this project. As most of you can probably guess, it was because of Dominick. Dominick has done so much for me, helping to make me

### The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Spring Concert

By: Olivia Lattanza

On May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade orchestra, chorus, and band students performed their spring concert. The orchestra started the program with five entertaining songs under the conduction of Mr. Jaklitsch. They closed their portion of the program with the song that they also played at Sequoia's Academic Pep Rally which was *Kashmir* by Led Zeppelin. Then the chorus sang, under the direction of Mrs. Zayas. They impressed the audience with five songs including the *Newsies* {Choral Medley} which they also performed at the pep rally. Lastly, the talented 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade bands played their individual grade songs and ended our concert with a combined song called *The Stars and Stripes Forever* conducted by Dr. Benson. Congratulations to Sequoia's talented young musicians.



### Medieval Times

By: Emma Kubinski and Taylor Agost

On May 21, 2009, all the sixth grade students in the Sachem Schools went to Medieval Times. At first, the kids spent time at the gift shop. Some common souvenirs included wooden swords, shields, and princess hats. Then the show began. The show was about winning a tournament. The knights threw spheres, they raced, and even jousted! The meal consisted of chicken, bread, corn, potatoes and, for dessert, cookies. But remember, no utensils! At the end of the show, the red and yellow team won. All in all, the trip was great!

### The G.R.E.A.T. Program

By: Taylor Agost

This year, the 6<sup>th</sup> graders participated in the G.R.E.A.T. program. The G.R.E.A.T. program is a violence prevention curriculum that teaches students important skills to help them avoid gangs, violence, drug abuse, and crimes. The purpose of G.R.E.A.T. is to help students develop beliefs and practice behaviors that will help them avoid destructive habits. During the G.R.E.A.T. program, each 6<sup>th</sup> grade team was assigned a sheriff to work with them. The sheriff's job was to teach the students the consequences of getting involved in a gang and or illegal activity. There were a total of four sheriffs who were involved in the G.R.E.A.T. program. The culminating project, due at graduation, was to create and present a poster, video, or project of the student's choice which demonstrated the power of making their own decisions in life.

## Writer's Workshop

### "Spring is Here"

By: Hannah Dougherty

Hibernation is over and all the small animals come out.  
Squirrels and bears are running about. They gather their food after sleeping for so long

And all the birds sing their favorite song.

Butterflies are flying

As the hot sun is shining.

Bumblebees are buzzing around,

It's all so exciting!

The grass is now growing.

And it's no longer snowing.

All the kids laugh and play a game or two

While the parents cook a nice BBQ.

Spring is the best,

And there is no contest.

Spring is here,

So let's give a great big cheer!



### "Spring poem"

By: Hifza Malik

Spring is seeing rabbits hopping around.

Spring is seeing birds flying around.

Spring tastes of chocolate ice cream.

Spring tastes of ice cold lemonade.

Spring is feeling the rabbit's soft fur.

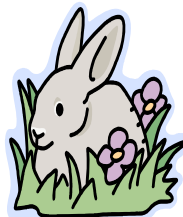
Spring is touching sunflowers.

Spring is hearing children laughing.

Spring is hearing chicks make sounds.

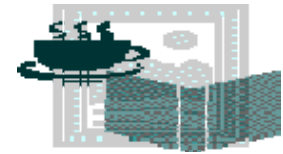
Spring smells of hot dogs cooking on the BBQ.

Spring is smelling honey.



## BOOK REVIEWS

By: Olivia Lattanza



*Eclipse* is the third book in the much-anticipated Twilight saga, written by Stephenie Meyer. The characters in the story have to face, and overcome, many difficult challenges. For example, as Bella learns that Jacob is in love with her she has to choose between either her vampire, Edward Cullen, or her werewolf, Jacob Black. In reality she knows that she is in love with Edward and loves Jacob as a best friend. Also, Edward and Bella learn that a string of newborn vampires are causing trouble in Seattle. They are led by a woman named Victoria from the first novel, *Twilight*. She wants revenge on Edward because she feels that since he killed her mate, James, she should kill Edward's mate, Bella. So the Cullen family and the werewolf pack join together under the leadership of Jasper Cullen, Edward's brother, to try to defeat these violent and blood-thirsty vampires. Once again, Forks is transformed into the epic battlefield between love and the clash of worlds.

### Sense and Sensibility

By: Courtney Arena

*Sense and Sensibility* is the first major work of renowned author, Jane Austen. Set in Victorian England, this classic romance tells the tale of two sisters, Marianne and Elinor Dashwood, who become entangled in a web of affection. They battle tragedies and rejoice in triumphs as they travel upon the path to find the truest of loves. Each of the Miss Dashwoods encounter sheer ecstasy as well as despondency. However, with the aid and sympathy of one another, they can face any endeavor.

### Wuthering Heights written by Emily Brontë

From this classic romance novel emerges one of the most epic love stories of all time. It is a tale of the tragic, but passionate love of the wicked Heathcliff and Catherine, who possess no redeemable qualities, apart from their love. The tale follows Heathcliff, in his ambitious pursuit of Catherine, after her catastrophic death.



### Sequoia's 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Girls' Lacrosse

By: Jennifer Gadzik

The Sequoia girls' lacrosse team had a fantastic and UNDEFEATED season! Although faced with a barrage of challenges, the team did their best to win every game. Their toughest competition of the season was against Gelinas Jr. High School, from Three Village. The team's hard work and practice allowed them to prevail, and they look forward to another great season next year! Good job, girls! We're proud of all your determination and hard work!

### Sequoia's Track Team

By: Olivia Lattanza and Jin Mi Sohn

Congratulations to the 2009 Sequoia track team. The team has worked and trained very hard this past season to improve their speed and times on their races. This year we had a new edition to the track competition, which was the field events. For the first time, students had the opportunity to choose from competing in the shot put and discus throwing with Mr. Loehle, the long jump with Mr. Schnall, a coach from Sachem East, or the triple jump with Ms. O'Reilly. Along with these field events, each student can be involved in two individual running events, allowing each person to be in a total of three events. These include the hurdles long distance running, sprints, the 4 by 100 relay, or the sprint-medley relay. Although pushing us to do our personal best, our three coaches also made track a fun experience.

### 8th Grade Softball Team

By: Melissa Castro



Congrats to the 8th grade softball team. Their captains are Kristine Jankowski, pitcher, Cassie Asselta, catcher, Kelsey Lock at second base, Kayla McKeveney at shortstop, and Maeve Dowd in outfield. These captains have been working and training hard to achieve their goals along with the rest of the team. The coach, Ms. Savarese, has also been training the team hard and pushing them to attain their personal best. I asked Coach Savarese how she thinks her team has been doing over the course of the season and she replied, "I am looking forward to a great season. We have some great personalities and talent who have improved greatly from last year." The team's current record is 8 wins, 2 losses. Good luck, girls, for a successful finish to the season.

### *"Spring Awakening"*

By: Victoria Carle

The snow has melted,  
The morning air is crisp and cool.  
As the sun rises,  
All you hear are birds  
Chirping in the wind.  
Flower buds begin to sprout  
For all to enjoy and see.  
Many of us see the leaves  
That begin to bloom on the trees.  
The squirrels are running up the trees  
To find the food they need.  
The bunnies are running about on the ground  
To eat the grass indeed.  
The bumble bees are buzzing around  
All day.  
The butterflies flutter so peacefully  
Above us.  
The fish look like they're flying through the water  
The birds actually fly with their wings spread out to glide.  
A ladybug lands on your finger  
An inchworm inches along your side.  
The sun is now fully in the sky  
With its bright rays.  
Children begin to come out and play  
On such a beautiful day.  
Now all you can think of is that spring  
Is finally here  
And all the lovely parts of spring  
Are here to stay.



## *“A A B B-Candy Dream”*

By: Anonymous

You go to sleep and dare to dream  
Of things like cookies and whipped cream  
You surf the chocolate covered sea  
And fly on clouds and feel quite free.

You dive into a pool of candy  
And walk on beaches that are warm and sandy  
But then the sun shines in your eyes  
And you run in the kitchen to look for some pies.

## *“Even When You’re Gone”*

By: Arianna Angel Thomson



Even when you're gone from sight  
You're still right here in my heart  
Even when you're not heard  
You still speak to my empty heart  
Now that we can't play together  
You still play with my broken soul  
When everyone has forgotten  
You're memories keep me from crying  
You're never really gone to me  
Without you my world is empty



## *“Sunrise”*

By: Paul Waltz

The sunrise is a beautiful sight,  
It is the break between dark and light,  
The colors are breathtaking,  
But inspirational and dream making.  
If I could see it everyday I would.  
Unfortunately I sleep longer than I should.

**Ms. Purcell:** One of the highlights of my career was teaching at the secondary level.

**Mr. Romer:** Painting the 40's mural at Chippewa, being nominated for SS award at Nokomis, seeing more than 1000 of my students graduate.

**Q: What are your plans for the future?**

**A: Mr. Drago:** I hope to learn to sail this summer, to possibly teach at the local community college, and to spend time with my grandson.

**Ms. Gibson:** I wouldn't call my retirement from teaching "retiring, but rather beginning a new chapter in my life. I am interested in traveling the world, spending time with my beloved dog, Remi, and in keeping up my interests of gardening, attending Broadway shows and participating in my book club.

**Ms. Kwartler:** My plans for the future include sleeping late, traveling to Italy, and eating my way from the north to the south.

**Mr. Romer:** Enjoying the beach, boating, Corvette, and waiting for grandchildren.

**Ms. Purcell:** Traveling to California to see my children, playing tennis, and substitute-teaching are my plans after retirement.

## Interview with Ms. Wasdo

By: Juliet Wenzel

Ms. Wasdo is Sequoya's new music teacher. She attended the University of Connecticut as an undergraduate and is currently in the process of obtaining her master's degree at Hofstra University. She is a talented musician who can play a lot of instruments but is especially good at the flute, saxophone and bassoon. She even performed at Carnegie Hall!

Her first teaching job was unusual in that she had to take a boat to work everyday—she worked at Fisher's Island School, teaching classes from Pre-K through 12th grade. Her classes here at Sequoya are involved in all sorts of fun activities. Her students get to dance, compose music, listen to music, play guitars and play keyboards. During their theater unit, they were actually able to dance in paint!

Ms. Wasdo is an outstanding softball coach as well. She coaches the 7th grade softball team here at Sequoya. Her favorite thing about being a softball coach is getting to work with other awesome coaches and students. In her high school years she played softball, but this is her first year as a coach.

Ms. Wasdo is also a very interesting person. She's had many different life experiences including jumping off a cliff into the ocean in Jamaica last year. She met and served Conan O'Brien, Dennis Leary and Peter Gallagher when she used to work at a coffee shop. She's also a huge Yankee fan (yeah!). Never doubt her abilities; she's making music classes really great and enjoyable for her students. Sequoya is extremely lucky to have her as a member of our staff. Welcome, Ms. Wasdo!

## TEACHERS' CORNER

### Three Cheers for our Five Retirees!

By: Courtney Arena

It is with sadness that we watch our five retirees complete their teaching careers here at Sequoya. We wish them many happy and healthy years.

**Q: When did you first decide to be a teacher?**

**A: Mr. Drago (8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math):** During my second year of college, I changed my major from engineering to math.

**Ms. Gibson (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade English):** My love of literature and listening to the opinions of students and teenagers inspired me to become an English teacher.

**Ms. Kwartler (6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Art):** As a little girl, I would pretend to be a teacher.

**Mr. Romer (6<sup>th</sup> Grade Math):** In college while studying to be a child psychologist.

**Ms. Purcell (6<sup>th</sup> Grade Math):** I decided to be a teacher when I was a little girl.

**Q: Was there any specific person or event that inspired you to be a teacher?**

**A: Mr. Drago:** I always admired my 9<sup>th</sup> grade math teacher who presented math with a sense of humor and unique method that I still use today.

**Ms. Gibson:** My 7th grade English teacher inspired me to become a teacher.

**Ms. Kwartler:** My fourth grade teacher (also my aunt), and my 6th grade teacher inspired and encouraged me to become a teacher.

**Mr. Romer:** Yes, one of my college professors.

**Ms. Purcell:** My elementary school teachers inspired me.

**Q: If you had to do it all over again, would you choose the same career?**

**A: Mr. Drago:** Yes, I would. I have enjoyed many experiences that teaching has offered me.

**Ms. Gibson:** If I had to do it all over again, I would definitely choose the teaching profession as my career choice.

**Ms. Kwartler:** Yes.

**Mr. Romer:** Yes.

**Ms. Purcell:** Yes, I would. I love teaching.

**Q: What are some highlights or your career here at Sachem?**

**A: Mr. Drago:** Meeting former students who have grown to adults who appreciate what I have done for them is a main highlight.

**Ms. Gibson:** First and foremost, the students at Sagamore and Sequoya have been the highlight of my career at Sachem. I have had the privilege of working with so many remarkable young people.

**Ms. Kwartler:** The pep rally, talent show, and especially the art show, were some of my favorite occasions.



## *“Red”*

BY: Emily Seiller

Red is envy  
And rumors spreading

Red as roses

Or the blush on your cheeks

Red like a cardinal

Red like blood

Red is the sound of a lovely melody

You hum

Red is anger and jealousy

Red is warm

But frightening too

Red as a heart on

Valentine's Day

Red like a flower

In a garden

Red like apples on a tree

Red as raspberries

On a bush

Red is a color like no other

It holds secrets but is truthful at the same time

Would there be a pink without a red?

Would a cardinal be so special if it weren't red?

Red is beauty like no other

Red is different

Red is rare...

