A monthly publication of the USPA developed by parents and staff to provide information of interest and import to US families

Dear Valley Voice,

I know the school has both school and community service requirements. What are they?

An Interested Parent

Dear Interested Parent,

US students have a number of opportunities to support both their school community and the larger community.

In support of the school community, each boy in grades 9–11 is required to perform two weeks of school service each year. This work consists of cleaning the classrooms and common areas by picking up papers and straightening desks and can usually be accomplished in a few (10–15) minutes after school on assigned days. Students are also expected to perform four hours of Cadmean service per year. This service to the school community includes activities such as supporting the theatre department through ushering, stage crew or stage set painting, assisting at athletic events as a time keeper or ball boy or working in the concession stand.

US encourages service to the greater community through organized school-wide service projects. The Thanksgiving Food Project involves the entire school community in sacrificing their own lunch and assembling food baskets. Boys who volunteer to be more involved will actually have an opportunity to deliver the food baskets directly to the recipients. There will also be a Community Service Day in the spring when each house will plan, organize and implement a community service project. This allows the boys to approach community service as a shared experience. They will participate actively in the planning, have an opportunity to view their impact and reflect as a group on the significance and effectiveness of their activities.

Many students will choose to do more volunteer work than is required. Students who perform more hours can earn membership in the Cadmean Society (for in-school service) or the Aurelian Society (for community service).

For our last USPA general meeting we were fortunate to have our headmaster, Dr. Richard Hawley, as our featured speaker. Although the boys tell us bits and pieces about their senior projects, Dr. Hawley clarified the options our senior boys have to explore and study in an area of interest through a Strand or Davey Fellowship, Senior Scholars or Senior Experience. As Dr. Hawley explained, this gives every student a unique opportunity outside of the school curriculum to independently pursue an area of interest. In spite of the impending poor weather, we had a fine turn out, and those in attendance were well fed in mind and body.

Because of the holidays, we will not be hosting a December general meeting but hope you will join us in January as USPA hosts grade-level coffees with Mrs. Margaret Mason, Dean of Students, as our featured speaker.

The International Dinner, hosted by Mercedes Villaire and Emily Lucas, was a wonderful success with about 100 people in attendance to enjoy the wonderful and varied food, decorations and community fellowship. The variety of wonderful dishes has prompted Mercedes to consider the creation of a first-ever US cookbook of recipes. Stay tuned for its debut.

After-Prom Fundraising has once again benefited from the Harry London candy sale hosted by Heath Mason. Those of you who ordered candy will have your treats available on November 19. Those of you who have yet to participate will still have an opportunity to purchase candy at the Tree and Wreath Sale in December.

Debbie Little and Marianne Bernadotte, chairs of the annual Tree and Wreath Sale, are eagerly anticipating the sale dates: December 6, 7 and 13. This family activity is a wonderful way to share the holiday spirit with our school community. Debbie and Marianne still have volunteer spots available for this festive event. Please call them to volunteer. You and your son will be amazed at how much fun this event is with the funds going to the After Prom committee.

So, as this calendar year comes to a close, on behalf of USPA I would like to wish you and your family a happy, healthy and restful holiday season. We look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

Kathleen Jung
USPA President

Future Dates to Note

Saturday, December 6
USPA Tree and Wreath Sale from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm
Annual Variety Show at 7:30 pm

Sunday, December 7
USPA Tree and Wreath Sale from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Thursday, December 11
Holiday Jingle Jam, US Jazz Ensemble at 7:00 pm

Saturday, December 13
USPA Tree and Wreath Sale from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Thursday, December 18
US Glee Club Holiday Concert at 7:30 pm

Friday, December 19
Winter Break Begins with Noon dismissal

Tuesday, January 6
Classes Resume
Glee Club and Orchestra Holiday Happenings

The annual holiday concert featuring “Carol of the Bells” and music from Handel’s “Messiah” as well as other favorites will be performed by the University School Glee Club and their a cappella group, the US Males. All members of the US community are welcome to attend this free concert on Thursday, December 18 at 7:30 pm in Gund Auditorium. The University School Orchestra will also perform. Their featured work will be the first movement from Beethoven’s Triple Concerto.

The US Males can also be seen following the US Jazz Ensemble on Sunday, December 7 at the Holiday Circle Fest in the Epworth Euclid United Methodist Church in University Circle. That appearance will be one of nine performances for the Males in the month of December! They will join with the entire Glee Club for a concert with the Mentor All City Girls Choir at Memorial Junior High on Wednesday, December 10 at 7:30 pm.

And All That Jazz

The US jazz year started with a tremendous rush when the Jazz Combo, with a totally new set of players (save for senior Dan Golub) played to very enthusiastic listeners during the US Homecoming cookout in the Smythe Pavilion. This set the stage for the run of performances upcoming for this holiday season.

On Sunday, December 7, the Jazz Ensemble and Combo will be playing from 1:00 to 2:00 pm at Epworth Euclid United Methodist Church in University Circle as part of the Holiday Circle Fest. They will also be playing during assembly for both the Upper and Lower School at times that will be announced soon — school receptionists will be informed when those will occur. The group’s “official” holiday concert, the Holiday Jingle Jam, will take place Thursday, December 11 at 7:00 pm in the Upper School commons. During these performances the ensemble will be featuring music by, among others, Duke Ellington (“Stompy Jones” and Duke’s arrangement of Gershwin’s “Rhapsody in Blue”) and Quincy Jones (“Hikky-Burr,” the old ’70s Bill Cosby Show theme). The combo will be playing music by Woody Shaw, one of the greatest jazz trumpet voices ever, and trombonist Steve Turre, for many years a musical compatriot of Shaw as well as one of the current horns in the “Saturday Night Live” band. This year’s crop of players features many new and eager musicians with much potential.

If anyone would like to book the Combo or Ensemble for any kind of function, holiday or otherwise (business or private), please call group director David Kay at 216.831.2200, ext.331. They have done many such “gigs” with terrific success for over fifteen years.

P.S. Our boys won’t be the only ones performing this holiday season. Mr. Kay himself could be seen performing at the 4th annual “An Evening with Scott Hamilton and Friends” ice show and gala featuring Aretha Franklin that was held on November 22 at Gund Arena. This exciting event was a benefit for the Scott Hamilton CARES (Cancer Alliance for Research, Education andSurvivorship) Initiative which supports cancer awareness, research and patient education efforts at the Cleveland Clinic Taussig Cancer Center.

International Dinner a Great Success

Approximately 100 people from the US community enjoyed a fabulous potluck feast on Friday, October 24. Co-chairs Emily Lucas and Mercedes Villaire would like to thank the following wonderful parent volunteers for all their help: Anjani Chak, Katie Drummond, Sandra Erlanger, Rose Jancsy, Toni Pollock, Noha Ryder, Tonya Tuffuel and Anne Vanic. A special thank you also goes out to everyone who made the delicious ethnic foods enjoyed by all in attendance. The boys who worked that evening to earn Cadmean hours were wonderful hosts allowing the guests to enjoy their dinner and get to the play on time!
The Admission Maze

For those seeking admission to one of America’s top fifty colleges, the labyrinthine process has engendered a nascent industry (often with the imprimatur of these very institutions) to aid in elucidating the so-called “admission maze.” That was the focus of a recent presentation at Hathaway Brown, which featured New York Times education reporter Jacques Steinberg’s promotion of his book, The Gatekeepers, Inside the Admissions Process of a Premier College.

Mr. Steinberg advised parents that the admission process at top colleges and universities was more arbitrary than he had ever imagined. Steinberg, obviously still stunned by his statistically anomalous acceptance at Dartmouth, sought to become “a fly on the wall” in observing the admission process at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. Wesleyan is similar enough to Harvard, Yale and other top tier schools in its admission procedures, and Steinberg documents the experiences of students applying to that school as well as his getting “into the head” of one of its admission officers.

One aspect of the admission process that is bound to baffle parents is how elite schools form their individual admission committees. There is no criteria, and the broader the life experience, the better. To demonstrate this incongruous approach, Steinberg noted that the former occupations of those on the admission committee at Wesleyan contained a rarefied mix that included a former food stamp interviewer, a management trainee at Sears, an administrator of a psychiatric halfway house, and a part-time dogcatcher. Mr. Steinberg mentioned that one member of Wesleyan’s admission committee was actually thought to be in a witness protection program which made discussing the merits of the vast numbers of candidates with this person arduous.

Steinberg emphasizes that despite the previous experience of admission officers, the process is designed to help students attain their goal of acceptance. In essence, the officers want to admit everyone but are forced by space to whittle down the applications. These admission committees, with their resemblance to a jury, really look beyond the obvious indicators of test scores and grades in an attempt to “plumb the depths” of an applicant.

Yes, the process is arbitrary, but there are things you can do. The first thing Mr. Steinberg recommends for aspiring students is to “embrace high school with all they have.” Students aiming for top-tier schools should take rigorous course work, focus on a few activities continued over the long run, and not become obsessed with SAT scores. Steinberg emphasized that there are a myriad of factors that ultimately determine if you will be accepted and that SAT scores represent a less significant part than many believe. The long-standing tradition of favoring well roundedness has morphed as “angular” applicants, those students with specific strengths, are now seen as very desirable. All in all, parents and students are advised that there is no sure way to control or outsmart the admission process, and for better or worse, we should be glad it is this way.
Successful Fall Sports Campaigns

For the second year in a row, all four fall athletic teams competed in post-season state tournament play. Contributing to the successes of these teams were the dedicated coaches and supportive parents, students, fans and alums.

Scoring an upset win over #1 seeded and undefeated Padua in the second round of tournament action, the soccer team then lost a tough game to Walsh Jesuit 3-2 in the District final to finish the season at 9-9. The football team advanced to the second round for the second straight year and finished its season at 10-2, recording the most wins in school history. Cross-country ran to States for the second consecutive year, besting last year’s performance to place 4th in the state. And the golf team broke many records on its way to a State Championship, including the school record by 14 strokes and the Division II record by 35 strokes!

The pride and spirit exhibited by those who witnessed these contests was instrumental in spurring on these young athletes to perform at their best. Thank you for your continued support!

Doug Lagarde
Head of the Upper School

Senior Prefects

There are ten senior prefects on the Hunting Valley campus, one for each “house,” where they serve as student leaders. Each prefect is responsible for working with the faculty housemaster to establish expectations for governance among the boys and faculty of their house. Each of these student leaders also helps design and run activities, initiates service projects, has a voice in discipline and guidance, and fosters the identity and spirit of his house. Needless to say, this position requires considerable time and energy!

The ten prefects work together on the Prefect Council to establish and maintain traditions of collaboration and competition and serve as an important student forum for the consideration of all sorts of issues related to honor, guidance, school procedures, and school spirit. This council takes the place of the more common form of student government with which most parents are familiar.

Boys apply for the position of prefect at the end of the first semester of their junior year. The application process consists of a written application including why the boy wants to serve and what he feels he would bring to the position and his house. It also includes interviews with house members in grades 10 – 12 and faculty house members. Additionally, the applicant needs a teacher recommendation from a faculty member not in his house. Although student house members have a say in the decision-making process, the final decision is made by the faculty.

When asked what an underclassman with aspirations to become a prefect one day should be thinking about, Peters House Prefect Drew Hoffman said the most important thing a boy needs to earn the job is the respect of his peers and the faculty. Enthusiasm and a good handle on his academic commitments are essential because of the huge time commitment. Getting to know all the boys in his house is another key. Earning the job of prefect is less about being the perfect student or the most popular one and more about being well-rounded, enthusiastic and a good communicator. New prefects are announced in early spring and actually assume their duties at the end of their junior year when seniors leave in May for senior projects. So, this is truly a year-long job.

The Prefect Council meets twice a week with faculty advisor, Graham Frey, Dean of Students, Margaret Mason and Head of the HV campus, Doug Lagarde. Headmaster Rick Hawley occasionally attends these meetings as well. Prefects also meet weekly with their housemaster and run house meetings every Wednesday after morning assembly. These busy young men are a link between students and the administration and help mold the school year for themselves and their peers.

Upcoming Spring Trips

As winter descends upon us, two groups of boys will be looking forward to warm spring trips. The Glee Club, along with director Jonathan Palant and accompanist Zaliba Sheikh, will be touring and performing in Puerto Rico during the first week of Spring Break. And the baseball team, accompanied by head coach Tony Ilano and assistant coaches Tony Mendolera and Jay McNally, will be training for one week of Spring Break at the Cocoa Expo Baseball Training Center in Cocoa Beach, Florida. The boys will practice as well as compete.

Reminder to College Trippers

The 2004 After Prom Committee reminds all families who might be visiting college campuses during the coming months to please buy an extra shirt, hat, or other college souvenir item to donate as a prize for the 2004 After Prom party. Contact Myra Roberson at 216.591.9001 or Leslie Dunn at 216.921.5274 to donate your items.

Special Announcements and Flyers

SPA committee chairpersons and parents planning school-wide or class activities are encouraged to highlight their event in the Valley Voice. Article suggestions can be submitted to Marcia Grant or any Valley Voice editor no later than the 1st of the month preceding the desired issue of publication, i.e., November 1 for an article for the December edition. Flyers to be included with upcoming editions must be submitted to Debbie Linich for Doug Lagarde’s review and approval. Approved flyers can be copied for distribution and given to Marcia Grant, Development Office Coordinator, whose office is located in the back of the Dining Hall, for inclusion in the next Valley Voice edition. Listed below are the deadlines for flyers to be included in upcoming issues:

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<td>January 2004</td>
<td>December 12, 2003</td>
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Special Year-End Wrap-Up!

To help celebrate the joyous holidays be sure to remember -

- To give your gift of thanks to US through the Annual Fund
- To use Visa/MasterCard, American Express on www.us.edu for convenience
- To double your gift with a matching gift from your company or board affiliations
- To support quality faculty and programs by giving a gift to US

Thank you to our Parent Chairs, to our hard-working volunteers, and to those who have already contributed to the Annual Fund.
113th Annual University School Alumni Holiday Luncheon

The Alumni Council will be hosting, for the 113th consecutive year, their annual luncheon and meeting at the Hunting Valley campus on Saturday, December 20, 2003. Seniors of the class of 2004 are invited and encouraged to attend. The event begins with a wassail at 11:00 am and lunch is served at noon. The luncheon has traditionally been used to elect the slate of new members to the Alumni Council as well as to thank the outgoing executive board and to welcome the new one. Seniors will have the opportunity to meet alumni from many different classes and will observe a strong alumni organization at work. Invitations will be mailed to alumni and seniors at the end of November.

The field house, squash courts and weight room will open at 9:00 am for those luncheon attendees wishing to play a game or enjoy a workout. Additionally, paddle tennis will be available at The Cleveland Skating Club. Reservations are required for squash and paddle tennis. Please call Jeff Starrett ’75, Director of Alumni Relations, in the Alumni Office at 216.831.2210, if you want a game.

US Annual Book Fair December 2-5

The greater Upper School community is invited to participate in the 2003 Annual Book Fair being held at the Shaker Campus December 2nd through 5th. The event is a collaboration between the USPA and Fireside Books of Chagrin Falls and will be held in the Barry Gallery in Conway Hall from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm. The selection of books is extensive and, for anyone who is looking for something specific, the Book Fair Committee can special order anything in print.

Holiday Shopping at the Prep Shop

Your holiday shopping won’t be complete this year without a stop at the Prep Shop. There are a plethora of new items that beg your perusal. To help you out with your busy schedule, the shop will have additional hours. The shop will be open for business from 7:30 am to 8:30 am (in addition to the usual 11:30 am to 1:00 pm) December 15 through 19.

Please stop by and consider a purchase as a way to show your support to the boys and their school. Gift ideas for her include: luxury bath robes, fleece gloves, microfiber jackets, ribbon belts, zip hooded sweatshirts and fitted T-shirts. Gift ideas for him include: folding stadium chairs, etched glass steins, garment bags and much more. Gift ideas for students could be: hooded sweatshirts, flannel pants and boxers, knit stocking caps, and the ubiquitous mesh shorts that all boys love and need.

Order your varsity letter jacket through the Prep Shop now. Coats are available at the shop for sizing purposes and take about two to three weeks to come in. Get your varsity letter sewn on as well.

Don’t be shy about coming in to the Prep Shop. It is located in the Stouffer Dining Hall and is a little off the beaten path, but as you know, the path less taken can make all the difference. Ask a boy (they know where it is because the shop gives out free candy), or anyone for that matter, where it is if you can’t find it and come in! Remember that the shop can take specialty orders if there is something that you don’t see.

Consider a visit to the shop online if you can’t come in person. The shop has a newly updated website and you can browse at www.us.edu by clicking on Prep Shop.

The shop co-chairs extend their gratitude to all the volunteers that help make it a great success.

Ask the Valley Voice Continued from page 1

The Cadmean Society requires 12 hours of service per year or 8 hours more than the basic school service requirement. The Aurelian Society requires 8 hours of community service per year beyond the school-sponsored community service activities. Documentation for hours served is required and should be turned into the student’s housemaster.

PACT Directories Still Available

PACT directories are still available for sale. The Four Schools Directory contains directories for US, Laurel, Hathaway Brown, and Hawken schools. You can purchase the collection by e-mailing PACT at pactparents@aol.com or mailing a check for $30.00 made out to PACT to: Jocelyne Linsalata 875 Andrews Lane Gates Mills, OH 44040

For those who know in advance that they will be unable to attend, but would like to order books, please call in your order to Book Fair Chair Marilyn Anderson at 440.343.1971. All proceeds contribute toward US.