

Mid-Peninsula High School

CONNECTIONS

MAGAZINE :: WINTER 2019



Exploring the World of Biotech, Page 9

RESPECT :: KINDNESS :: ACCEPTANCE :: RESPONSIBILITY



LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

One of my goals this year has been to try to spend more time with students. An oddity of career advancement in schools is that the higher one goes up the administrative ladder, the further one moves away from students. Having started my career with several wonderful years in the classroom, I have missed sharing spaces and conversations with young adults.

I began the year in September by sitting in on Mid-Pen's Peer Leadership group, led by school counselor Wendi Wells. Peer Leadership is one of the many student clubs at Mid-Pen, each with its own faculty advisor. The group, as the name suggests, leads projects and initiatives that serve the school community. I enjoyed being with those students and was also curious to find a club that needed an adult advisor. Fortunately, a group of environmentally-conscious students gathered to form Mid-Pen's Environmental Club. I saw an immediate alignment of my own values with those of the club, and for the most part, I've been able to attend their weekly meetings to offer insight and advice.

What I've loved most is watching these students solve actual problems. When the school needed volunteers to start our new garden program, the club stepped up to plant and harvest the produce. When the kids saw leftover food going to waste, they initiated a compost program and made videos to educate the community on how to make use of the different compost, recycling, and landfill bins on campus. In December, the club educated itself on the poaching of rhinos and discussed what we could do at Mid-Pen to help put a stop to this crisis. The Environmental Club, like many Mid-Pen clubs, has ambitious plans to make Mid-Pen – and even our world – a better place.

Aside from clubs, I've been visiting classes to share time with students. I've seen all of my colleagues teach,

and while all of them have their own teaching styles, their classes invariably put the students at the center of the lessons. I recently visited Tara Theobald-Anderson's

Gender Studies class and watched and listened to the students respond to an excerpt from Betty Friedan's groundbreaking 1963 book, *The Feminist Mystique*, and The Rolling Stones' "Mother's Little Helper," recorded three years later. Hearing both Tara and the students hold the book and the song in dialog with each other was fantastic.

Another personal highlight was accompanying a group of kids on our fall Community Service day. My group took a short walk from campus to do work at a local school that serves children and adults with developmental challenges. We spent two hours weeding and cleaning around the building and another hour helping in the art room. I loved watching our students in a different space make a real difference in our extended community.

Finally, my day is never whole unless I greet students at the door in the morning or say farewell in the afternoon. I'm paid to do certain tasks every day, from evaluating staff to working with the board on our budget. However, saying a warm "hello" and a fond "take care" is work I do for free. Seeing students is by far the best part of my day.

Educators hold the hope of touching the future every year. At Mid-Pen, we see student leadership on local and global issues. Kids come to Mid-Pen to learn and to gain confidence to take on any challenge. If the Mid-Pen kids I'm fortunate to interact with every day are any example, our future is indeed bright. 🌸


Phil Gutierrez



CONNECTIONS

CONNECTIONS is published twice yearly, in January and July, for the parents, alumni, faculty, and friends of Mid-Peninsula High School.

Henry Trevor,
Director of Development
Design by Lori Susi
Printed by Bay Area Graphics

Front cover: Greg Prieto '20
conducts a biotech experiment.
Photo by Veronica Riedel P '22.

Back cover and biotech class
photos by Veronica Riedel P '22

The views expressed in this
publication are solely those of
the authors.

Mid-Peninsula High School
1340 Willow Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025
www.mid-pen.org

To submit alumni news and
address changes, please
contact alums@mid-pen.org



From D&D to Diversity, Student Clubs Are Thriving

Whether playing fantasy games or caring for the environment, Mid-Pen's student clubs give students the opportunity to pursue their passions and develop new interests each week. This past fall Mid-Pen held its first-ever Club Fair. Organized by Peer Leadership under the guidance of counselor Wendi Wells, the fair featured an astounding seventeen clubs.

Several new clubs made their debut at the fair. Senior Rebecca Newman is spearheading the school's literary magazine, which she hopes will create something "in the mold of my favorite magazine, *The New Yorker*." Another new group is the Environmental Club, led by Davey Feng '19. The club worked with the school's Director of Facilities, Bob Yapp, to bring compost bins to campus this fall.

Clubs cover the spectrum of student interests: from the Dungeons and Dragons Club to the Nintendo Club, from the Genders and Sexualities Alliance to the Diversity Council, from Music Appreciation to the Podcast Club. "It was really fun to see how many students came to the fair to find new sparks of interest," said Wendi.

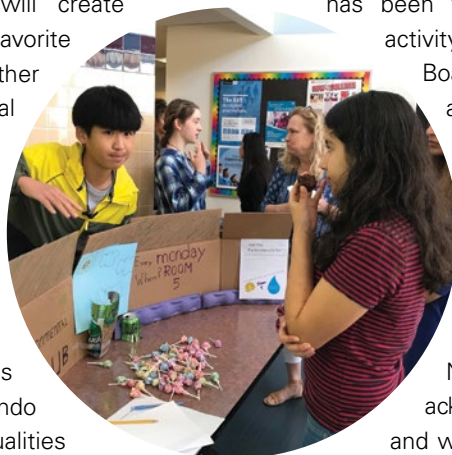
Clubs allow students to develop their leadership and communications skills, often by sharing their knowledge with others. At a recent meeting of the Board of Trustees,

Diversity Council leaders Alynna Vilchez '19, Keaton Berkes '19, and Naomi Orta '19 led a thought-provoking workshop on school-related discrimination. The seniors had learned the activity at a Student Diversity Leadership Conference that they attended last year.

The students presented a variety of scenarios, such as a transgender student being asked to use a different bathroom, and asked the trustees to determine if discrimination was at work. One of the Board's priorities has been to diversify its membership, and the activity allowed trustees to consider how the Board can be part of Mid-Pen's efforts build a more equitable school community. Some trustees were a little nervous to start, but by the end of the hour-long session, they clearly appreciated the thoughtfulness of the students and the opportunity to reflect on diversity, equity, and inclusion issues at Mid-Pen.

Not all clubs last the year, Wendi acknowledged, as student interest waxes and wanes, but new clubs can start any time.

"Another nice aspect of our clubs is that they are offered during lunch," she explained, "and there are multiple clubs each day so students have a choice to get involved and meet new friends on a daily basis." 🐉



Above, Environmental Club leader Davey Feng '19 at the Club Fair and after a harvest, below, with teachers Nicola Willits and Michelle Boire and Madison Trembley '19.

Eco Club Builds New Garden

Inspired by students in our Environmental Club, Mid-Pen launched a new garden this fall that is producing a bumper crop of organic produce. Math teacher Nicola Willits and art teacher Michelle Boire serve as mentors for the student gardeners, but the students drive all the decisions on what to grow and are responsible for watering, weeding, and harvesting the plants.

The first planting included kale, spinach, snap peas, and broccoli. The broccoli plants are especially impressive, yielding heads about the breadth of a large human hand.

Environmental Club leader Davey Feng '19 enjoys his time outdoors cultivating the garden, but he says his

primary goal is to spread environmental awareness. For Davey, the garden is a metaphor that "teaches



all of us that we should be responsible denizens of the earth." Thanks to the Environmental Club, Mid-Pen students can look forward to many harvests of fresh, healthy produce.

Two New Staffers Join the School Community

Mid-Pen is pleased to welcome two new staff members to our Mid-Pen community.

Kaci Anderson is Mid-Pen's new Office Manager. Kaci holds her B.A. in French Language and Culture from Oregon State University. She has taught English in France and has worked in the study abroad offices at her alma mater and at UC Berkeley. Most recently, Kaci worked as a Student Advisor and Housing Coordinator at the San Francisco branch of Stafford House International, a group of English language schools with branches in the U.K, the U.S., and Canada. Kaci is no stranger to Mid-Pen, as she is married to ASL instructor Francis Phiri.

Dr. Meenu Baloda joins the Mid-Pen Science Department. Meenu received her B.S. in Biotechnology and her Ph.D. in Biochemistry from North Dakota State University. She worked as a Teaching Assistant at NDSU, supervising undergraduates and graduate students. Meenu has



New staffers Meenu Baloda, left, and Kaci Anderson.

conducted research and delivered presentations on a variety of topics. Most recently, Meenu was the head of the Science Department at Tilden Preparatory School in Walnut Creek. 🐾

Developing Compassion Through Community Service

On October 17, the Mid-Pen community came together for its annual Fall Community Service Day, when students and teachers set lessons, homework, and daily academic life aside to dedicate themselves to serving the greater Silicon Valley community. Along with their teachers, students worked with eight different local organizations on a variety of service projects.

The day's highlights included the student group that worked with the llamas, goats, and other therapy animals at Animal Assisted Happiness. At Avenidas,



students assisted senior citizens with troubleshooting and learning how to use devices such as tablets, laptops and smartphones. At EPAShop, a new thrift store on Willow Road dedicated to assisting single mothers with employment and job coaching, students helped the staff organize donated goods and hunt for valuable items in preparation for the store's grand opening. At St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room, our Mid-Pen student volunteers helped prep and serve lunch to community members. Other partners for the day included Second Harvest Food Bank, San Mateo County Parks, Family Connections, and Sacred Heart Community Service.

"Service to the community is an essential component of the learning experience at Mid-Pen," said Spanish teacher Jon Austin, who also directs the school's community service program. "By becoming involved in addressing the needs of our community we raise awareness, develop compassion, and find purpose in helping to improve the world around us."

The school would like to thank the 25 parent volunteers who helped to make the day such a success. The next Community Service Day takes place in March. 🐾

Dawson Kinnamon '20 and Keri Chu '20 with one of the therapy animals at Animal Assisted Happiness.



Celebrating the Holidays the Mid-Pen Way

Halloween has always been a time for fun and celebration at Mid-Pen, and this year was no exception. Students and teachers alike pulled out the stops and donned some fun and creative costumes. The day's festivities included pumpkin carving, a donut eating contest, and a costumed footrace.



Eating, singing, and shredding guitar leads – that's how Mid-Pen celebrates Thanksgiving before taking off for the holiday weekend. Along with turkey and all the trimmings, there were exceptional performances of all kinds – from student dancers to solo ballads to ensemble performances by Mid-Pen's music classes – at this year's Annual Thanksgiving Feast and Talent Show. 🦃



Three New Trustees Named to Board

As the governing body of Mid-Peninsula High School, the Board of Trustees is composed of parents of alumni, alumni, and community members who bring strategic expertise from a variety of professions. Over the summer, the Board said goodbye to three trustees and proudly welcomed three new members to its ranks.

Outgoing trustee **Lisa Braun P '10 '12** served as chair of the Parents Association before joining the Board after her youngest son, David, graduated. Lisa was chair of the Committee on Trustees, an often overlooked but critically important group responsible for cultivating, recruiting, and evaluating trustees, and making sure that the makeup of the Board aligns with the school's strategic priorities. "From the Parent Association to the Board, Lisa's commitment to the school has been astonishing," said Board Co-Chair Tim Biglow. "She's always considered all the Mid-Pen faculty, staff, and students as members of her family."

After joining the Board in 2015, **Jill Christensen** worked on the Head of School Search Committee that helped bring Phil Gutierrez to Mid-Pen last year. Jill and her husband, Wes, hosted numerous Mid-Pen events and always graciously welcomed trustees, faculty, and staff into their home. "I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to work with so many talented and committed Board members, as well as having a chance to get to know the exceptional teachers and staff who make Mid-Pen the special place it is," Jill said. "I know there is a bright future ahead for Mid-Pen and all of the wonderful students it serves."

Patricia Galligan P '12 served as secretary and, for the last two years of her six-year tenure, co-chair of the Board. Mid-Pen was extremely lucky to have her in these capacities during the transition to a new head of school. Throughout her two terms, she consistently brought wisdom, good humor, and insightful questioning to Board deliberations. "I wanted to give back a little to a wonderful school that did so much for our son and our family," she recalled. "I was not quite ready to part company from the many compassionate, intelligent, and fun people I met in the course of his school career, and so being on the Board was a kind of reward for me."

New trustee **Phil Abramhamson** received a B.S. in Mathematics from Harvey Mudd College and a Ph.D. in Operations Research from Stanford University. After teaching for three years at the University of

Massachusetts, he has enjoyed a 34-year career in consulting, market research, and AI companies. His most rewarding years were focused on coaching, training, and career development of new-hire college graduates. Education runs in his family: his father was



a pioneer in the field of medical education, his mother taught middle school, and his brother is a professor. The proud parents of two children who have grown into wonderful adults, Phil and his wife, Dana, are slowly but steadily improving their ability to play duplicate bridge.

Quin Garcia '99 is a Managing Director of the transportation-focused venture capital firm Autotech Ventures. Previously, he was a board member, investor, and advisor to numerous transportation startups. A graduate of Stanford



with a masters in Management Science and Automotive Engineering, he started his career working as a management consultant after graduating magna cum laude from Cornell with a degree in Applied Economics and Management. He has lived in China, Japan, and Israel, and speaks Mandarin and Spanish. A grateful alum who played on the Mid-Pen basketball and baseball teams, Quin continues to enjoy playing sports in his free time and is looking forward to helping future students leverage Mid-Pen to improve their lives.

The mother of a 2018 Mid-Pen graduate, **Shandon Lloyd** has spent the past 18 years shepherding her two children through their educations while simultaneously serving in numerous volunteer positions, including co-chairing the



Mid-Pen Annual Fund, leading fundraising events at Charles Armstrong School, chairing the Portola Valley Bicycle, Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Committee, and serving on a special committee for the Sierra Lakes Water District. Shandon is a graduate of UC Santa Cruz and a native of Palo Alto. In her free time, she enjoys snow sports and cycling. A fun fact about Shandon is that during the summer of 1980, she took Algebra at the newly-founded Mid-Peninsula High School. 🌀



College Advisor Dave Richardson reviews recent college acceptances with senior Naomi Orta.

The Many Paths of the Mid-Pen Graduate

By Kristy Stone P '22

At this point in the year, many Mid-Pen seniors have endured the rigorous college application process and are eagerly anticipating responses from their colleges of choice.

However, for some students, attending a four-year college directly after graduation is not part of the plan. There are a number of options that are less traditional but also lead to success, according to Academic Director and College Advisor Dave Richardson, who is in the business of helping kids map out their future after Mid-Pen, guiding students to create an individual post-high school plan that makes the best sense for them.

One suggestion Dave often makes is a gap year, a period away from the classroom between high school and college when students can continue their education in other meaningful ways. Dave explained that a gap year allows a young adult to gain new experiences outside the pressures of academia, to mature and gain a deeper understanding of what he or she wants in college or in life.

To be well spent, Dave advises that a gap year should include an academic component or an internship that keeps students engaged and offers the opportunity for personal growth. "If you are going to take a gap year, do something that is going to take you to the next level or to a level after that," he said.

More and more colleges are open to deferring enrollment so that a student can take a gap year, Dave said. From a practical standpoint, colleges know there is a greater chance that students who have deferred admission for a year will complete their studies and graduate. However,

for the most part only private colleges allow a year's deferment. California public universities encourage students instead to re-apply when they are ready to enroll, which Dave says should not stop students from considering a gap year, because if they were accepted once, there is a good chance they will be accepted again.

Another alternative is community college. The Bay Area is rich with a variety of programs, from professional certificates to associate degrees that give students the option to transfer to four-year colleges. Benefits of community college include time for students to mature as young adults while completing the General Education requirements that make up the foundation of an undergraduate degree. It can also provide an opportunity to work or intern in a field of interest while attending school. And if a student wants to attend a four-year institution, transferring as a junior has benefits. Dave says that because they are older, transfer students have more life experience and may find it less stressful to balance the newness of independent living with college academics.

Dave also advises to look at the "guaranteed admission contracts" offered through many community colleges. This program streamlines transfers between community colleges and four-year institutions and guarantees admission as a junior to one of the 35 local colleges and universities that are part of the program.

There are as many different paths after graduation as there are Mid-Pen graduates. On the following pages are four recent Mid-Pen alums who have taken the road less traveled. ➤

THE MANY PATHS OF THE MID-PEN GRADUATE



Career First, Then Maybe College

Maya Mulleneaux '17 entered Rocky Mountain College in Montana in the fall following her Mid-Pen graduation. She grew up riding horses and chose Rocky Mountain for its Equine Studies program. However, she found that college was not right for her and returned home after completing her first year. Her parents

encouraged her to get real life experience by finding a job.

Fiercely independent all her life, Maya has always had an entrepreneurial spirit. She knew she wanted to work with horses, so she decided to return to Montana, which she loved for the tranquility and the beauty of the land. She got a job training horses. It wasn't ideal, but it was a "good step to take" and helped her gain confidence. Currently living in Montana with her boyfriend, she now has her own business training and selling horses and is a professional photographer to boot.

Maya says she may some day return to school but, in retrospect, she knows that what she needed to launch her career was not college, but rather direct hands-on experience and an opportunity to be mentored.

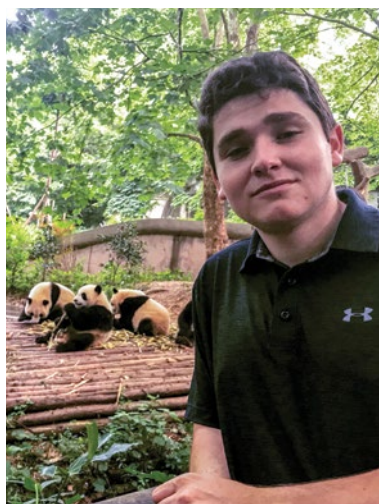


Internship Sparks a Passion

Nico Linton '17 graduated from Mid-Pen with the intention of continuing school but didn't know what he wanted to study. His parents encouraged him

to find a job or an internship that would give him time to decide. At Mid-Pen, he loved science; after graduation, he landed an internship at the Stanford Linear Accelerator (SLAC) working as an intern on the Large Synoptic Survey Telescope, a new type of telescope currently under construction. The internship has since developed into a part-time job.

From this experience, Nico realized that he was passionate about physics and engineering. He found a STEM Core (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) program at West Valley College, a community college in Saratoga, and enrolled this past fall. He loves the program and said that the teachers are very much like those at Mid-Pen: "They are there to help you, not to hurt you." Although the program is rigorous, he likes having some flexibility to take courses while also working at SLAC. After completing the program at West Valley, Nico plans to transfer to a four-year college and major in mechanical engineering.



Gap Year Is a Time to Grow

Eli Feuerman '15 graduated from Mid-Pen knowing that he needed to take time for himself before he headed off to college. He jokingly says he was the only one in his class without a "plan."

However, his parents encouraged him to take a gap year. Together they approached the year as an opportunity for Eli to experience different parts of the world that were culturally rich and the chance for him to mature as a young adult.

Eli and his parents worked with an agency to identify three places in the world he would like to live. The goal, he said, was less about the destination and more about the experiences he would have traveling. During the fall semester, he lived in Shanghai, and taught English to children twice a week. He was in a program where he lived with a host family and could work on speaking Mandarin.



After Shanghai, he moved to upstate New York and worked for the Tampa Bay Rays for six weeks as an intern. He said that he loved gaining the experience of working in an office as a professional. The final leg of the gap year was living in Spain. He immersed himself in the culture and mastered the language. He taught English to young children in an afterschool program and played soccer with them during down time.

Following his gap year, he enrolled at Occidental College, where he is currently a junior studying international relations. He credits his year of traveling and working with helping him learn independence. Since he had already traveled solo, worked in a foreign country, and lived away from home, he wasn't burdened by the adjustments his freshman peers were experiencing when he entered college.

"It was an opportunity to stretch outside my comfort zone without the stress of being in academia," Eli said. "I was able to take risks without the consequences that could occur while in college. I learned so much about myself and was able to take that to college."

Finding the Right College Fit

Megan Biglow '13 was interested in liberal arts programs and planned to attend a four-year college after graduation. She was accepted into the College of Charleston and headed off to South Carolina in the fall, full of hope and anticipation. However, she quickly found the program wasn't a good fit. Returning home, she realized she needed to take a year to explore her



interests and gain more clarity about what she wanted in a college.

During her year off, Megan spent a lot of time both working and doing some inner work

contemplating her next steps. An animal lover, she took on various jobs that satisfied her interest: dog grooming, dog walking, and pet sitting. She also spent a lot of time with her Mid-Pen friends, who were supportive of her taking time off. Several were attending the University of Puget Sound and loved it. They encouraged her to apply as a freshman for the fall of 2015.

Megan is now in her senior year at Puget Sound, where she is majoring in Psychology and minoring in Sociology. She has even integrated her interest in animals into her studies, with courses in animal-assisted therapy and animal behavior. 🐾

ADVICE FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

I had the privilege of interviewing four bright, articulate, and happy Mid-Pen alums who took a "different" path following graduation. They are all well-rounded people who are engaged with their lives. Regardless of the path they chose, each of the four alums encouraged parents to talk with their children as they approach senior year and really try to understand what they want. Even if the answer is "I don't know," let your child know that you trust their journey and work to instill in them the confidence that many paths will lead to success in life.

Asked what advice she would give parents, Maya said, "Stay open to understanding what your kid's interests are and how they can best be nurtured. Also, be aware

of his or her personality, as college is not for everyone and there are other ways to gain skills that match their interests." Nico's advice is equally valuable: "Encourage them to find something that they like and encourage them to pursue it."

Reflecting back on her experience, Megan offered some sage advice to seniors: "Trust your instinct. Follow your internal compass. What is good for someone else might not be the best for you."

Good advice for us all from some very thoughtful and reflective young people.

— K.S.



Students Investigate the World of Biotechnology

Science teacher Meenu Baloda observes as Madison Trembley '19 undertakes a biotech experiment.

Menlo Park is home to the headquarters of some of the most innovative biotechnology companies in the world, with names like Pacific Biosciences, AccuraGen, and Grail. Soon you may be able to add Mid-Peninsula High School to the list.

Recognizing that biotech is one of the fastest growing industries in the U.S. and that virtually every aspect of modern life is impacted by biotech, Mid-Pen Science teachers David Oliver and Meenu Baloda recently restructured the department's Advanced Biology course as an introduction to biotech. Previously focusing on marine biology, the course now provides students with an introduction to topics like recombinant DNA, stem cell research, and the use of DNA evidence in forensic science.

"Students may or may not become scientists, but the course allows them to understand the field of biotechnology and its implications in the real world," Meenu explained.

For readers who don't know the difference between their genome and their jeans, at its simplest, biotechnology is the use or manipulation of an organism or the components of an organism. The origins of biotechnology date back to when people first began to domesticate animals and cultivate food crops. While those early applications are certainly still employed today, over the last 50 years the biological sciences have been revolutionized by several key discoveries that have enabled scientists to isolate and manipulate genes, spurring the growth of the biotech industry. Today,

New History, Art Courses Added

Over the summer Mid-Pen teachers developed two new courses that are being taught for the first time this year: Latin American Studies and Digital Art.

Spanish teacher Jon Austin had long wanted to teach Latin American Studies, so when History teacher Alan Cameron asked if he would teach a section of history, he jumped at the chance. The year-long course, introduced this year, covers the history and culture of Latin America from the pre-conquest era to the present day.

The year began with the study of the three major

indigenous cultures – the Aztec, Inca, and Maya civilizations – followed by the period of Spanish colonialization. Jon has designed the course around primary source materials, such as the writings of Bartolome de Las Casas, a sixteenth-century Spanish Dominican friar who was one of the first to speak out in defense of the rights of native peoples. Students also read the work of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, a seventeenth-century Mexican scholar, nun, and poet whom Jon describes as "a proto-feminist and one of the first to challenge the authority of the Church patriarchy."

"This really isn't your typical history course," Jon says with pride. "I really want to make sure that the



biotech is primarily associated with molecular biology, cloning, and genetic engineering

"The course covers all aspects of modern biotechnology," Meenu said, "but biotech itself is as old as human history. Biotech goes all the way back to when humans first started using yeast to make bread rise or to make beer."

The course uses two high school level textbooks and has a significant lab component as well, a portion of which is based on materials developed by the biopharmaceutical company Amgen. Over the summer, before the start of school, Meenu attended a two-day training to learn how to implement the Amgen Biotech Experience (ABE) with her students.

David, who first used the ABE program in his summer school classes, said the labs allow students to carry out some of the important steps used by the biotech industry to develop medicines that treat a variety of diseases. By engaging in this program, he found, students are motivated to understand the underlying science concepts, develop critical laboratory skills, and maybe even pursue future careers in science.

One of the ABE labs the Advanced Biology students conducted this fall involved using recombinant DNA technology to begin the process of synthesizing human insulin, which in 1982 was the first genetically engineered pharmaceutical product to receive FDA approval. When segments of DNA are cut and pasted together to form new sequences, the result is known as recombinant DNA. When recombinant DNA is inserted into cells, the cells use this modified blueprint and their own cellular machinery to make the protein (insulin in this case) encoded by the recombinant DNA.

For decades, Meenu explained, insulin had been extracted from the pancreata of cattle and pigs. The chemical structure of insulin in these animals is only slightly different than human insulin, which is why they were used. However, scientists realized that if they could use a simpler organism, like yeast or bacteria, they could produce genetically engineered insulin in unlimited quantities. It also would not contain any animal contaminants.

Using an enzyme, the students cut a DNA sequence that contained the human insulin gene from a sample of DNA, then inserted the gene into *E. coli* bacteria. "That's the start of the process of creating synthetic insulin," Meenu said. "If you then grow the bacteria, it will begin producing insulin protein. Then all you need to do is extract and purify the protein for therapeutic use."

Next semester students will study plant tissue culture, by which tiny pieces of plants are cultured in a nutrient-rich medium under sterile conditions. Using the appropriate growing conditions for each tissue type, plants can be induced to rapidly produce new shoots, and, with the addition of suitable hormones, new roots. Students will also learn about cloning and gene editing for humans.

The class will finish the year with an in-depth look at the ethical considerations of modern biotechnology. "And in today's world," Meenu noted, perhaps thinking of the Chinese scientist who stunned the world in December by claiming that he had created twin girls from embryos whose DNA he had edited in his lab, "that may be the most important lesson." 🐉

perspective of the oppressed, not just the oppressors, is represented."

For Art teacher Michelle Boire, the need for a Digital Art class grew out of the understanding that traditional art classes don't appeal to all students.

"Some of our students have had some real negative art experiences in the past," she said. "Some have fine motor challenges, which makes some kinds of art difficult for them, and others feel if they can't draw, they can't do art."

The year-long class, which she co-teaches with Director of Technology Anne Marie Schar, covers all the same concepts as a traditional art class (line, shape, form, color,

texture, etc.) but using digital media. Students began the year with a photography unit using Adobe's Photoshop and Lightroom software and are currently learning graphic design, using Illustrator to create logos for the school's 40th anniversary next year.

Second semester students will learn 3-D printing, study the visual design of apps, and will team up with Facebook's Oculus division to make virtual reality presentations. "In the spring, at Night of the Arts," says Michelle, "visitors will be able to put on a headset and see a VR presentation of students' portfolios."

By Kurt Lange, Athletic Director

Soccer Finishes in 4th Place

The Mid-Pen Soccer team finished its season in a tie for fourth place. After starting out very strong and winning its first two matches, the team lost a couple of close ones by identical 2-1 scores to the eventual second- and third-place teams. We improved tremendously over the course of the season, however, and the fact that we have a very young team bodes well for the future.

Congrats to Taylor Young '21 on being selected to first-team all-league, to Tyler Peery '19 on making second-team, and to Sebi Strachan '21 and Nate Annau '22 on making honorable mention. In addition to Tyler, departing seniors include Joe Bello, Kevin Menard, Ernesto Valencia Arevalo, and Nathan Cooper.

Next year's returning players include freshmen Stefan Minkowski, Shan Thippawong, and Nate Annau; sophomores Philip Wollman, Sebi Strachan, Karson Berringer, Owen DeCardy, Josh King, Taylor Young, and Andries Castellano; and juniors Colder Li and Alfredo Moran. Thanks again to Coach Raul Salazar on a job well done. 🐉



Shan Thippawong '22 outruns a North Valley Baptist defender.

Sophomore Runner Earns First-Team All-League Honors

People often assume that Cross Country is an individual sport. After all, you are racing against a clock, doing the best you possibly can. But while you are running your heart out, it is not merely for yourself. Cross Country is a team sport, and this fall Dragons competed bravely as a team and concluded a successful 2018 season.

September saw our first league race at Crystal Springs Uplands School. As five of our six races were at Crystal Springs, this was a good opportunity to become acquainted with the course. It was also the debut of our freshmen, as well as first-year runner Davey Feng '19. The Dragons ran their hearts out, and Davey had a very successful premiere, coming in first for Mid-Pen. Raina Iarocci '21 finished first among the Mid-Pen girls, earning her first of many top-ten finishes this season. By the middle of November, Raina was in seventh place in the league and had earned a CCS berth and First-Team All-League honors.

Competition was tough this year. Nueva High School had built an early lead in the standings, and the rest of us were attempting to dethrone the champs. Mid-Pen managed to place in the middle of the rankings, a pretty impressive finish, as we lost two great graduating seniors

last year, Skylar Zandbergen '18 and Aidan Lloyd-Tucker '18. The Dragons never quit, however, and they worked hard to improve as the season went on, despite injuries, fatigue and some very tough opponents.

Perhaps the most impressive meet of the season was the Annual Artichoke Invitational, held every October in Half Moon Bay. The Dragons competed, but were plagued with injuries at this point. Despite this, our wounded warriors came to watch their teammates run, and even stayed to watch Head Coach Alan Cameron compete in the coaches race. While his time was well behind Raina Iarocci's mark, he did manage to finish the race in one piece.

We were deeply impressed with the tenacity of runners like Dominic Vogel '20, who was a rookie this year, and benefited from the leadership of captain Dawson Kinnamon '20, who consistently got the team ready for races and cheered on his comrades. Lanier Poland '21, who was hurt throughout most of the season, was always there on crutches to cheer on her teammates. Truly, Cross Country *is* a team sport. 🐉

By Alan Cameron



Volleyball Improves Over a Rough Season

It wasn't the easiest of seasons, but the JV Volleyball team, consisting of 13 girls, improved tremendously as the season went on.

The team kicked off September with three returning players and five new freshmen, who came with limited volleyball experience. We were able to beat rival Kehillah early in the year but the hope of finishing out the season against the same team was dashed as Kehillah cancelled their JV program just a few days prior to our scheduled match. Another highlight of the season was a tight home game against the Waldorf School of Mountain View, which the girls lost in the final and deciding set, 16-14.

Commendations go to freshmen Mayan Dolev, Simone Dawkins, Chloe Reimer, Yness Riedel, Olivia Rodriguez, Jess Spence, Cam Wood, and Collette Zubizarreta; sophomores Bridget Cruz, Julia Crouse, and Jaelynn Godinez; and juniors Emma Marek and Keri Chu. Some of these girls will definitely be ready for the varsity team next year, and we expect to maintain a stable foundation on which to build next year's JV squad.

Facing what looked to be a really tough season at the outset, our Varsity team ended up showing major improvement by season's end, solidly beating visiting

Pacific Point Christian from Gilroy in the final week of the season. The team improved significantly in the second round of league play, losing close matches to teams that had previously beat us by large margins. It took Mountain View Academy four sets and Summit Prep five sets to put away our Varsity girls the second time they played us. In the season's final game the team played one of its best games, losing a great match against Kehillah in three sets, 25-18, 25-17, and 25-19.

We sadly say goodbye to three seniors, Ary Ong-Beith, Jeannessa Lurie, and Alynna Vilchez, who were a big part of our program. Special congratulations to Alynna, who received an honorable mention award from our league.

We look forward to a great season next year, with many returning team members, including freshmen Anna Gordon and Addi Stone; sophomores Natalie Nunez, Sarah McKinley, and Sophia Scheid; and juniors Sanaye Ryder and Val Rendon. Thank you to coaches Franc and Alec Salazar, who did an excellent job coaching both JV and Varsity teams. 🐉

From left, Anna Gordon '22, Alynna Vilchez '19, and Natalie Nunez '20 prepare to return serve.





Actress and Women's March organizer **Sarah Sophie Flicker '90**, whose husband Jesse Peretz was nominated for an Emmy for his work on the Netflix series "GLOW," was in the news in September when she was photographed at the Emmys sporting a "Stop Kavanaugh" message just hours after the Senate Judiciary Committee said it would reopen the hearings for Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh. She also wrote the US Capitol switchboard number on her arm and displayed the message to the cameras as she walked along the red carpet entering the awards ceremony. Despite all the glitz and glamour of the evening, it was her "Stop Kavanaugh" that was the most talked-about accessory of the evening and quickly went viral.

Stephen Duda '91 got married a couple of years ago, and is enjoying life in Los Angeles as a producer of electronic music – and a teacher of it as well.

Daniel McCrory '92 passed away on December 3, 2017. Academic Director & College Advisor Dave Richardson remembered Dan as one of Mid-Pen's all-time best baseball players. He maintained a love of baseball throughout his life and played with the San Jose Senior Men's Baseball League.

In October, **Jaime McFaden's '02** new audiobook, "Walk to Run One Mile," hit #2 on Audible's non-fiction list, beating out Omarosa Manigault Newman's tell-all account from behind the scenes at the Trump White House and Trevor Noah's memoir, "Born a Crime." Jaime continues to live and work on the Peninsula, where she has been a fitness instructor for the last 10 years. Starting as a dance instructor for children, she now has over 10 certifications, is a pre/post natal fitness specialist, and has developed over 10 fitness series. She is co-author of the *Skinny Confidential Bombshell Body Guide*, developed a pre/postnatal program for the app Aaptiv, and is currently working on the development of a postnatal DVD series in Germany.

Peter Ellison '04 visited Mid-Pen this fall. He is currently an EMT with American Medical Response in San Mateo.

Wesley Kramer '04 stopped by the school in November. He is currently living in San Diego and is working on starting a non-profit to help teens become more financially literate and develop good credit before they are 18.

Andrew Jones '05 is living in London, where he manages a medium-sized business that recruits education professionals for schools and colleges. "However, I'm returning to university to finish my degree this October so will go part-time. I married a Brit six years ago, hence living here. We have two sons; one is nearly three and the other 10 months."

Bryan Jeong '06 was profiled in the San Mateo Daily Journal this fall as the new coach of San Mateo High School girls' tennis team. He also serves as head coach for the Cañada College women's team and the co-ed team at Mid-Pen.

Shelley Richanbach, mother of **David Henry Richanbach '07**, writes that he is currently known as Henry. Last winter he was living on Hawaii's Big Island and applying to graduate schools in hopes of attending Naropa University in Boulder, CO, to further his education in transpersonal psychology and therapy.



Chloe Lawler '18 returned to campus in December to install "Flight of a Thousand Cranes," a piece that she first displayed at last spring's Night of the Arts. The piece joins about a dozen other alumni artworks on display around the school. A freshman at Colorado State University, Chloe originally was planning to major in Equine Studies, but is now considering Studio Art as well.



Kellie Wilson Hurst '11 stopped by the school in September to say hi to her old teachers. After graduating from Mid-Pen, Kellie attended Hawaii Pacific University for a semester before returning to the Bay Area, where she enrolled at Foothill College and earned her EMT certification. She says she "hated the internship as an EMT, so I decided to start my own pet care company, which has been very successful." She and her husband, Robert, are the proud parents of a son, Logan, who was born on Thanksgiving 2017.

Charlotte Johnson '14 writes, "I just finished up school in May and graduated with a B.A. in Business from the University of Puget Sound – I already miss Washington like mad! Everything was so green and lush always! The summer went by so fast – my last ever, sadly, now that I've found work as a baker at Icing on the Cake in Lost Gatos. **Ben '16** is a junior at University of Oregon and is doing very well."

Mitchell Broadwin '15 is currently attending Ventura Community College with the hopes of transferring to UC Santa Barbara.



Last spring **Shontelle Watkins '17** (front row second from right) played for the Cañada College Women's Tennis Team, alternating between the #2 or #3 doubles positions and the #3 or #4 singles positions. When last we heard, she was carrying an impressive 3-3 doubles record with alternating partners and a 1-4 singles record. Shontelle was selected as the player of the week after her Week 2 shutout in both Singles and Doubles against Mission College. According to her coach, "Shontelle has been an excellent addition to the team, as she brings a unique energy, positive attitude, and energetic nature. She is often the first to support her teammates during their matches."



Morgan Yee '17 is attending Pepperdine University in Malibu, where he is planning on majoring in sociology and minoring in psychology, with an eye to working in law enforcement when he graduates. In November, while most of his classmates were sheltering in place as the Woolsey Fire consumed the hills behind the university, Morgan was at the Pepperdine campus in Lausanne, Switzerland, where he is spending his sophomore year. In addition to his regular classes, he's been studying French and spent a week with the school in Morocco, visiting the ancient city of Fez and exploring the desert. On his weekends off, he has traveled to Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, and Greece.

"It's been one of the best experiences I've had in my life," Morgan says of his year abroad. "I've had to learn to be much more independent, and it's opened my eyes to the world beyond the U.S. I've learned that it's really important to get outside your bubble and immerse yourself in other cultures."

Ryan Burton '18 has landed a spot on the Junior Team USA bowling squad after placing 5th out of 1,500 competitors in the under-20 men's division of the Junior Gold Championship. His accomplishment was recently profiled in the Los Altos Town Crier, his hometown newspaper. According to his mom, Jen, he is having a great time as a freshman at Purdue, where he is on the bowling team and has pledged Phi Kappa Tau, his grandfather's fraternity. Jen says he has adjusted well to a large college, and "everything he learned at Mid-Pen has been essential to his success. He has met all kinds of people at Purdue, and the tolerance and acceptance he experienced at Mid-Pen have been particularly helpful in navigating that."



CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Parents of Alumni: If your son or daughter no longer maintains a permanent residence at your home, please notify the Development Office at 650-321-1991 or alums@mid-pen.org. Thank you for helping us keep our alumni records current.



FOLLOW US! @mphsdragons



LIKE US!



FOLLOW US! @midpendragons

**Your gift to the Mid-Pen
DragonFund empowers students
with the knowledge and purpose
to impact a complex world.**

WWW.MID-PEN.ORG/GIVING



Yness Riedel '22 catches up on reading for English class.