FROM THE ARCHIVES

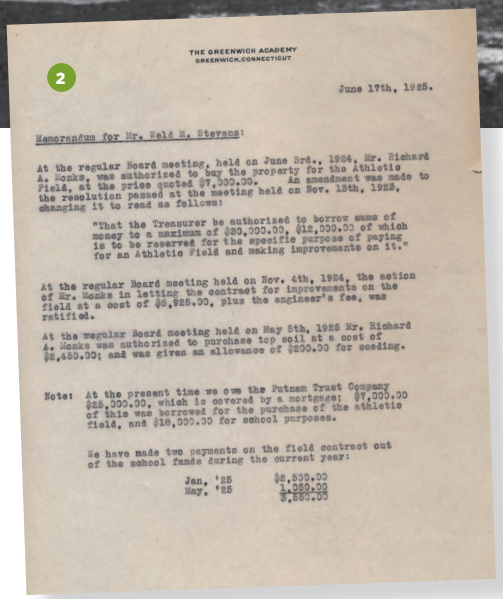
Field of Dreams

BY SUSIE DAVIS ’79 AND JOCELYN SHERMAN-AVIDAN ’96

The little white field house on Greenwich Academy’s Ridgeview Campus began life as a humble building for sports equipment storage, built in 1929 with money raised from a GA student vaudeville production. Since then, the building has been host to international hockey stars, regional field hockey competitions, and preschool programs for both GA and Brunswick.



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THE GREENWICH ACADEMY
GREENWICH,CONNECTICUT

June 17th, 1925.

Memorandum for Mr. Reid H. Stevens:

At the regular Board meeting, held on June 3rd., 1924, Mr. Richard A. Monks, was authorized to buy the property for the Athletic Field, at the price quoted $7,000.00. An amendment was made to the resolution passed at the meeting held on Nov. 15th, 1923, changing it to read as follows:

"That the Treasurer be authorized to borrow sums of money to a maximum of $20,000.00, $12,000.00 of which is to be reserved for the specific purpose of paying for an Athletic Field and making improvements on it."

At the regular Board meeting held on Nov. 4th, 1924, the action of Mr. Monks in letting the contract for improvements on the field at a cost of $6,925.00, plus the engineer's fee, was ratified.

At the regular Board meeting held on May 5th, 1925 Mr. Richard A. Monks was authorized to purchase top soil at a cost of $6,480.00; and was given an allowance of $200.00 for seeding.

Note: At the present time we owe the Putnam Trust Company $20,000.00, which is covered by a mortgage: $7,000.00 of this was borrowed for the purchase of the athletic field, and $12,000.00 for school purposes.

We have made two payments on the field contract out of the school funds during the current year:

Jan, '25	$8,500.00
May, '25	1,250.00
	$9,750.00

In 1921, Greenwich Academy was in dire need of a field to accommodate its student athletes. While the campus, then located at 116 Maple Avenue, was only large enough to allow for a playground, kind neighbors let GA borrow their backyards for other events. Among them was Francis K. Brown, who generously offered his backyard for field sports. GA built a baseball diamond, a 100-yard cinder track, hurdles, and a sand pit for the long jump, and started hosting track and field events against other schools. The property abutted what would eventually become GA’s Ridgeview Campus.

Three years later, Greenwich Academy parent and local realtor Raymond B. Thompson, who had two girls at GA, Ruth ’29 and Jean ’35 (and later granddaughter Marilyn Makepeace ’68), helped GA procure a mortgage for the purchase of the Ridgeview field. Soon a field house was needed to store sports equipment and house a changing room. To help raise funds, GA students wrote, choreographed, and rehearsed what the local newspapers described as a “musical extravaganza” called *Step This Way*. Tickets were sold for $3 and the community rallied for the cause. The musical featured several numbers, including one called “The Cos Cob Coast Guard.” Enough money was raised to help build the field house, which opened in fall of 1929.



In the 1930s, GA hosted the tournament for the Stuyvesant Field Hockey Association, which was comprised of top teams from the Northeast. Greenwich Academy players on the Stuyvesant Fairchester team were Jean Nolan ’29 and Martha Hodge ’29. Sisters



Jean Hatheway Ringwalt ’35, Harriet Hatheway Marrin ’36, and Barbara Hatheway Weadock ’40 all played sports on the Ridgeview field. Jean’s daughter, Sharmon Ringwalt Kelly ’65, remembers the mile-long trek from the old GA campus to the Ridgeview field. “Of course we would sigh at the need for walking to the field, but I actually felt a freedom being off campus and walking unsupervised down the road; some ‘free time’ so to speak,” she recalled.

Virginia White Meyer ’35 was on the hockey team, and later so was her daughter, Virginia “Winkie” Meyer Grandison ’62. Winkie, who played for the Stuyvesant team, recalls, “The Stuyvesant hockey days were particularly memorable because schools came from all around, and all schoolgirl teams were recognized. It was a great honor to make the team, and GA usually did well. I also remember softball on the fields and my dad coming to help at extra practices. He brought a baseball and Brooklyn Dodgers fan perspective to our game and introduced me to heckling of the batter!”

The two manicured fields also attracted the men’s Stuyvesant teams, bringing teams from as far away as Toronto and Philadelphia in the early 1950s. Around that time, John Rote, a member of USA’s 1956 Olympic Field Hockey team, put together a group of former Olympic field hockey players called the Privateers, whose home field was Ridgeview. The team hosted Bermuda in 1957 and beat them. John also invited former Olympic players from Spain, the Netherlands Antilles, the West Indies, and Canada to the Ridgeview field. John eventually became a GA parent—he was the father of GA student Sandra Rote ’80!

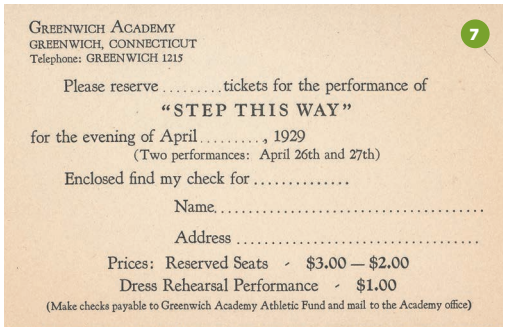
In 1962, GA started using the fields on the current campus and sold the Ridgeview Campus to Brunswick, which rechristened it Everett Field, after a former headmaster.

In 2004, Greenwich Academy bought the property back as a home for its new soccer program and to make more room for the Pre-Connecting and Connecting classes. Since then, the historic 1929 field house has served as a schoolhouse for the youngest Greenwich Academy girls, launching them on their own GA journeys. ■









GREENWICH ACADEMY
GREENWICH, CONNECTICUT
Telephone: GREENWICH 1215

Please reserve .....tickets for the performance of
“STEP THIS WAY”
for the evening of April....., 1929
(Two performances: April 26th and 27th)
Enclosed find my check for .....
Name.....
Address .....
Prices: Reserved Seats - $3.00 — $2.00
Dress Rehearsal Performance - $1.00
(Make checks payable to Greenwich Academy Athletic Fund and mail to the Academy office)

1 Ridgeview Campus in 1929

2 1925 memo detailing the purchase and costs associated with the 1924 purchase of the athletic field.

3 Field hockey players in 1930

4 At Ridgeview in the 1930s

5 Athletics practice at the field house

6 Field hockey players at Ridgeview in 1944

7 RSVP card from the *Step This Way* fundraiser

Coordination: A Joint Venture

At nearly 50 years old, the GA/Brunswick Coordination Program brings benefits to all aspects of student life.

Visitors to Greenwich Academy may do a double take upon first arrival to this all-girls school: male students stand on the cafeteria line, walk the halls, and sit on sunny benches outside the Upper School entrance. Greenwich Academy's coordinated program with the all-boys Brunswick School dates back to 1971, nearly 50 years, affording GA and Brunswick Upper School students the opportunity to take classes at either campus, thus doubling the number of course options and providing a co-ed dynamic within a single-sex school. A leafy footpath ("The Path") joins the two campuses, busy with students during the 10-minute passing period between classes.

Pictured right: Andrea Jemiolo, Susanna Warne, Jose Riera, Nicole Surgent




CREDIT: DAN BURNS

The benefits of coordination extend far beyond the classroom, too. In the opening days of September, GA School President Annabel Thrasher '19 and Brunswick School President Christian Farricker '19 planned a joint GA-Brunswick cookout: freshmen and sophomores from both schools enjoyed a barbecue at GA, while juniors and seniors held their cookout at Brunswick. This particular event took considerable planning from the two student leaders, who worked with the administrators and dining halls at each school to make the day happen. "We wanted to find a way for people to hang out with their whole grade, boys and girls, at the beginning of the year," said Thrasher. "People sat outside in big circles, talking and playing music. It helped that it was a really sunny day."

The coordinated activities extend to the performing arts as well. In addition to two co-ed musicals and two co-ed plays produced each year between the two schools, the annual Arts Assembly is also a fall highlight: freshmen and sophomores from both schools head into GA's Massey Theater, while all juniors and seniors fill Brunswick's Baker Theater. Each group watches a selection of that school's music, song, art, film, and theater offerings (this year's assembly included scenes from GA's fall musical *Mamma Mia!* and Brunswick's fall play *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*). The grades then switch locations to watch the performance at the other school (the path is never so busy).

Sophomores and juniors enjoyed an additional coordination moment in the fall: for the first time, the orientation days in the opening week of school were co-ed for 10th and 11th graders courtesy of Grit 'N Wit, an outdoor obstacle course that combined physical challenges, mental puzzles, and the teamwork of paired GA/Brunswick advisories. It was a day filled with activities and physical challenges—as well as plenty of water breaks to contend with the lingering summer heat. "I saw a whole lot of positive interactions between students as well as between students and faculty," says Kent Motland, GA's Group XI dean and Upper School English teacher, "and the 'downtime' was as useful as the time actually doing the course. There was a good bit of milling around, and there's a lot to be said for some unmanaged time before and after more intentional, structured activity."

GA's Group X Dean and Upper School English teacher Sarah Maliakel agrees. "Aside from being just plain fun, the joint GA-Brunswick Grit 'N Wit day totally exceeded my hopes of setting a positive tone for the school year and laying the groundwork for sustained relationships," she notes.

"I've always felt that GA offers the small-school experience of a place where you're *known* along with the big-school experience of coordination—a two-campus, two-culture reality."

TOM SULLIVAN
GA'S HEAD OF UPPER SCHOOL AND ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

Left: Scene from the fall 2018 Upper School play
Bottom: A challenge from Grit 'n Wit

"I watched students who'd never met before hoisting one another over wooden hurdles and solving giant Sudoku puzzles together and—just as meaningfully—colleagues cheering them on and connecting with each other for the first time. The chance for casual conversation, low-stakes activities, and unstructured time to just hang out was so valuable."

The GA/Brunswick paired advisories from those orientation days remained a team throughout the year, meeting as schedules allowed. One success story comes from the paired advisories of Andrew Ghobrial, GA's assistant director of technology, and Kristina Norrgard, Brunswick Upper School science teacher, who have managed to arrange numerous meetings throughout the school year over pizza, waffles, and Dunkin' Donuts. "People feel safe in familiarity so we try to meet regularly," notes Andrew Ghobrial. "We call ourselves the Norrbrials." He's observed a shift toward inclusion in his advisees' mindset. "Their instinct is to ask if the Brunswick students can be included in an activity," he observes, "and they also feel comfortable on the Brunswick campus when they see a Norrgard advisee, someone they know and can say 'hi' to."

Freshmen and seniors enjoyed coordination this fall, too, through the ongoing Peer Program, a co-ed freshman orientation led by 18 GA seniors and 18 Brunswick seniors that extends throughout the fall and early winter. The program kicks off every year with an off-campus retreat for the seniors as they embark on this leadership program. "Both the Brunswick and GA students show up a bit tentative and nervous, but they so appreciate the ability to get to know each other in a nonacademic, noncompetitive setting," notes Edwina Foster, a Peer faculty advisor and GA's English Department chair. "Within minutes of arriving at our retreat in August, they're laughing and becoming fast friends with people they never expected to. We faculty members love to be a part of a program that encourages unaffected and honest relationships between the two schools—Peer is coordination at its best."

Those senior Peer leaders then lead a freshman Orientation Day as school opens—and continue to meet with co-ed groups of freshmen throughout the fall, each led by one GA senior and one Brunswick senior. "It's a good way to connect with seniors," says freshmen Annie Carey '22. "It's nice to have seniors that you know and can say 'hi' to." Another freshman, Caroline Cowin '22, enjoys the camaraderie of Peer. "In class you don't always get to talk to people that much," she notes. "In Peer, we can all just talk. I love hanging out with my group."

The two schools come together not only through orientation activities but through that most reliable and sustaining of all media: books. Brunswick and GA have a coordinated summer reading book for all Upper Schoolers—culminating in a visit from the book's author. The schools alternate hosting the authors, with all GA and Brunswick students and faculty attending the author talk. Recent authors and summer reads have included Hannah Tinti (*The Good Thief*), Colson Whitehead (*The Underground Railroad*), and Emily St. John Mandel (*Station Eleven)*.

This year, the two schools heard from an additional author together. Anthony Ray Hinton, author of *The Sun Does Shine: How I Found Life and Freedom on Death Row*, spoke to students and faculty in a joint assembly about the 30 years he spent on death row for a crime he didn't commit. Gloria Fernández-Tearte, GA's director of diversity and staff development, had the chance to hear Mr. Hinton speak last year at the Equal Justice Initiative in Selma, Alabama, to GA and Brunswick students in the U.S. History of Civil Rights expedition course. "Mr. Hinton managed to become a social justice leader in solitary confinement—while wrongfully imprisoned," she notes. "When I think of Dr. King's message of peace and nonviolence, I think of Anthony Ray Hinton." Along with Kyna Shine, Brunswick's director of diversity and inclusion, Ms. Fernández-Tearte invited Mr. Hinton to speak in a joint assembly to both Upper Schools.

Coordination also carries the students out of the day-to-day schedule and into the future. "I've always felt that GA offers the small-school experience of a place where you're *known* along with the big-school experience of coordination—a two-campus, two-culture reality," observes Tom Sullivan, GA's head of Upper School and assistant head of school. "Most of our students will attend a co-ed college, and the coordinated experience really helps to prepare them for that and life beyond." ■

