



# THE FACULTY CORNER

## A WORD FROM THE ANACAPA SCHOOL ENGLISH DEPARTMENT. . .

### **Lower School Literature: 7<sup>th</sup> Grade**

The most recent project for Peggy's 7<sup>th</sup> grade Literature class had students engaged in creating their own nations with both political and economic systems. The project is a follow-up to the students' reading of *Animal Farm* by George Orwell. After we read the novel, we discussed how the rebellion and new society conceived by the animals of Manor Farm is an analogy for the Russian Revolution. A short lesson in the history of the revolution and its key figures helped the students make the appropriate connections, and they delighted in figuring out which pig represented Stalin and which was analogous to Trotsky. As part of the unit, we looked at various systems of government by placing them on our "political eagle" on the appropriate left or right wing of the bird. We examined the basic tenets of communism, socialism, democracy, monarchy, dictatorship. We also talked about common economic systems. To put this knowledge to use, the class divided in half, each group creating its own nation with a political system and an economic system. Students are also creating flags, maps, and currencies for their nation, activities they are having lots of fun with. Their finished products will be displayed in Lassen 2 when they are complete. In February, the students will be finalizing and presenting these projects before they move on to an all-time favorite: *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

### **Lower School Literature: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Alison's 8<sup>th</sup> grade Literature class had a wonderful student-driven cap to their philanthropy unit that was based on the summer reading, *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*. Bakers and chocolatiers from the class volunteered to make treats and other students sold them, so that we could raise enough money to buy a goat for a family in Nepal through Heifer International. In fact, the Anacapa community was so supportive that we also were able to purchase a batch of chickens and a bee hive! The class has just finished their latest novel, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night*, and will begin another this month. Inspired by many of the questions the students asked during our Synthesis Unit talk by Rabbi Cohen at Temple B'Nai B'rith, I've switched our next reading to *Maus*, a graphic novel that speaks of the Holocaust and its continuing effects on later generations. I love the fluidity of teaching at a small school and having the luxury of responding to the students' inquiries and interests!

### **Upper School Modern Literature**

Alison's Upper School Modern Literature classes are currently reading *Cannery Row* by John Steinbeck. We've been talking about Steinbeck's use of narrative chapters and theme-rich interposed chapters. This is a lovely way to explore narrative and theme and come to a greater understanding of the world of ideas that can be discovered in the layers of a book. We have instituted occasional tea parties this semester, during which our current vocabulary list must be used as part of our discourse. We chat about this and that, eat baked goods (thank goodness for student bakers!) and cement understanding of new vocabulary through its practical use. More reading, writing, discourse, and eating are to come in the new semester, as well as some long-awaited Charleston dance lessons promised to the students during our *The Great Gatsby* unit.

(over please)

**AP Literature and Composition**

Peggy's Advanced Placement (AP) Literature and Composition class has worked hard this semester reading modern novels, writing essays, and revising them. They have also been learning about the technical elements and forms of poetry. They can all now identify a villanelle at a glance and are learning to enjoy the power of poetry. At one point, each student presented a poem. We are lucky enough to have Apple TV in the classroom and have been listening to and seeing the authors and poets they have been reading, including viewing John Steinbeck's Nobel Prize acceptance speech. We have also been reading *Hamlet* in class, and the students performed scenes from the play, memorizing their lines. We will begin the second semester by reading *Their Eyes Were Watching God* followed by *Animal Dreams*. Preparation for the AP exam in May will begin in earnest this semester. Students are looking forward to attending the Santa Barbara Literary Society luncheon and meeting the author of *The Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown. This luncheon is on Tuesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> which is during our spring break. I am hoping most of the AP students will be able to take advantage of this opportunity.

~ ~ Alison Strellich and Peggy Lauer