



THE FACULTY CORNER

FROM ANACAPA SCHOOL. . .

Often the best and clearest memories our alumni have of their Anacapa years are the trips. A common comment has been, "I went to places I would never have been." At the start and end of each school year, we take off to travel and learn together for several days. Most of the trips are camping trips, but some are city trips. On our camping trips, teachers and students work together to organize the details before leaving, and they are a team during the trips.

The list of trips the school has taken is quite extensive and can be found on our school web site, www.anacapaschool.org, which also includes photos and itineraries. Some of the most popular destinations of recent years have been Yosemite (Tuolumne Meadows), the Grand Canyon (North Rim), Zion, Big Sur, the Channel Islands, Refugio State Beach, and Death Valley. The San Francisco trips have become legendary for the amount of fun and learning the students and teachers enjoy. Often students enjoy taking their parents back to the places they've been, and they'll likely take their children to these same places some day.

Anacapa trips are a mixture of educational opportunities, personal challenge, student/faculty bonding, and experiential learning. The camping trips teach students camping skills and give them first-hand experiences with nature; they often have a challenging hike the students will always remember. There are also plenty of opportunities for student leadership, especially for the older students.

As I'm writing this page for *Notables*, Suzie and I are preparing to leave for Tuolumne Meadows to take the hike the school will do on September 13 to the summit of Clouds Rest. We've done this hike several times, but not since 2006. We always like to reconnoiter the trips beforehand for safety and to maximize the learning potential.

During our last Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation review, it was noted that Anacapa offered outstanding experiential learning opportunities for our students. It was recommended at that time that we begin to formally assess these trips. Beginning with the Boston trip in 2006, we have asked students to fill out an extensive questionnaire after each trip to assess all aspects of the trips. Here is a sample of some comments students have made:

- "These bonding moments are the structure of our community and the foundation of our school. Trips allow students and staff to learn about each other and build memories that will fortify relations and respect. These simple experiences allow for personal and communal growth and are very important." – Rachel Kulchin, **Boston '06**
- "Being in a hiking group with two of my best friends was such a unique experience because it put us in an environment away from our TVs, computers, shopping malls, and cell phones and really allowed us to just talk. Being in nature and away from our comfort zone was very refreshing." – Heather Nivin, **Tuolumne Meadows '06**
- "The tour of the *USS Hornet* really stood out to me not just because I had a keen interest in it, but because so did everyone else! I think it's wonderful that being smart is 'cool' at Anacapa—I have no idea how it happened, but it's fabulous to witness." – Lily Strelich, **San Francisco '07**
- "Seeing my fellow Anacapans cheering me on made me feel like the whole world was in my grasp." – Chris Eckert, **Grand Canyon '08**
- "The weather didn't break us, but only made us stronger and more unified." – Chris Lancashire, **Death Valley '09**

~~ Gordon Sichi

P.S. It is now time for Anacapa to return to Europe for one of our optional summer excursions. We've had six trips over the course of our 30-year history. Suzie and I will be in Italy for Christmas, and we will be checking things out and making arrangements for our **Italy 2012 Trip** next July. Andiamo!