



THE FACULTY CORNER

FROM THE ANACAPA SCHOOL ENGLISH DEPARTMENT . . .

LOWER SCHOOL LITERATURE

Lower School Literature students began the year very enthusiastically after enjoying Carl Hiaasen's novel, *Hoot*, their reading assignment for the summer. The seventh and eighth graders, who meet as a group, all seemed to have liked the characters they encountered and to have been caught up in the plot, which revolves around threatened burrowing owls. The book is full of humor such as when a hapless police officer, who falls asleep on nighttime surveillance, wakes up to find all the windows of his police cruiser painted black. The story also asks young readers to ponder such serious themes as friendship, parenting, responsibility, and bullying. Currently, the students are reading *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie, which has been a favorite with Anacapa Lower Schoolers in the past. The novel has a self-deprecating protagonist for whom the students feel sympathetic. The first-person narrative is accompanied by drawings, which are often comic but also thought-provoking. Lower Schoolers will be reading many more books, writing a lot, studying some poetry, and adding significantly to their vocabulary this year.

UPPER SCHOOL BRITISH LITERATURE

Anacapa's Upper School students had the opportunity this summer to experience the vastly popular writing of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in his novel, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, an introduction—for many of the students—to Sherlock Holmes and his assistant Doctor Watson. The majority enjoyed the experience and expressed their interest in reading other work by Doyle. Here are a few responses to the novel from students:

- "Sherlock Holmes is so fun because what most people wouldn't notice, he notices and then puts together to make a correct interpretation of what happened."
- "I love Watson and Sherlock's friendship; it amuses me."
- "The characters are charming, from Sir Henry's stolid disposition to Dr. Mortimer's honest and sincere intentions."
- "Its plot is complex and well thought out, and watching Sherlock Holmes put the puzzle pieces together to solve the mystery is a fun and intense experience."
- "Doyle's style of writing and clever use of words give readers a taste of what speech was like back then and keep the dialogue interesting."

The British Literature course is a survey of some of the most important and influential works of the English canon beginning with *Beowulf*, *The Canterbury Tales*, and *The Comedy of Errors* by Shakespeare with the opportunity to see the play on stage at UCSB. We will read works, including plays and poetry, from each century up to the present. Students taking the Advanced Placement option will be doing more in-depth work on poetry and analytical reading as they prepare to take the AP exam in May. They will also have the opportunity to join the Santa Barbara Literary Society in reading *The Paris Wife* and meeting with Paula McLain, the author.

~ Peggy Lauer

P.S. I hope all parents will be able to join us for Parent Academic Morning on Saturday, October 22 to learn more about our academic program this year.