

Soundings

"Men for Others, Delivering News to Others"



February 2014 Issue

Campus Life

First Annual Homecoming Dance

Tim Kiernan '14

Picture this! It was a brisk fall evening in Fairfield County. The stars were shining their brightest. The moon was lit just right. And from Madison all the way down to Greenwich, Fairfield Prep seniors were dressed to the nines in preparation for the First Annual Fairfield Prep Homecoming Dance. They beamed from cheek to cheek through red faces, as they stood before a paparazzi of mothers, eager to capture photographic evidence of the momentous—and often times rare—miracle of females willingly accompanying their sons on a formal date. Cameras flashed under the stars, as nervous couples posed in the frosty autumn breeze for pictures that would undoubtedly surface on the Facebook profiles of mothers and daughters alike within the hour. The night was set to be magical...and it did not disappoint!

Seniors arrived at the dance around 7 p.m. either with the help of an enthusiastic parent chaperone or in a car of their own. The difference between the two means of transportation meant little to most seniors unless the student had some sort of intense aversion to small talk and Bruce Springsteen radio.

Upon arrival, each couple was greeted by Prep's Housemaster, Mr. Brennan. He welcomed the boys with a hearty handshake and a piercing glare of warning that seemed to imply that he had some sort of omniscient capability allowing him to foresee any premeditated shenanigans of which he clearly disapproved. The girls he met with chivalrous flattery, leaving many seniors in shock and fear. Shocked that the infamous Mr. Brennan had the capacity for any form of human emotion other than rage and fury, and afraid that the covert lady's man would steal their

dates!

After passing Brennan's test, couples were permitted to enter the ballroom. There, students and their dates were dazzled by Gatsby-esque décor, music that could rival that of Bourbon Street, and a spread of only the finest American delicacies, including Doritos, Cheetos, and—for the less sophisticated palate—Lays. At the door, couples were encouraged to cast their ballot for Homecoming King, to which many female companions responded by scoffing at the superficiality of the custom; however, by the end of the night, those same girls appeared to be the lucky beneficiaries of a mysteriously generous sum of votes from nameless admirers.

As the hustle and bustle of the voting station dwindled, students and teachers laced up their tap shoes and prepared to boogie the night away. Boys whisked dates off their feet with the suave decorum of a young John Travolta, and proceeded to cut a rug like an old Michael Jackson. These Prepsters were in rare form, a form that I am fairly certain is entirely unknown to the vast majority of their mothers.

Finally, as the night drew to a close, it came time to announce Fairfield Prep's first ever Homecoming King. Students and their dates formed a circle around the dance floor. Boys tried desperately to feign indifference toward the results, while their dates entirely abandoned the highfaluting airs that they had donned earlier in the evening and openly prayed that the crown would be theirs. Eventually, as the night reached its long-awaited climax, Brendan Sullivan and his lovely date, Avery Willett, were crowned Homecoming Prince and Princess, the runners-up to the throne. However, it was Robert Ranzilla and his beautiful girlfriend, Mary Claire Bernard, that were honored with the coveted title of Homecoming King and Queen of Fairfield Prep. The two royal couples enjoyed a majestic slow dance to Van Morrison's "Into The Mystic" as the fairy-tale evening faded to black.



Homecoming King Robert Ranzilla '14 enjoys a dance with his Queen!

Op-Ed

The “Chirp” on Twitter: @SMACKHighCT Reilly Bloom ‘14

In this advanced age of technology there is no question that social media has played a paramount role in human interaction and communication...yet why do we hear so often the flaws of participating in social media sites? In today’s society, online-posting has become a trending—and rather contagious—obsession over attention. Sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have made it easy for people to attain the gratification they so desperately yearn for. One particular account that is buzzing right now on Twitter is @SMACKHighCT, “Connecticut’s only high school #SMACK talk, news, sports, & entertainment account.”

@SMACKHighCT made its Twitter debut earlier this month and is currently boasting 28,833 followers, averaging well over a thousand followers per day. The account is a place for people to “talk smack”, or to “chirp” at other high schools in Connecticut. @SMACKHighCT invites their audience to submit their tweet proposals via an online form on docs.google.com, from where the tweets are selected and shared with the Twitter world anonymously. As lighthearted as some of the tweets are, most of them are controversial, to say the least. Tweets can range from “Branford high school, where the powderpuff football team is better than the varsity boys football team” to “Fairfield Ludlowe High School, where students are sleeping with teachers”. With the type of demeanor @SMACKHighCT is showing, the true art and meaning of trash talking may be lost.

Trash talking is a crucial part of sports, whether you are a fan of it or not. And if you can make it work to your advantage, it can greatly affect the outcome of

a game. Reggie Miller, NBA Hall of Famer and former shooting guard for the Indiana Pacers, can attest to that. Notoriously known as one of the greatest trash-talkers in professional sports, Miller had a knack for getting into his opponents heads. It was during Game 3 of the 1994 NBA Eastern Conference Finals that Miller's skills in trash talking resulted in an ejection for Knicks guard John Starks. Fed up with the pestering words of Reggie Miller, Starks head-butted Miller as a sign of his frustration, and the Knicks ended up losing the game, without their best guard. While they did end up winning the series, it goes to show that trash talking can be a turning point in a game, series, or even season for that matter.

Trash talking is still a prevalent part of our sports culture; but today a masked offender, @SMACKHighCT, is the face of Connecticut high school trash talking. The author of the account, in response to the hatred he/she was receiving, tweeted saying, "Love the kids that stand up for me and understand people submit these tweets. If you don't have haters then you're doing something wrong." Is he or she the one to blame for all the controversy, as most of the tweets selected are explicit and uncensored? Or, is he or she not to blame, as the tweets are submitted by everyday students? To gain further insight on the issue at hand, I had a word with our Class President, Varsity Football Captain, Tony Fox, a fellow Twitter enthusiast.

When asked what he thought about @SMACKHighCT, Fox said, "I personally am a fan of it. I enjoy reading the tweets. It is harmless if a person does not take it too seriously. I always root for Prep and not against another school, but SmackHigh is funny." I then asked Tony what he thought about trash talking, and he declared, "It makes the game more fun" and that "even a little trash talk in a simple card game is fun!" Fox then went on to explain that trash talking in social media is a "sticky situation," and it is something people should stay away from. Andrew Ostrosky, Co-Captain of the Football Team with Fox, had to agree with

him, while adding, “Twitter takes it to another level that can get out of hand very quickly.”

What is disappointing in reading the majority of @SMACKHighCT’s tweets is seeing how rivalries in sports can be taken to a different level. The account has become a place for the anonymous kid in the student cheering section to take an unoriginal joke and make it a direct attack. Take for example the tweets about Fairfield Ludlowe and the student-teacher sexual relationship. That is something the Ludlowe student is going to have to live with for the rest of her life, making it far from a joking matter. Another example can be the one about Greens Farms Academy, “where the gay club is more popular than the sports teams.” This is certainly a tawdry and offensive joke. There is no doubt that had this account existed four years ago there would be at least one tweet about the 0-10 Fairfield Prep Varsity Football Team, but don't think for a second that someone out there has not tweeted about Fairfield Prep, because they have. So in case you were wondering (which I am sure you were), here they are:

As we know, these jibes could not be farther from the truth. And frankly, none of them is really too clever. While this account has fulfilled the obsessive compulsions of high school sports aficionados, I agree with Tony Fox when he says to “make sure your team can actually perform or do what you say before trash talking occurs.” It is in typical Fairfield Prep fashion that we respond to these “chirps” with the utmost class and respect, for as our Varsity Hockey Captain Matt Wikman told me, “No need to trash talk when you play for Prep, because when you play for Prep...you play for Prep.”

Op-Ed

Parking At Prep: Ultimate Injustice

Will Clyne '14

Every senior has been there. After realizing he is running a few minutes late, he breathes a sigh of relief as he pulls into Fairfield Prep at 8:29 a.m. As he weaves through the rows in the Senior Lot, he is hit with the crushing truth that each and every spot in the Senior Lot is occupied. This forces the senior to make a choice: park in the Junior Lot or park in one of the hundreds of spots closer to the school that sit empty throughout the day. Under normal circumstances, a pleasant walk from the Junior Lot on a crisp November day is no punishment, but missing valuable class time and what is waiting at the end of that walk—Mr. Brennan with a blue tardy slip that has JUG scratched out across the top—are quite the punishment.

The second option a senior has after pulling into a full Senior Lot is parking in one of the plethora of empty spots found in the Alumni Hall lot, Kelley Center Lot, and the Visitors Lot. These options seem considerably more appealing than an afternoon with Mr. Brennan, until you stroll out at 2:30 to find an orange ticket flapping in the wind, demanding that you pay a steep \$40 fine.

This Fairfield University practice merits some scrutiny. This shameless, financially motivated scam has proven quite successful with seemingly every Prep student having gotten a few tickets before. Fairfield Prep students are faced with an impossible conundrum, miss valuable class time, and the opportunity to grow and evolve intellectually. Or they can pay a 40-dollar fine because of their commitment to excellence and their desire to learn.

Fairfield University has also placed an incredible amount of spots between the Junior Lot and Fairfield Prep, luring students into their trap. The vast majority of the spots in the Alumni Hall and Kelley Center Lots sit not only closer to Fairfield Prep, but also sit empty throughout the duration of the day. Fairfield University's Campus Security does an admirable job of protecting these spots from the dangers of Fairfield Prep cars.

The exorbitant fees that Fairfield University charges Fairfield Prep students is outrageous enough, but with the implication that, at some point, almost every student gets a 40-dollar ticket, is indicative of the extent to which the University is willing to go to make an easy buck. 40 dollars is no small fee, and for a spot that can be an up to 10-minute walk, it is truly highway robbery.

As a student who has found himself in this situation, I can attest to the fact that few events match up to the dejection of driving past hundreds of empty spots on a path to impending doom.

Because of what the Editorial Board feels are ill-gotten gains, we are proposing that Fairfield University, instead of adding to a growing pile of money (Endowment \$254,000,000), we believe the University should donate this money to charity. That way, Fairfield University can deter parking in what it deems to be inviolable spots, while doing something altruistic.



Campus Life

Mike's Switches to Nautical Dolphin: Highs vs. Lows

Paul Cashman '15

Did you hear that? It was the sound of a group of sophomore sophomores running across the street during their fourth period free to snack on the widely known delicacies of Mike's Pizza. I speak in the past tense, reason being Mike has seen his downfall; he has met his Maker; he has cooked his last pie. Meanwhile, from the depths of the deep sea, the Nautical Dolphin has ridden its wave of deliciousness from the train station to the home of Mikes! The news spread like a fog across the sea and the feedback has been mixed. There are four main eating areas for a hungry Prepster (The Cafeteria, Campus Center, Super Duper Weeny Truck, and Nauti) but the most popular is a few feet across the street. I asked a few students what they think of the change, and I received the following results.

Sophomore Jack O'Connor answered with a prompt, "Dude I have no idea, they're basically the same." I then asked Sophomore George Crist the same question and he answered, "Oh Nauti all the way. The Dolphin has much fairer prices and quality service. A chicken parm from Mike's was \$9 while one from Nauti is around \$7. The workers are nicer and they provide speedy results, not to mention the food is much better. Nauti Dolphin for life." I talked to a few others and I got mixed results, ranging from Mikes menu being better, to Nauti having better drinks (although the drinks stayed the same)... In the end, the Prep community can agree: food is food and when you're hungry after fourth period it doesn't matter who makes it.

Sports

Prep Hockey 2014

Phillip Kenneth Lynch Jr. '14

Fairfield Prep is known for many things, namely: preppy clothing, the Country Cow Deli, and of course, hockey. But hockey stands above the rest. In the last ten years, Fairfield Prep has reached Connecticut's promised land of high school hockey six of those years. Every winter comes with high expectations that are fulfilled all too often at the Wonderland of Ice in the early season and later on at the iconic Yale Whale. While much of the success of last year's state championship team was due to former seniors, many leaders from last year's team are returning. With the return of several key components to an already proven state championship hockey team, the expectations are once again sky high.

Among the returning seniors is Captain Matt Wikman, whose dedication and character embody the spirit of the team. When asked about his passion for Prep hockey, captain Wikman told me that what makes Prep hockey so special is, "Winning championships." According to Matt, a championship "doesn't come easy" and "each and every day we're out on that ice working hard." Apart from personal hard work throughout the year, Wikman believes that the coaching staff is the "best in the state" and considers Head Coach Matt Sather a "hockey genius." Clearly, Prep's success on the ice is never taken for granted by those in the locker room who dedicate themselves to the ultimate goal of winning championships and the coaches who put the players in position to win year after year. Their work and passion is what inspires the students every winter and puts Fairfield Prep hockey above the rest.

Prep hockey is a central component of the “Prep culture” thanks largely to the character and success of the team year after year. Prep’s domination in the past ten years has not only been defined by hard work individually, but also a powerful coaching staff, and a cohesive environment. As Prep students prepare for the upcoming season with high expectations on their shoulders, we cannot take success for granted. While year after year students assume that we will all be taking the iconic walk to the Whale from the train station, we are only granted this opportunity due to determination of the hockey team. Without these elements, Prep hockey would be no more a part of the “Prep culture” than a bacon, egg, and cheese from the Country Cow.



After a disappointing 1-2 start, Prep hockey is looking like...well, Prep hockey. With Matt Wikman, Kenny Kochiss, and Dean Lockery at the helm, Prep is 6-0-2 in its last 8 games. Outstanding play by Freshman Jack Hoey and formidable goaltending by seniors Matt Beck and Chris Gutierrez have allowed Prep to remain a powerhouse, beating the likes of Ridgefield, Notre Dame-Fairfield, and Xavier. As playoffs near, Prep appears as ready as ever to run the table in the state playoffs.

Prep Basketball 2014

Liam O'Reilly '14

After an unbelievable ride last year all the way to the Class LL State Championship, the Fairfield Prep basketball team is poised for an equally, or possibly more impressive, season this winter. Last year the Jesuits were a remarkable 24-3. Though the team lost key senior Tim Butala, the squad returns almost its entire nucleus. This star-studded team is led by its all-world center, Paschal Chukwu, and a fleet of electric scorers. Namely, Tom Nolan, Keith Pettway, and Ryan Murphy headline the offensive threat in the backcourt. The team is coached by Leo Redgate, a man who knows how to win (and has a nice head of hair.) He has had the team in the Class LL finals twice since I stepped into Prep and I anxiously await the third. The team has had a strong fall exhibition season and is ready to hit the ground running. The team is battle-tested and primed for success. Come out and watch the Jesuits play and I'm sure they would love the support of a full bomb squad to cheer them on for their first game and the start of their road to a championship.

It is hard to find a fitting a more fitting word than dominant to describe Prep Basketball's play this year. Leo Redgate knew this was his year, the team has been electric. Boasting a 13-0 record, a victory against perennial power Hillhouse, and over 70 points in 9 of 13 games, Prep basketball is deserving of its number one state ranking. Under the leadership of vets Keith Pettway, Dave Zeilinski, and Tom Nolan, there is nothing this team--gilded by the towering senior Paschal Chukwu and scorer sophomore Ryan Murphy--is incapable of accomplishing. Editor's Note: Since this article was written, Prep finished their regular season 20-0, moving on the playoffs.

Campus Life

The Prep Players Perform: *Clockwork. Well, Satire Too.*

Jack O'Connell '14

Fairfield Prep is often stereotyped as a bastion of sports craze—and perhaps with that assumption comes a perceived lack of culture. November 13-15, the Prep Players, with Mrs. Hoover at the helm, put on quite a show. *Clockwork* was like no show I had ever seen before (although my theatrical knowledge is no more extensive than that of the average primate.)

There is no doubting Prep's depth in talent. In my opinion, Sergio Cruz '14, Brian O'Donnell '14, and Bernardo Moreno '14 were certainly standout performers. The set, sound, dialogue, and acting were remarkably professional. Lines were memorized and perfected; improvisations were witty; inflection always seemed appropriate, and not histrionic. This play, however, was not your run-of-the-mill school play. It was incredibly fast-paced—30 skits in one hour! That feat alone is a tribute to the perfectionism manifested in the play.

Although the acting and execution were sublime, many—including myself—couldn't help but question the choice of script. It was written by neo-futurists. If you don't know what neo-futurism is, join the club (I have to admit I had no idea!) After a cursory research, I found that neo-futurism is basically an artistic philosophy rooted in the idea that an actor plays himself or herself, yielding an honest, satirical, and fast-paced performance. This seemed a little paradoxical. How is a "Prep Player" supposed to implement his own acting style and personality into a play that was written by someone he's never really met before? On this, Sergio Cruz '14 noted, "There was room for improvisation." I think most

would have liked more of that, as the average Prep kid doesn't speak in arcane symbolism. Perhaps I am in the minority, but I think the green tea-sipping, ironic urbanites aren't the most fitting writers for a Prep play. Personally, I would have liked to see our clear theatrical, directorial, and technical talent challenged by something a bit more traditional.



Alumni Letter

Former Prep Student, Chris Felner '13, writes to the Prep student body, informing them on what life is like after Prep and offering advice from his own experience at Prep:

“To all students at Fairfield Prep,

What’s up boys? Maybe some of you know me, but I’m sure the majority don’t, so, I’ll introduce myself. My name is Chris Felner, I graduated from Prep last year (2013), and I currently go to University of Southern California. I was asked to write this letter by one of your fellow Prep brothers and I couldn’t be more excited to reach back out to the school. To put my last four years simply – Prep was heaven. Straight up Zion. I didn’t realize how much I was truly enjoying myself until I graduated and now, like almost every alum, I look back and think about my time at Prep as the glory days. No doubt there were rough patches to get over – from bomb squad bans to tests that you don’t stand a chance at passing, but honestly there is no place like Prep. I know currently a lot of changes are being made, but I have full faith in you boys to keep up the old traditions and the same liveliness.

To get to the purpose of this write-up, I was asked to share with you guys a little bit about my experiences after Prep. Right now I’m studying music industry at USC and it’s really just a great time. Classes are relatively interesting, similar school spirit (real hype), and the weather is great. I came out here after being really involved in making music and viewing LA as the place to go, but honestly I didn’t really have an idea of what I was getting myself into. You probably won’t either and that’s a great thing.

College is very different. The first thing you’ll realize is that you miss your boys. At Prep, you’ll, without a doubt, develop the best friend group you’ll ever have in your life and it’s legitimately painful to leave that if you’re traveling for school. However, on school breaks, you come back and absolutely kill it with your Prep brothers and everything feels normal. Just last week a couple of my best friends and I mobbed through the Prep halls on a visit and reminisced about how much we miss the place. I could

continue to talk about the many differences between college and high school , but honestly I think this brotherhood aspect is the only one worth noting. You probably hear the concept of brotherhood way too much during retreats and in class, but I'm here to tell you that it is very real. Prep gave me a family of kids who I know would die for me and I would, without a doubt, do the same for them – and I think it really is amazing that a high school can cultivate such a bond.

Overall, I just wanted to put that on the table and tell you guys to cherish where you are and the people around you. You're probably in the most comfortable spot in your life and, regardless of any changes, as you all will experience with college, the community aspect of Prep is something that does not fade. The ones you are close with now will be the ones by your side forever. Fight the system and love your brothers.

Hail Fairfield,
Chris Felner