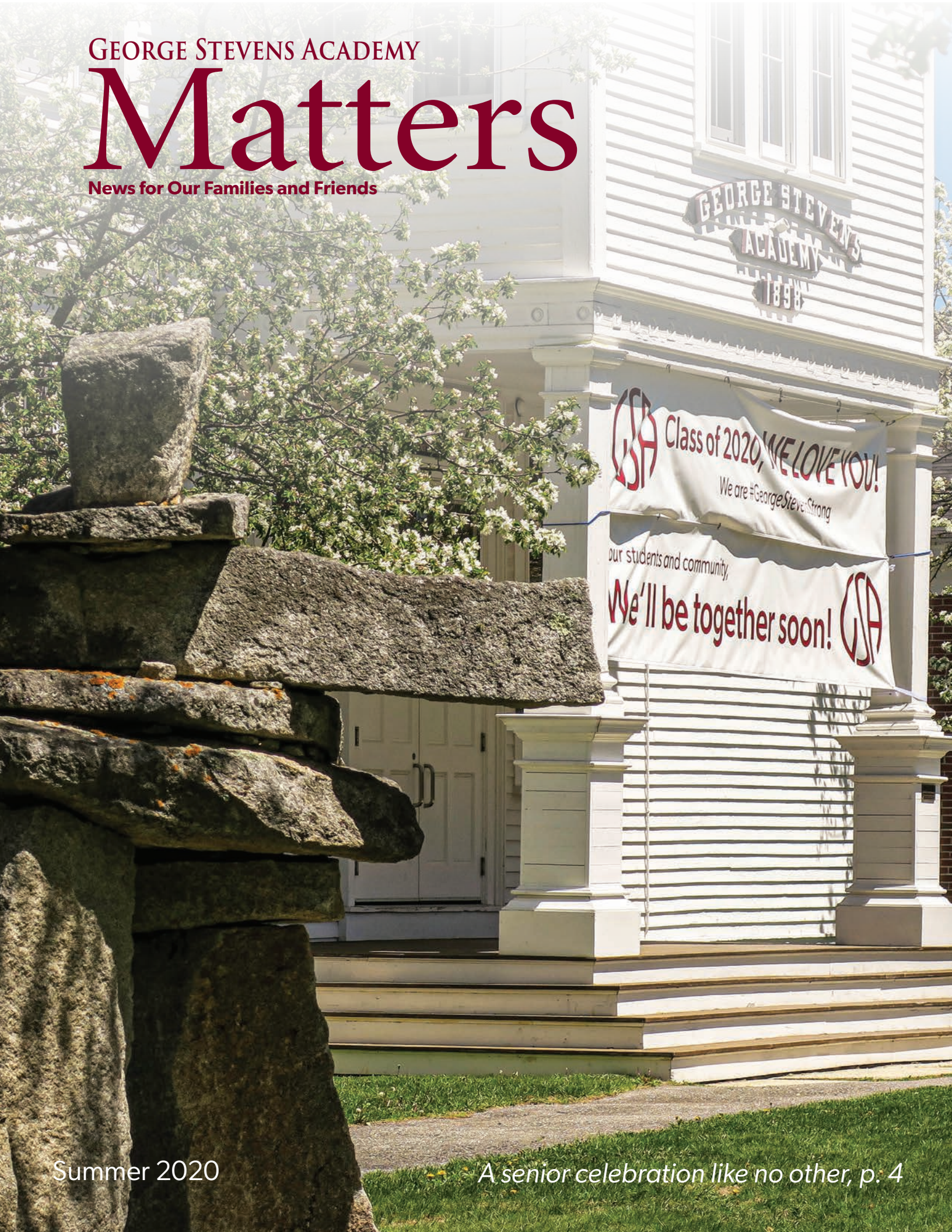


GEORGE STEVENS ACADEMY

Matters

News for Our Families and Friends



Summer 2020

A senior celebration like no other, p. 4

From the Head of School

Every summer in schools, there is much work to be done. We reflect on the year just past and get ready for the next. This summer, the amount of work we face has greatly increased as we prepare to return to school with the coronavirus still a presence in Maine and around the world.

Our most pressing concerns are how best to ensure the health and safety of everyone on campus; how best to engage in distance learning, as we will likely need to do that for at least some students; and how to operate our boarding program safely.

Since shortly after graduation, a committee of representatives from across GSA, as well as a parent, has been thinking through every aspect of school, with student input as appropriate. Here are some of the questions we expect to have answered by the time this issue has been published in early August:

- How can we adapt our programs to provide the best possible education to our students whether we are back in the classroom or have had to resume distance learning?
- How can we accommodate students who might be uncomfortable returning to campus even under low-risk conditions?
- What will our cleaning and disinfecting protocols be?
- How will we bring students and staff onto campus each day?
- How many students can safely be in each classroom?

- How will we feed students?
- How will we provide athletics, music, and other extracurricular programming?
- How will we meet students' social and emotional needs during any periods of distance learning?
- How will we support parents during any periods of distance learning?
- What procedures will we follow if someone in the school community tests positive for the virus?

The committee is drawing on resources from the Maine CDC, the Maine Department of Education, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and professional associations, as well as our own experience and careful judgment, to answer these questions and create a comprehensive plan for fall.

Another critical part of our work this summer is being undertaken by all our faculty members: the development of curricular and programming elements to address racism and other social justice issues. For more on our commitment to advancing social justice, visit www.georgestevensacademy.org/SocialJustice.



Timothy J. Seeley

Our Mission

George Stevens Academy is a town academy on the coast of Maine. Founded in 1852, we are the high school for nearly all students from the seven towns in our rural community. We also enroll private-pay day and boarding students from around the world. Our students' interests, talents, and aspirations reflect the diversity of the communities from which they come.

GSA provides a comprehensive and challenging education for all students, for those who will build futures in surrounding communities and for those who will make lives elsewhere in the world. Our many academic and experiential programs foster a love of knowledge, inspire creativity, instill self-confidence, encourage good character, and prepare each graduate for a purposeful life in a changing world.

Our Vision

We will be a vibrant learning community that proudly reflects the diversity of students from our surrounding towns, as well as those from elsewhere in the world, enabling them to thrive now and in the future.

We will provide all GSA students with an education that helps them pursue whatever jobs and career paths they choose, so that when they succeed, they and their communities will be the better for it.

We recognize that a GSA education is not just a matter of cultivating intellectual and creative strengths but also requires caring for students' physical and emotional needs. Everything we do will be stamped with this conviction.

We will be seen as a community resource, in the belief that schools and their communities make each other stronger. We will expand school-community partnerships and real-world learning opportunities that engage students and community members in shared activities and projects for the benefit of both.

We will have a safe, attractive, functional, and cost-efficient facility that supports our current programming well and has the flexibility to adapt to changing needs in the future.

We will be financially sustainable, with the resources we need to maintain GSA's facilities and provide for every GSA student's needs. We will grow our endowment, meet more ambitious annual GSA Fund goals, and benefit from the support of sending towns that recognize the indispensable value of a strong high school in their community.

Our mission says broadly who we are and what we do. Our vision sets out our bold goals for the future. We are well on our way to accomplishing some of these. Others will take longer. All are attainable with community support. Our mission and vision were approved by the Board of Trustees on April 25, 2019.

Our Trustees 2019-2020

Samantha Politte, Chair, Blue Hill
Sally Mills '85, Vice-Chair, Blue Hill
Jim Markos, Treasurer, Blue Hill
Phyllis Taylor, Clerk, Blue Hill

Jeffrey Allen '79, Blue Hill
Michael P. Astbury '03, Blue Hill
Bill Case, Blue Hill
Sally Chadbourne, Castine

Jim Crawford, Blue Hill
Kenelm "K" Guinness, Blue Hill
Tyler Knowles, Blue Hill
Deborah Ludlow '79, Brooksville

Michael McMillen, Brooksville
Brendon Reay, Blue Hill
Zoe Tenney '93, Sedgwick
Jon Woodward '66, Sedgwick



The Class of 2020 on the front lawn in early fall.



The Class of 2020 in the gym in January.

In These Pages

- 4 Farewell, Graduates!**
A senior celebration like no other.
- 7 An Extraordinary Spring**
School, community meet challenges.
- 9 Two Teachers Retire**
See you around town!
- 10 Class Connections**
Welcome, new volunteers!
- 11 Giving Day 2020**
Virtual event a big success.
- 12 Visual & Performing Arts**
Creativity abounds.
- 14 Inspired Poetry**
Students find silver linings.
- 15 Spring Sports**
No season? Fans find reasons to cheer.



Dylan Stewart '08 holding a shark woodburn. Dylan's marine life-oriented pyrography studio, Bold Coast Burns, is in South Portland. See page 11 for more class updates and information on our new Class Update web pages.

Keeping You in the GSA Loop

We have a lot of great news to share, so we've sent this summer issue of *Matters* to the residents of our sending towns. If you don't usually receive *Matters* and other GSA communications and would like to, please let us know!

- Complete this simple online form: www.georgestevensacademy.org/Communications, or
- email GSAmailings@georgestevens.org and tell us your name, mailing address, email address, telephone number, and whether you would like to receive *Matters* digitally, in print, or both, or
- call 207-374-2800 and leave a voicemail with the same information.

If you already receive our print publications and would like to receive them *digitally only*, please complete the online form, email us, or leave a voicemail.

Matters is a publication of the Advancement Office.

In these pages, we share news about our town academy, our students' great accomplishments, and our alumni. Visit www.georgestevensacademy.org and follow us on social media: FB: George Stevens Academy Instagram: [george.stevens.academy.gsa](https://www.instagram.com/george.stevens.academy.gsa)

Mark Messer, Editing and Design
Director of Communications
m.messer@georgestevens.org

Karen Brace
GSA Fund and Alumni Relations Director
k.brace@georgestevens.org

Maggie Garfield '77
Advancement Associate
m.s.garfield@georgestevens.org

Rada Starkey
Director of Advancement
r.starkey@georgestevens.org

Liffey Thorpe
Advancement Special Projects
l.thorpe@georgestevens.org



Alice Bowden with Head of School Tim Seeley.



Adrian Marsh celebrates in Kingston, Jamaica.

Celebrating the Class of 2020

On the second weekend in June, the Class of 2020 was recognized in what one parent called “a perfect graduation weekend.”

The “most memorable” celebration ever, others said. “The best you could hope for” if we couldn’t hold Class Night in the gym and our graduation ceremony on the front lawn.

The weekend showed how much our community loves our seniors and how far it will go to wish them well. More than 100 were involved in one way or another in the success of the event, not counting our seniors, those who lined the parade route on Sunday, and hundreds who watched our online ceremonies.

No, it was not what we usually do—and we hope to be back on the front lawn next year—but we learned a thing or two that just might make future ceremonies better.

Diploma Ceremonies

Three days of individual ceremonies were held on our front lawn. Many families and staff enjoyed the uniquely personal nature of the ceremonies. Graduates also received gifts from the school and local businesses and organizations, and a special message from the Class of 1970. Senior boarding students who already were home took part in a special videoconference with staff, administrators, and trustees on June 12.

Class Night

Rather than gather in the gym to celebrate our seniors, hundreds watched Class Night on televisions, computers, and smartphones on June 13. Nearly as many watched the next day.

Though we participated in new ways, the ceremony, hosted by Head of School Tim Seeley, included many traditional elements.



Silas Murnik welcomes the GSA community to Class Night.

In their student welcome, Silas Murnik and Morgan Welts took a look back at the momentous events our seniors have seen throughout their lives and during their time at GSA.

Chad Davis, Caden Mattson, and Chloe Politte shared the Class Thoughts, saying something positive about each of their peers.

Ian Howell and Lucy Morison gave the class Thank Yous. Ian credited the connections he made with each of his teachers for making him feel as if he “was accomplishing something grand and worthwhile.” Lucy thanked the parents and guardians, who “have assisted us through every hardship and watched us grow into the people we are now.”

Tim then introduced the scholarship awards segment. “These scholarships are all funded by generous individuals and organizations who wish to support our students’ desire to further their education,” he said, “and the oldest ones go back fifty years or more.” Ninety-four scholarships worth more than \$200,000 were awarded, with every eligible applicant receiving at least one.

Then the English, World Languages, Math, Social Studies, Science, Visual Arts, Drama, Industrial Tech, Music, and Athletics awards were presented by GSA faculty and administrators, each introducing the next. If a prize had been given for the most musical hand-off, it would have gone to the Math and Social Studies presenters.

After Tim announced our salutatorian and valedictorian, promising to say more about them in our Commencement broadcast, senior Vanessa Sherwood gave the Class Farewell, urging her classmates to live their best lives.

Cassidy Carlson then introduced the Senior Slideshow, noting that the Class of 2020 would be “a part of history.”



Ian Howell shares what makes GSA different in his Thank You remarks.



Faculty, staff, family, and friends wave as the senior parade passes by.



Cassidy Carlson smiles as the parade moves down Union Street.

Senior Parade

As supporters lined the parade route with signs and noisemakers on Sunday, June 14, our seniors gathered at the Blue Hill Fairgrounds under the direction of parent organizers Amy Mattson, Christie A. Snow '90, and Nikki Dennison.

At 9 a.m., the first sirens were heard and the excitement grew as our seniors, following Sheriff Scott Kane and fire engines from our sending towns, made two tours through Blue Hill, with family, friends, and the school community cheering them on.

Commencement Day

As they did on Class Night, hundreds of friends and family—and the graduates themselves—settled in to celebrate the Class of 2020 from the comfort of their homes.

The celebration began with “words of reflection and hope” from the Class of 1970. In the special message, Della Martin recounted fifty years of change and observed that much has stayed the same, noting that seniors have an opportunity to act.

As always, the ceremony began with Elgar’s “Pomp & Circumstance,” performed this year by Melodious Thunk and Music Director Steve Orlofsky. Class Marshal Caleb Rhine '21 symbolically marched the graduates to their seats.

In his welcome address, Head of School Tim Seeley reflected on what GSA had learned since the shift to distance learning in mid-March. “We have learned that a school lies at the center of things for a young person. We have learned how much a school is an integral and an intimate part of a young person’s life and the life of our community. We have learned how much we adults miss seeing our students every day, not just to help

them learn, but because we like them. ... We’ve also learned that smart, caring adults can turn on a dime, make adjustments, and adapt to completely unforeseen circumstances. And we’ve learned that young people can do that as well, that they can rise to any occasion.”

“These lessons,” Tim said, “though they came at a time of great difficulty, are no less valuable for that, and we can use them going forward to shape our community for the good.”

First Honor Essayist Joe Ciampa said in his welcome, “As an ex-homeschooler, the thought of going to GSA terrified me at first. I was an awkward, social runt with no idea what to expect.” Joe said he soon found that the GSA community was welcoming and kindhearted. He developed strong and “dependable friendships” with people who helped him and whom he helped. As a member of the sailing team, he experienced a feeling of camaraderie that “can be found all over GSA. ... We all know each other. Whether it’s waving to someone in the weight room, or at the gas pump, or just walking down the street, I feel like I’m part of something at GSA.”

In her address, Salutatorian Erika Hipsky spoke of how easy it is to learn about GSA’s strong academic, athletic, and arts programs, but what is not as apparent from the outside is our strong, “close knit ... community that supports you, encourages you, and has your back.” When she spoke at a trustee meeting about her experiences two years ago, she said she had “never felt more comfortable with or welcome into a community.” Two years later, she said, this still holds true. “Kind acts are abundant,” she said, praising the positive energy here. “It didn’t take me long to know all of you, and I take that as a gift.”



Alumna Della Martin shares a special message from the Class of 1970.



Teacher Megan Flenniken introduces son Olin to her senior advisory.

Valedictorian Syra Gutow drew on “Harold and the Purple Crayon” by Crockett Johnson, her favorite book as a child, in her speech. She offered examples of how her peers embody the traits that help Harold succeed in his adventures: “creativity, curiosity, ingenuity, and a promise that you can always solve the problems you encounter if you put your mind to it.” As the class “ventures into the unknown,” Syra said, she is confident that “the members of the Class of 2020 have the ability to face any challenge the world throws at us.”

Assistant Head of School Libby Rosemeier then gave the commencement address. First, she acknowledged that asking her to be the speaker was a “leap of faith on Mr. Seeley’s part because, quite frankly, he never knows what I’m going to say.” Libby listed the many things seniors have missed out on since the year “took a strange detour” in the middle of March. Then she spoke about the things she had missed, such as the “normal stages of senior year” when you’re “looking at us like ‘You can’t tell us what to do. We’re almost done.’ And then what we do is we roll our eyes and count to ten while saying to ourselves and each other ‘Will this year ever end?’ But,” she said, “my mind still feels like it’s March and we have some time together yet, but the reality is that graduation is here, and you’re really leaving, and I’m not quite ready for you to go.”

Morgan Welts, Kayla Bond, and Erika Hipsky announced the Senior Class Gift Committee’s plan to build four picnic tables later this summer to give the GSA community a place to gather and create new memories, something they were unable to do the last few months of their senior year.

Then each of the eight senior advisors spoke briefly to their advisees before Dean of Curriculum and Instruction David Stearns announced the students’ future plans as their pictures appeared on screen.

After a few thank yous, Tim Seeley introduced Second Honor Essayist Alex Tully, the farewell speaker. Alex spoke poetically about how he came from Isle au Haut “to GSA with the initial sense of being a trespasser.” At first, he said, “I was certain that I would not, could not, make it here at George Stevens, a place where the smallest average class dwarfed the total number of students I had ever had the privilege of sharing a classroom with in the small, one-room schoolhouse of my youth, that number being about four, and sometimes less. ... But I was fortunate. Within the span of a few more days, the warm, intellectually inquisitive, welcoming spirit of GSA began to fall upon me as the warmth of a fire falls upon an adventurer in from the cold.”

Tim then concluded the ceremony by asking everyone on the Blue Hill Peninsula to make some noise while the Academy Building bell was rung once for each senior.

For the full poignancy and charm of our Class Night and Commencement celebrations, we invite you to watch them—or watch them again—from the Senior Celebration playlist on our YouTube channel. Search for “George Stevens Academy” on YouTube.com or the YouTube app.



Eighty-four lawn signs, one for each senior, allowed us to see the Class of 2020 together once again. Most were taken home on graduation weekend.

Where Are They Heading?

Our graduates’ interests and aspirations are as diverse as they are. Most will continue their educations (see below), some will take a gap year to work or travel, one has enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, and many will join the workforce. Graduates, we wish you the best whatever path you follow and wherever it takes you. Stay in touch!

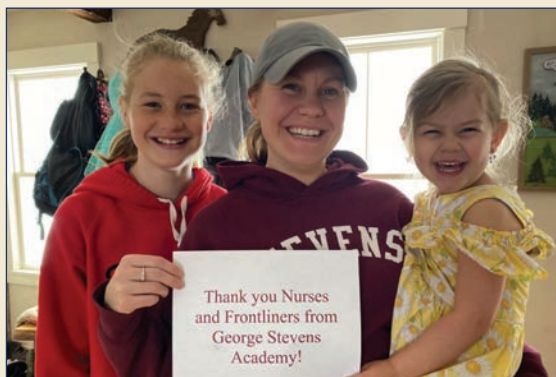
Beal College, Bangor, Maine
 Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Mass.
 Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine
 Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass.
 Camosun College, Victoria, B.C.
 College of the Atlantic, Bar Harbor, Maine
 Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa
 Drew University, Madison, N.J.
 Eastern Maine Community College, Bangor (8)
 Emory University, Atlanta, Ga.
 Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, N.Y.
 Hamilton College, Clinton, N.Y.
 Husson University, Bangor, Maine (6)
 Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo, Mich. (2)
 Keene State College, Keene, N.H.
 Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Ore.
 Maine Maritime Academy, Castine (3)

New York University, New York, N.Y.
 Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pa.
 Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, N.Y.
 Rollins College, Winter Park, Fla.
 Saint Joseph’s College of Maine, Standish
 Santa Clara University, Calif.
 Smith College, Northampton, Mass.
 St. John’s College, Annapolis, Md.
 Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa.
 University of California, Davis
 University of California, San Diego, La Jolla (3)
 University of Connecticut, Storrs
 University of Maine, Orono (7)
 University of Maine at Farmington (2)
 University of Southern Maine, Portland
 University of Virginia, Charlottesville
 Whittier College, Whittier, Calif.

If more than one graduate plans to attend an institution, the numeral indicates how many.

A Look Back

- Jan. 31** GSA monitoring the coronavirus situation
Mar. 1 COVID-19 cases in U.S.: 69*
Mar. 1 Distance learning planning began
Mar. 11 WHO declared pandemic
Mar. 11 ISIP Exhibition and State Jazz Fest cancelled
Mar. 12 First Maine COVID-19 case announced
Mar. 13 National emergency declared
Mar. 14 End of on-campus classes announced, distance learning to begin by March 23
Mar. 16-17 Intensive prep for distance learning
Mar. 19 Distance learning began
Mar. 20 Distance learning extended to April 27
Mar. 20 Hector Sapien created wellness website, COVID-19 Resources page went live
Mar. 23 First food care packages delivered (p. 9)
Mar. 25 Internet access outreach began (p. 9)
Mar. 28 Hannah Dyer '21 2nd in State Science Fair
Mar. 31 First Hancock County case announced*
Apr. 1 U.S. cases: 189,618; ME: 377; County: 2*
Apr. 1 First all-school assembly video
Apr. 5 Sunday Jazz Series started
Apr. 10 Distance learning extended to end of school year
Apr. 10 Senior Celebration suggestions solicited
Apr. 11 Nikki Jaffray '04 in School Nurses video



- Apr. 14** Emerging needs email sent
Apr. 15 5,700 gloves given to hospital, Chef Lu gave 70 N95 masks to hospital
Apr. 27 Hotspot phones delivered
May 1 U.S. cases: 1.07 million; ME: 1,151; Cty: 10*
May 1 Senior Celebration planning began
May 2 Khang Ung '20, Chi Nguyen '21, Khang Nguyen '22 3rd in state history competition
May 7 First Throwback Thursday School Year Video
May 16 Spring Sports Senior Parade (p. 15)
May 21 Music Awards inaugurate YouTube channel
June 1 U.S. cases: 1.79 million; ME: 2,366; Cty 11*
June 2 Virtual Giving Day (p. 11)
June 13-14 Senior Celebration (p. 4)
July 1 U.S. cases: 2.63 million; ME: 3,294; Cty: 16*

*data from Maine CDC and ourworldindata.org

Rising to the Challenge

George Stevens Academy is a vibrant learning community of hundreds of individuals with the same general objectives. Our mission and vision (p. 2) broadly define these goals, but every class, club, cast, combo, and team has its own aspirations, as do the members of these groups.

The interactions of these individuals and the thousands of acts of trust, kindness, caring, and patience that take place daily at GSA create a rhythm that grows more familiar the longer we are in the community. Sometimes the song of the school day changes when an instrument is added or subtracted, but the rhythm continues.

Some would say the whole story of the school is captured in that song, but it has become clear in recent months, regardless of how beautiful that song may be, that the real measure of our school, of any community, is how it responds to disruptions like the one that has shaken the world since early this year.

In late January, news of the novel coronavirus was everywhere, but the virus itself had entered the United States only via those who had traveled in China. According to the Centers for Disease Control, it was late February before community transmission anywhere in the U.S. had been confirmed.

Even so, on January 31, Head of School Tim Seeley informed the GSA community that "we are closely monitoring the situation" and announced that travel to China over February break or for ISIP would not be permitted.

Though the threat of the virus reaching us seemed remote, by the end of February, the school was already talking about how "to ensure as little academic disruption as possible if a school closure" became necessary, Tim wrote in our eBulletin, which is sent primarily to parents.

On March 14, the end of on-campus classes was announced in emails to our parents, students, and others in our community. "During the coming week," Tim wrote, "GSA teachers, administrators, and staff will be working to develop distance-learning strategies, procedures, and mechanisms for students' academic classes, ready to implement by Monday, March 23. Teaching and learning will then be conducted through a combination of email and other online communications between students and their teachers."

Here, we take a closer look at what distance learning was like at GSA and how our community responded to the challenges that came with it.

Learning in New Ways

The life of a school centers on learning. We offer a wide range of courses to prepare our students well for their futures, whether they choose to become contractors, attorneys, small business owners, music engineers, nurses, or cashiers. At a school with such diverse course offerings, a one-size-fits-all approach to education just does not make sense, nor does a one-size-fits-all approach to distance learning. Each of our teachers prepared for distance learning in the ways that made the most sense for their courses.

Some used online course sites like Google Classroom to share and collect assignments and communicate with students. Others relied on email.

Some engaged students in online discussions at their usual class times to promote a sense of normalcy and routine. When possible, those discussions were recorded and shared with classmates who couldn't meet at the same time as everyone else, perhaps because they had taken on the responsibility to care for younger siblings who also were at home.

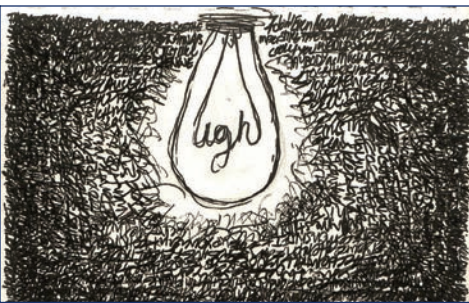
In some courses, though the media of communication had changed, the lessons were largely the same. There were readings, opportunities for feedback, discussions, assessments. But for other courses, more substantial revisions to the curriculum were needed to ensure that students could meet course goals.

One such course was Advanced Fitness. Among the tools used by teacher Dan Kane were fitness and activity logs, and links to exercise websites and videos. His students were encouraged to exercise using whatever equipment and opportunities they had on hand.

Our boatbuilding students couldn't meet in the shop, so John Brooks brought the shop to them by creating videos with son Jack's help. These online videos focused on measurements, math, and techniques needed for building boats.



A screenshot from the Richard III Minecraft video created by four tenth-graders.



A page from the visual journal of Norea Graff '22.



Senior Balinha Aparicio de Oliveira's view while quarantined on campus as a precaution.

In her British Literature course, Erin McCormick found innovative ways to involve her tenth-graders with Shakespeare's "Richard III." Noah Czuj created a stick-figure animation of a murder scene from the play. Jaden Lewis, Ben Hallett, Teague Smallidge, and Sol Tyler created an 18-minute video using Minecraft and a voice chat program to record their voices during "filming."

In other courses, the pandemic or staying at home became the subject of study.

Caroline Richards' World History students recorded their experiences for an assignment modeled after the U.K.'s Mass-Observation project, which captured the domestic impact of World War II.

Students in Maria Johnson's Introduction to Literature poetry module wrote about the silver linings of the pandemic and what they missed about school (p. 12).

In Mariel Duym's Art II Honors class, students created visual journals in response to prompts from their classmates.

Staying Connected

The best part of school for most students is belonging to something bigger than oneself. That sense of connection comes from seeing one's friends in class, but it also comes from riding on the school bus, seeing Libby Rosemeier waiting at the drop-off point, sharing a love of Chef Lu's noodle bowls or Toni Staples' donuts on Wednesdays, participating in club meetings, or practicing in a musical group or on a team.

Maintaining that feeling on campus is effortless; however, after the transition to distance learning, new ways of creating connections were found.

Some teachers reported positive interactions with students who had rarely contributed to classroom discussions but were eager to share their ideas by email.

Videoconferencing in place of classroom discussion created a sense of normalcy. Advisors also used videoconferencing to give students a chance to see and speak to each other.

Some teachers and advisors called students to give them a chance to talk to an adult outside of their home.

Social media, a useful tool for communicating with those outside GSA, became a way to engage students with Throwback Thursday video reviews of the current school year and updates on what was happening in classes, as well as how students and staff were taking care of themselves in these strange times.

To create a feeling of togetherness, Tim Seeley recorded videos with the help of Larry Gray '79. These were shared on Wednesdays, the day we usually hold our all-school assemblies.

Boarding Students

Once the switch to distance learning had been announced, Tim asked boarding parents to make arrangements for their children to return home. He knew international travel would become more difficult, and though our boarding students were very well cared for here, he believed the best place for them was home with family.

Though the majority departed by the end of March, most who remained lived in the dormitories, shared meals, studied during the school day, and took part in after-school and weekend activities even more like a family than usual.

A few, however, attempted to return home but were turned back at airports through no fault of their own. After returning to Blue Hill, they were quarantined for two weeks as a precaution. Balinha Aparicio de Oliveira '20 was relieved to have a place to return to, and said "it was great to have my own space."

All were cared for by our dedicated boarding staff, who "were amazing in their support and care for our students the last three months," Tim said.

Generous Community Meets New Needs

As distance learning began, members of our staff identified three emerging student and family needs, determined how best to meet them, and sought support from the GSA community, who responded generously and quickly.

Internet Initiative

Though all GSA students are provided a laptop by the school, not all have a strong internet connection at home. These students usually access the internet at school, but once classes were no longer held on campus, that was not possible.

In the first full week of distance learning, teacher Elizabeth Moss contacted teachers and parents to find out which students were struggling with online access. Initially, these students received their assignments from teachers as paper packets, but once it was clear that distance learning would last longer than two weeks, we knew that we needed to find ways to provide internet access.

Liz researched the options, and the decision was made to purchase smartphones to use as internet hotspots and to pay for short-term data plans. Doing so would allow these twenty or so students to use their school laptops to complete their assignments at home, giving them the best chance for academic success. Just as important, they would be able to connect with their teachers and classmates online.

Within a week of a social media post, an eBulletin note to parents, and an email to alumni and others announcing the internet initiative, \$4,100 was contributed, and those gifts went farther than anticipated after U.S. Cellular decided to donate the phones and chargers.

"Members of our GSA community," Director of Advancement Rada Starkey said at the time, "are demonstrating that they're eager to help during the COVID-19 crisis and have proven to be extremely generous."

Yearbook Initiative

Though all GSA students missed out on spring on campus and all it entails, our seniors lost their final chance to participate in spring sports, concerts, plays, the prom, and more. For these seniors, Liffey Thorpe suggested in an Advancement Office meeting, it was more important than ever to have a memento of their final year as Eagles, even if they couldn't afford the \$50 price on their own.

Once the number of seniors who had not ordered a yearbook was known, a goal of \$1,250 was set. Soon after this initiative was announced in mid-March, our generous community met that goal. Our seniors received those yearbooks when they picked up their diplomas during their individual graduation ceremonies.

Food for Families

The most pressing of the emerging needs was the most basic, and its announcement led to the strongest community response.

While much of the school community was focused on the transition to distance learning, Food Services Director Kristyn LaPlante knew that every student whose lunch had been paid for in part by our Food For Thought Fund when classes were held on campus—about 15% of our students receive such support—would continue to need help after they started learning from home.

Kristyn coordinated a team effort to give food care packages to those students and their families, as well as other GSA families experiencing food insecurity for the first time as a result of the pandemic.

The care packages included wholesome ingredients that families could use for quick lunches or more substantial meals according to their preferences. Every week, Pastry Chef Toni Staples '87 made "homemade treats for families," Kristyn said.

Since the effort began in late March, more than a dozen members of the GSA staff have helped assess the need for, order, pick up,

prepare, pack, and deliver food to more than thirty families. By the end of the school year, more than 10,000 pounds of food had been provided, Kristyn said, and GSA had committed to continue to provide care packages to these families through the summer.

Feeding our families is a labor of love for Kristyn and everyone involved. Toni "loves baking for our families," Kristyn said. "Chef Lu donated masks for us to wear while packing and distributing boxes. Right now, we are grateful to do this work. This work is a gift."

This gift is made possible by overwhelming support from our community. By the end of June, more than \$17,000 had been contributed to the Food For Thought Fund to feed our families. In addition, to support GSA's efforts to address food insecurity in the long-term, a gift of \$10,000 was made to the Food For Thought Fund endowment.

That endowment, established by Blue Hill resident Dottie Hayes in 2017 with a gift of \$100,000, has nearly doubled thanks to the generosity of so many.

"And to everyone who has stepped forward during these challenging times," said Rada Starkey, "we thank you."

Gifts to the Food For Thought Fund can be made online at georgestevensacademy.org/onlinegift.

Retiring Teachers Earned Peers' Praise

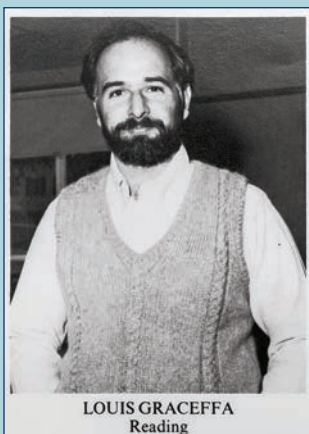
Two educators with a total of 75 years teaching our high school students retired at the end of this school year after long careers at George Stevens Academy.

Lou Graceffa, who joined the GSA English Department in 1977, has helped generations of GSA students develop their reading skills. His first year, he also started the Outing Club, which is still going strong.

In 1988, Nancy Buckingham was hired to create a Spanish program, which has grown steadily in both breadth, depth, and impact on the culture of the school. She also was very active with extracurriculars, particularly those related to language and dance.

Thank you, Lou and Nancy, for your tireless dedication to your students. We will miss you!

Below, we share a few quotes from memories and messages about Lou and Nancy that were shared by some in our community.



1978 yearbook photo

"Lou Graceffa is one of the finest educators and people I have ever known."

— Maria Johnson

"For generations of students, ... he has been a true father and friend."

— Erin McCormick '00

"What student does not love Mr. Graceffa?"

— Kelly Cunnane

"Well, it must have been bears sniffing around the campsite hoping to find something to eat."

— Larry Gray '79

Find out about the bears and read these messages in full at www.georgestevensacademy.org/2020retirees.

"She is one of the hardest-working teachers I have met since I started teaching in 1985."

— Joelle Florian

"She gave up nearly every one of her lunch hours to help students finish work or take exams."

— Bill Case

"Nancy has been the rock upon which a solid and successful foreign language program was built ..."

— Patricia Gaz

She had "high expectations of her students becoming authentic learners of culture, of language, and of all the possibilities therein."

— Kelly Cunnane



1989 yearbook photo

Class Connections



REUNIONS IN 2021

Several classes whose years end in 5 or 0 missed reunions this year, and some plan to hold reunions in 2021. If your class year ends in 0, 1, 5, or 6, we look forward to helping you plan next year's class reunion. Be in touch!

Please reach out to Alumni Relations Director Karen Brace at alumni@georgestevens.org.

ALUMNI CONNECTIONS: Virtual Reunions for Any GSA Class!

We're happy to announce a new program created to help classmates connect. Alumni are invited to reach out to GSA to suggest a date and time for a virtual class reunion over Zoom. GSA's Advancement Office will facilitate the process of reaching out to your classmates and will supply a Zoom link.

Schedule an Alumni Connections reunion a month or more in advance to be sure to include as many classmates as possible. Don't miss this opportunity to share experiences, memories, and news! For more about Alumni Connections, email Karen Brace at alumni@georgestevens.org.

INTRODUCING GSA'S YOUNGEST ALUMNI VOLUNTEER

Kayla Bond, Class of 2020, helps lead the ongoing work of the Senior Class Gift Committee. With enthusiasm and dedication, Kayla has spent many hours this summer planning the class gift (see p. 6), coordinating the committee and classmates, and handling communications with the school.

"Serving as part of GSA's Senior Class Gift Committee has helped me grasp new skills to take with me into my next chapters in life," Kayla said. "It made me realize how important it is to have people skills, to be a leader, to set goals and work towards them. My experiences volunteering during part of my senior year and a pandemic gave me a chance to grasp more abilities into my next step into adulthood."

Kayla will study elementary education at the University of Maine at Farmington.



Kayla Bond '20

INTRODUCING GSA'S NEWEST ALUMNI VOLUNTEER



Emily Biss Williams '91

Emily Biss Williams recently volunteered to be the class agent for the Class of 1991. After graduating from GSA, Emily studied mechanical engineering and American civilization at Brown University. She also spent a few semesters at the University of North Dakota learning to fly, ultimately earning her commercial pilot license and instrument rating.

She has spent time in the San Francisco Bay area, Las Vegas, and Portland, Ore., and currently lives in Seattle, where she works for Boeing as a test pilot. Her husband, Doug, also is in the aviation business. Emily has two stepdaughters, one of whom graduated from high school this spring. Emily looks forward to helping organize her class's 30th reunion in the summer of 2021!

BECOME AN ALUMNI VOLUNTEER

Class Agents Keep Classmates Connected

Class agents are integral to a strong GSA community. These alumni volunteers communicate with classmates, keep the school informed, and spread the word about alumni events. In partnership with the Advancement Office, class agents also may help find classmates to organize reunions.

If you'd like to know more about this vital way we keep our alumni connected, email alumni@georgestevens.org or visit www.georgestevensacademy.org/ClassAgents.

Alumni, Share Your Experience with Our Students

Do you have interests to share, career advice, or insights that would benefit a high school student thinking about the future?

Our students are eager for practical advice, and we know our alumni have a lot to offer. If you'd like to be a valuable resource for our students, tell us about your profession and interests in an email to alumni@georgestevens.org.

All communications take place over Zoom at this time.

CLASS OF 1970 - A LETTER TO THE CLASS OF 2020

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of their graduation, the Class of 1970 shared a message with the Class of 2020 during Commencement, delivered by Della Martin '70. A printed copy of the message also was given to seniors in their gift bags.

It begins: "With 50 years behind us, members of the Class of 1970 would like to offer words of reflection and hope. It's a different world today and there have been so many advancements that have changed us. Yet, too many things are much the same." The letter cites the Class of 1970's experiences, such as protests over inequality and war, classmates headed to Vietnam, the first steps on the moon, and the founding of Earth Day. The letter concludes: "As you move forward, please stay positive, stay focused, and work hard. When new opportunities come to you to improve yourself or the world around you, please grab them and make the difference. You have youth on your side. It's your time!"

The Class of 1970 message is the featured video on our YouTube channel. Find "George Stevens Academy" on YouTube.com.

VIRTUAL GIVING DAY: A CELEBRATION OF GSA

They say necessity is the mother of invention, and so it was with Giving Day 2020. The event traditionally occurs on campus on the first Tuesday in June, but this year's Giving Day evolved into a virtual celebration of all that is George Stevens Academy.

The online format opened the door for GSA community members far and wide to contribute Giving Day content. Music, sports highlights, messages for seniors, examples of student work, and stories were shared by 59 alumni, faculty and former faculty, parents, students, trustees, staff, and coaches.

For a finale, Noel Paul Stookey, with Paul Sullivan and others, performed "Better Times Will Come," a new song written by Janis Ian. In his introduction, Noel described his experiences with GSA and why he supports our school. Another familiar figure to join the celebration was the GSA Eagle, who danced among the signs on the front lawn honoring the Class of 2020 (facing page).



Noel Paul Stookey

Student intern Keegan Butler '21 helped spread the word via social media. "I was able to implement the marketing skills that I learned during my ISIP internship with an international trade show," Keegan said. "I look forward to working on more GSA events during my senior year."

The academy's virtual Giving Day was a resounding success. As new student and family needs emerged with the pandemic (p. 8), our generous community rose to meet those needs and others. Including the \$25,000 match, gifts totaled \$55,450, an increase of 30 percent over the next best Giving Day total.

There are many ways to contribute to the life of the school, and we're grateful to all who gave money, creativity, and energy to the celebration. We, and the GSA Eagle, thank you for making this June's Giving Day fun and memorable!

To listen to "Better Times Will Come" and revisit other video content, visit www.georgestevensacademy.org/GivingDay.

CLASS UPDATES

Do you wonder what your friends from GSA have been doing? Our class updates are now online! We've added 42 new updates to the 19 from last year's issue of *Matters*. Find them all at www.georgestevensacademy.org/ClassUpdates.

If you have an update to share about yourself or a classmate, send it to alumni@georgestevens.org or submit it via our online form: www.georgestevensacademy.org/AlumniProfile.

Here are four pictures from recent updates. Be sure to visit our Class Updates page for all the details.



"Moon Chase," 2019, photomontage by Lilian Day Thorpe '09. Lilian works at Nancy Margolis Gallery in New York City.



Jesus Henares Duclos '10 in an Ironman Triathlon in South Africa. Jesus is training for the next World Championships.



Dustin Piskura '10 in the engine room of Ocean Jazz. Dustin is chief engineer of the Crowley Maritime deep sea vessel.



A dessert created by Kara van Emmerik '12, who recently started Honey and Lace Baking Co., a delivery bakery in Sedgwick.

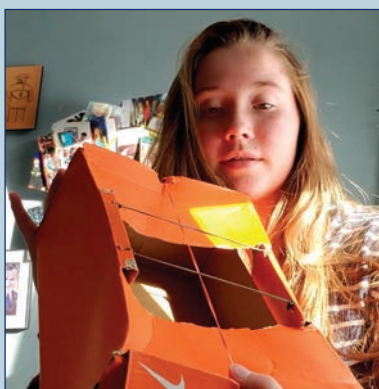
Visual and Performing Arts



After the State Jazz Fest cancellation, Tate Yoder '15 visited campus to record jazz sets for a virtual festival. Too few recordings were submitted by other schools to proceed with judging, but we think all GSA's jazz ensembles deserve gold medals! Listen for yourself at www.georgestevensacademy.org/VirtualFestival. Our thanks to our musicians, directors Steve Orlofsky and Fiona Schubeck '08, and Tate. Without these recordings, we would not have had a Facebook Sunday Jazz Series!

Clockwise from below left, the four ensembles: River of Jazz, the GSA Jazz Band, Big D's Septet, and Melodious Think.

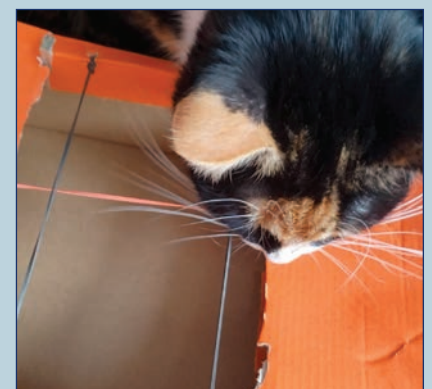
Below right, Melodious Think and Mr. O record music for Maine Maritime Academy. The video also was used in our online graduation.

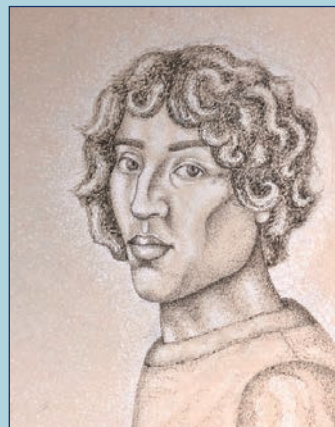


After the transition to distance learning, some music students leaned into theory, some practiced at home, and some shared videos of their performances.

Fiona Schubeck '08 asked her Steel Band students to make their own instruments and demonstrate them.

Clockwise from left, Regan Libby '23 shows off an improvised string instrument in Surry, Regan's cat shows some pluck, Fiona Allen '22 plays a wind instrument made from straws in Fletchers Landing, and Beatriz Mariscal '22 prepares to play a song on wine glasses in Zaragoza, Spain.





From left, AP Art portfolio pieces by Wanda Gould '20, Keishin Sadava '20, and Anna Trowbridge '21.

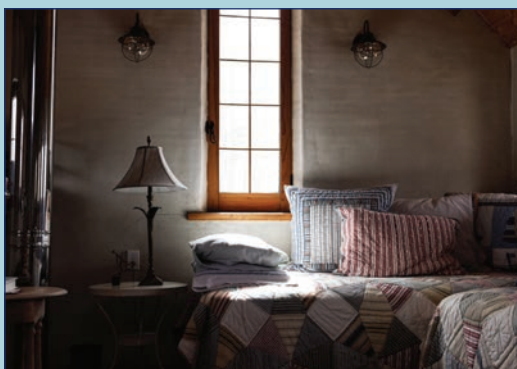
Photo by Eszter Szabadi '22.

GSA's visual arts courses give our students the opportunity to look inward, to examine the world around them, and to share their perspectives with us.

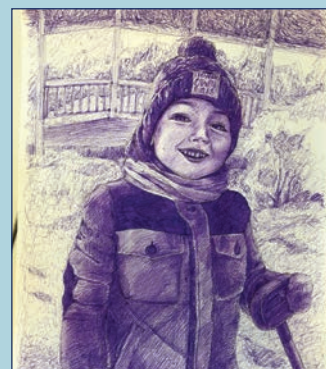
Many thanks to teachers Anya Antonovych, Mariel Duym, and Lee Park for sharing these works of art by students in their Art I, Art I Honors, Art II Honors, Photo I and II, AP 2D students, and 2D Illustration and Animation classes.



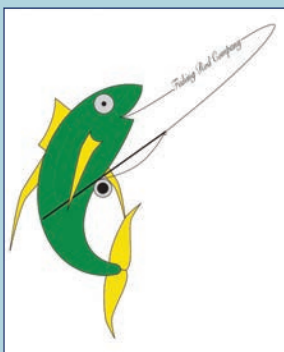
Perspective drawing by Zeke Sacaridiz '21.



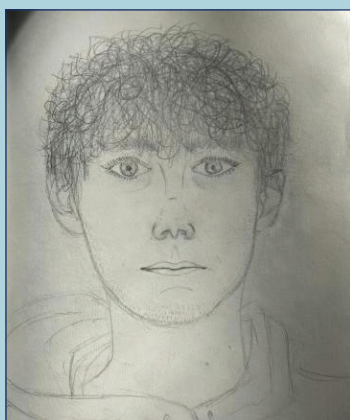
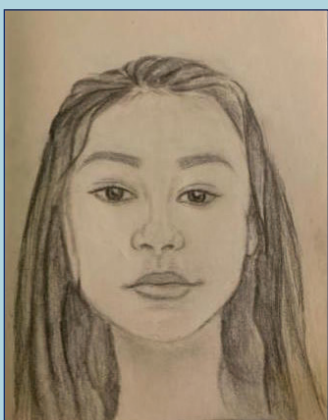
Architectural interior photo by Ryan Mitchell '21.



Drawing by Sofia Lantratova '22.



From left, logos by Holly Ibarguen '21, Isabelle Hurley '21, Logan Bryan '21, and Randy Yan '20.



From left, self-portraits by Ellie McMillan '23, Ben Hallett '22, and Solomon Haggarty '23.

Poems from Home

English Teacher Maria Johnson asked students in her ninth-grade Introduction to Literature poetry module to write poems about the silver linings of the coronavirus pandemic cloud and what they missed about GSA. Poetry has the power to take what at first seems ordinary and make it quite extraordinary. Here, we share poetry that does just that from five of Maria's students. Thank you, all, for giving us a glimpse into your lives and for sharing your thoughts and feelings about these unusual times. Thank you, Maria, for sending their poetry our way.

Many more poems can be read here: www.georgestevensacademy.org/PoemsFromHome.

What I Miss about School

an acrostic by Jenna Blodgett

Getting to be around amazing people every day	Singing with the combo	Acting in plays with the Laramie cast
Everyone coming together	Thanking Kristyn and the lunch crew every day	Calling the office through the speaker
Overly enthusiastic parents at basketball games	Events in the gym	Assembly
Reading with Mae during study halls	Volunteering for something I've never done before	Delicious soup on Wednesdays
Gorgeous art in the hallways	Earning money by fundraising with my team	Embarrassing Jillian in English class
Evenings spent rehearsing lines for the play	Notes with Ms. Lowe	Mr. O
	School spirit week	Yelling across the soccer field

Not-So-Homesick

by Grace Whiting

I've stopped counting the days it's been	I miss the sight of an ocean of people	I miss my motivation and goals to complete
Since I walked those sloping hallways.	Huddled in their groups in the cafeteria	Even the small ones that only last the length
The hallway almost always	And even hearing Tony's voice echo	Of a sixty-five minute class
Filled with faint music.	Through the waves of people.	Every minute, not homesick
And the small water fountain	Every day I feel	But very sick of home.
That almost always has a puddle under it	More and more school-sick.	I miss waking up with a schedule
Causing the sound of squeaky shoes	I miss the thousands of stairs I had to climb	And still not knowing what the day
As soon as you walk past it.	First thing in the morning to reach my classes	will become
Each day finding myself,	And the walk all the way across campus.	I miss seeing diverse groups of people
Not-so-homesick.	With every hour feeling I'm feeling	In every room.
	Very-not-homesick.	I find myself feeling not-so-homesick.

Missed

by Thea Crowley

The absence	Without break; without lunch	School is routine	You miss the monotone ring of
Of packing your bag	Effortless ways to be with people	No more practice at three	the bell
Or hellos in the hallways	Realization comes that maybe	No more seeing your friends	Signaling dread, signaling relief
Makes a difference	Subconsciously	You miss that	The bright, shiny gym floor
Larger than one might expect	You needed school		For laps and badminton
	And miss it now		You miss school.

Untitled Poem

by Oliver Tenney

During quarantine I have enjoyed	Working has also been fun for me	Overall this opportunity
Hikes and adventures in the calm	And a good way to make money.	Has given us a good chance
green forest	Along with daily workouts and exercise,	To learn and be in the great outdoors
And bike rides around my property.	It is important to take advantage of all	With all of the wonderful wildlife
I believe exercise and fresh air are	this time we have.	And beautiful nature.
Very important to staying healthy.		

Staying Home

by Cyrus Blake

Staying home is like art.	In fact, it takes 20 hours.	But after all those hours are over,
It takes patience.	20 hours of sitting,	You have a warm, crispy loaf of bread.
If you rush it, things could get ugly.	20 hours of thinking,	So make some bread when you
When I stay home,	20 hours of reading,	Stay home because after all
I make bread.	20 hours of painting,	What else is there to do?
Bread takes time.	20 hours of watching,	

Spring Sports

Sports are a big part of the GSA experience, important to our athletes, coaches, families, and fans. For many, coming to the track, the field, the harbor, and the court to cheer for our Eagles creates a strong feeling of connection to their academy, to each other, and to the next generation of our community.

Having no spring sports this year was difficult for all of us, especially our senior athletes, who trained year after year hoping this season would be their best. But we found ways to honor them and give our community a reason to cheer.

Parade Honors Spring Sports Seniors

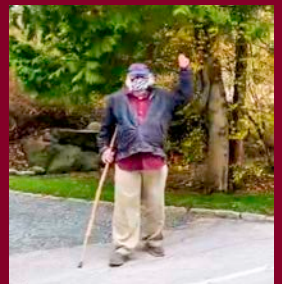
When our teams win championships, and they've won quite a few, we celebrate with a parade back to campus.

Though there were no school sports this spring, Athletic Director Larry Gray '79 wondered if a parade might boost people's spirits. After clearing it with the town and securing the help of coaches, the Hancock County Sheriff's Office, and fire departments from our towns, he invited every senior who had signed up for a spring team to participate.

On May 16, a lot of fans came out to show our senior athletes that they're champions to us, tournament or not. When there wasn't much going on, it was great to have something to celebrate and a joyful reason to get out of the house.

We are grateful to everyone who helped make the parade a success and who cheered for our spring sports seniors!

If you haven't watched the parade video yet, visit the GSA Senior Celebration playlist on our YouTube channel.



Clockwise, from top left, our GSA Eagle ready to go, the parade on Main Street, fire engines at the rotary, retired Math Chair Paul Gilden, more adoring Eagles fans, the procession of fire trucks back on Main Street, and senior Owen Vinall giving the victory sign. Many thanks to Tim Seeley, Shauna Schmidt, and Greta Hooper for sharing these images.



SENIOR SPORTS AWARDS

Iron Eagles and Athletes of the Year

During our online Class Night ceremony, Larry Gray '79 announced this year's recipients of the GSA Iron Eagle awards: Ian Howell, Caden Mattson, Ryan Mullen, Silas Murnik, Vanessa Sherwood, and Austin Snow.

Larry then announced our Athlete of the Year awards. This year's Female Athlete of the Year is Vanessa Sherwood. Our Male Athlete of the Year is Austin Snow.

To watch the Class Night ceremony, search for "George Stevens Academy" on YouTube.com. Look for our GSA Senior Celebration playlist. The athletic awards are part of Class Night video 6 of 8.

All-Academic: Balinha Aparicio de Oliveira, Trevor Cochrane, Alex Fu, Syra Gutow, Erika Hipsky, Ian Howell, Chloe Politte, Liam Webb, and Morgan Welts.

Awarded to seniors who had signed up for a spring sport and who had earned an unweighted GPA of 90 or higher their first six semesters at GSA.



Coach Dan Kane didn't let the cancellation of the baseball season keep him from the field. He planted a dwarf Alberta spruce and a pair of junipers to beautify the area around a stone that marks bleachers given by family and friends of Joe Parson. The gift in Parson's memory was dedicated at a special ceremony in 2018. Thank you, Dan Kane. This is but one example of the many quiet acts of stewardship of our campus undertaken by you and others in our community.



GEORGE
STEVENS
ACADEMY

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BLUE HILL, MAINE
PERMIT NO. 7

23 Union Street
Blue Hill, ME 04614
www.georgestevensacademy.org

Address service requested

Congratulations, graduates!



Our Eagles are ready to soar.
Find out where they're heading on p. 6.