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## Back to the Point

May 2010

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We like to present each edition of Back to the Point with brevity, knowing that people only have so much time to read communications such as this. Having said that, so much has happened at the School over the last month that we have gone on a bit longer than usual. We hope you'll agree that the extended pieces are worth the read.

### DUNCAN BROWN '08 AND HIS WORLD



What do tennis, Jane Goodall, and a veterinary camp in Ohio all have in common? None other than Duncan Brown '08. After a successful 15-1 season, with a personal record of 13-3 in his first season as a member of the Stonington High School Bears JV tennis team last year, Duncan is now a member of the varsity squad, which as of this writing has compiled a perfect 12-0 record. He is also a member of the varsity soccer team.

This coming summer will be the tenth that Duncan has spent at The Wilds, one of the largest wildlife conservation centers in the world at nearly 10,000 acres. The Wilds in Ohio is home to rare and endangered species from across the globe. According to Duncan's mother, Elizabeth Tobin Brown, "His experience there has evolved from enjoying watching the Prezwalski's wild horses, African wild dogs, and bison romp to doing simple wildlife projects as a youngster to hands-on work in the field and in the lab as a pre-veterinary student. He has gone on feed runs to feed giraffes, bathed a Southern White Rhino, helped with necropsies (animal autopsies), done heart-rate monitoring during a procedure on a Grevy's zebra, and helped diagnose diseased animals."

Part of Duncan's love of animals has caused him to join both the [Jane Goodall Institute](#) and [Roots and Shoots](#), nonprofit organizations that work to protect the environment around the world and to benefit chimpanzees. When Duncan and his mother heard that Dr. Goodall was going to be at Roger Williams Zoo earlier this month, they made haste to Providence to be at her speaking engagement, where she was promoting her new book, *Hope for Animals and Their World: How Endangered Species are Being Rescued from the Brink*. With all his "free" time, Duncan has also started the college search process.

### PARENTS' ASSOCIATION HOSTS MAGNIFICENT GALA!

Historic Branford House on the University of Connecticut's Avery Point campus was the scene for Pine Point's first benefit dinner dance and auction since the 50th Anniversary Gala in 1999. And what a night it was! Our thanks go out to the Organizing Committee, which attended to every detail to ensure that the Gala went off without a hitch.



With 220 guests in attendance, the energy in the room was palpable and the mix of people (parents, past parents, grandparents, alumni, faculty, community leaders, an actual auctioneer drawn from the parent body, and even two couples whose children won't be Pine Point students until September!) left folks feeling very good about our school. *Every* aspect of the evening – the food, volunteer support, music, the room, the auctioneer, the weather, and the selection of auction items – came together to make for one of the most memorable evenings in the history of Pine Point.

The fall issue of *ViewPoints* will present the event in greater detail, but we wanted to let you know that it was a great success. At the end of the evening it was determined that \$82,000 had been raised in net income to support the entire program at Pine Point! Of that amount, \$11,100 was committed by inspired auction bidders to purchase 22 Apple iPads for use in the classrooms. That new technology will be ready and waiting for our students when they return in September!

Our heartfelt thanks to everyone who was a part of "An Evening by the Sea." Click [here](#) for a slideshow of who was there!



### Gala Organizing Committee

Alexandra Alpert  
 Susan DeMovick  
 Anne Fix '76  
 Geraldine Griffin  
 David Hannon  
 Barbara Silver Holt  
 Sally Mackillop  
 Debbie O'Brien  
 Jennifer Parsons  
 Kimberly Rick  
 Jennifer Schwindt

### PINE POINT STUDENTS EXCEL IN ERB TRAINING

Last December, the 4th, 6th and 8th grade students at Pine Point took the Educational Records Bureau Comprehensive Testing Program standardized test, commonly referred to as the ERBs. The test is comprised of objective achievement and reasoning sections covering reading, writing and mathematics. The results identify areas of strengths and need for individual students. For example, if students are showing a particular strength in mathematics, teachers may investigate further and determine if an accelerated program beyond honors level is warranted. The faculty also looks at the outcomes as a whole to help them recognize how well they are reaching the students.

This particular standardized test is used by independent schools to help them compare their program with other academically rigorous programs. The statistics received are based on three norms: the **national** norm, which is a comparison of our students to the estimated performance of all students across the nation; the **suburban** norm, which is a comparison to the performance of suburban public school students; and the **independent** norm, which is a comparison to the performance of students in independent schools.

"Our school-wide scores indicate we are significantly above the national and suburban norms, and are on par, and in many cases above the norms established with other independent private schools," said Director of Studies and newly-appointed Middle School Director Diana Owen. "Historically our students have performed at this level and we are pleased to see the consistency. This is a strong indicator of the effectiveness of our curriculum and instruction!"

### STUDENTS ATTEND LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES

Four seventh graders spent time this spring at various student leadership conferences in the Washington, DC area. Christopher Bowdler and Jennifer Carroll attended the Junior National Young Leaders Conference. The conference offers middle school students "the opportunity to learn about leadership by studying the leaders of the past and by focusing on social advocacy to make a positive impact in their homes and communities." Jenn went during the March school break, while Christopher was there in April.



Jenn's brother, Alan, and Kara Falck attended a session of the well known leadership group People to People, also in March. Alan described the organization as one that "brings kids together from different schools who haven't met before, and we learn to work together." Part of his experience included a trip to Gettysburg and being close enough to the White House to see President Obama get off his helicopter! Says Alan, "It was awesome and I'd recommend it to anyone!" Pictured here are Kara, Alan, Jenn, and Christopher.

### GRANDPARENTS'/GRANDPERSONS' DAY



Over 200 grandparents and grandsons spent a delightful morning with us on April 30. The day started earlier than in past years, giving our guests the opportunity to spend extra time in class with the students. A great arts program ended the day. Thanks to all concerned on the faculty, and particularly to Dionne Butler, who led a great group of volunteers to ensure that our visitors were well nourished during the entire day.

#### **PINE QUILL**

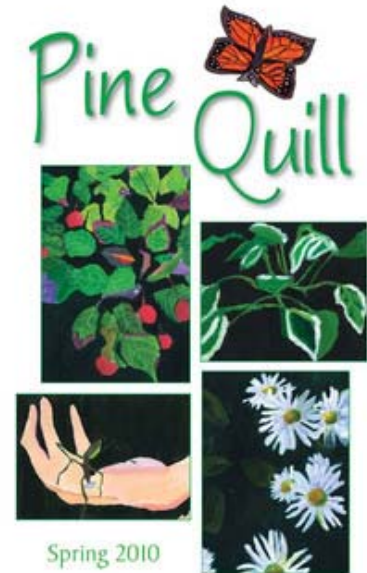
The Spring edition of the *Pine Quill*, Pine Point's literary and arts magazine, went home with students for families to enjoy. Students across all grades are represented in this wonderful publication and now you too can enjoy it by clicking [here](#). Sixth

grade teacher Carol Roper and Latin teacher Robin Rice edit the magazine while Publications Coordinator Rosemary Robertson is responsible for its layout.

#### **GARY WILLIAMS AND INTO THE DEEP**

Last September, history teacher Gary Williams missed the first three days of school. His absence was excused, however, as he and others affiliated with Mystic Seaport traveled to Lake Erie, to film *Into the Deep: America, Whaling, And the World*, the latest movie by documentary film maker Ric Burns as part of PBS' American Experience series.

*Into the Deep* looks at an event that inspired one of the greatest novels ever written. In 1820, the whaleship *Essex* was rammed twice and sunk by a giant sperm whale. The crew members took to three whaleboats and were adrift for more than 90 days. Of the original crew of 20, eight men were found in two boats, having turned to cannibalism for survival. Mr. Williams (third from right, with director Burns in the center) plays the captain of the *Essex*, George Pollard, who was one of the survivors.



On a stagecoach years later, a whaler named Herman Melville overheard a story about a fearsome whale in the Pacific who was nicknamed "Mocha-Dick," thanks to the creamy color of his skin. Later meeting the son of the *Essex's* first mate while on a voyage, Melville put the two stories together and, in 1851, published *Moby-Dick, or The Whale*.

Although the show was premiered on PBS on Monday, May 10, it will be repeated several times, as American Experience shows are. Go to [www.cptv.org](http://www.cptv.org) to find when the program will be broadcast again.

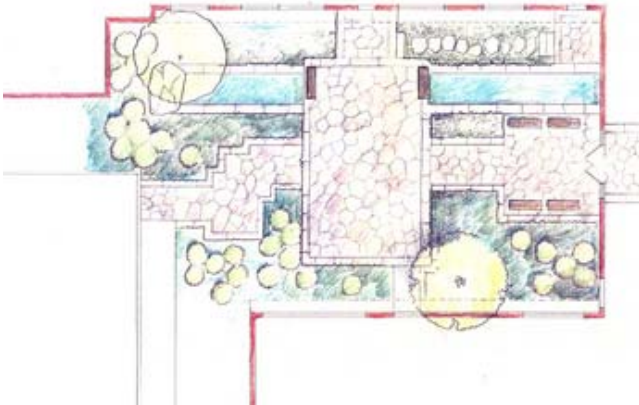
#### **JOIN US FOR GRADUATION**



Come and send the Class of 2010 off in style at Pine Point's commencement exercises, beginning at 10 AM on Saturday, June 12th. This year's speaker is David Winans '73 (left), a teacher of English at the Gulf Stream School, a Pre-K through 8th grade school in Gulf Stream, FL.

### RUSSELL GARDEN CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY

In November 2007 Pine Point lost a dear friend when past parent Alicia Zintl Russell was struck and killed by an automobile. Those who knew Alicia rallied together to raise funds that supported the creation of what would become the Alicia Z. Russell Center for Assessment and Learning (CAL) in the DeMovick Early Childhood Center (DECC). It was also hoped that a garden might be created between the 6th grade and DECC that would honor Alicia. (For those whose time with Pine Point goes back many years, this is the area where one enters into the Houghton Wing through the glass doors.)



If everything goes according to plan, by graduation we will have a beautiful new space to enjoy. (The historic rains last July and this March made attending to the space a matter of real urgency.) In typical Pine Point fashion, there are many folks to thank for making the garden a reality. Noted landscape architect and past parent Peter Cummin of [Cummin Associates, Inc.](#) donated his services to design a space that is functional, attractive, and low maintenance. Evoking Alicia's spirit and the love of the ocean, it will be a welcoming spot where classes can work and one can find peace and inspiration.

In March, the Griffin family made a generous gift to move the project forward and their commitment was followed by the Zintl and Russell families. Martin Griswold '88 (featured in the fall 2009 issue of *ViewPoints*) of [Judges Farm](#) in Old Lyme and Dan Jeffrey of [Pequot Plant Farm](#) in Stonington, respectively, donated perennials and shrubs to keep us headed in the right direction. [Lee Malek Landscaping](#) has started prepping the site, putting in various elements to ensure proper drainage and will later lay walkways and small patios. Flemings Feed will donate mulch for the project.



***We're almost there, but we require some help to complete the project. We need to purchase 60 Common Bearberrys and six benches. As well, we want to put in steps allowing access from a CAL office into the garden. The remaining work requires \$2,500 of funding. We will be putting in all of the plants ourselves on Saturday, May 29th (rain date, May 30th). Please contact [Director of Development David Hannon](#) and let him know if you can lend a hand through a contribution and/or labor in creating what will be a wonderful addition to the campus.***

### PEACE ONE DAY

Planning is underway for Peace One Day at Pine Point. This international day of arts, workshops, and fun activities – and, of course, the hope of the absence of conflict around the globe – will take place world-wide on September 21. Ironically, the proclamation proclaiming the first Peace One Day was signed at the United Nations on September 11, 2001, which shortly thereafter was evacuated due to the events of that day.



A tentative schedule of activities is listed online, which you can review by clicking [here](#). There is also a place on the site for you to register to be a presenter during the day, if you feel that you have a special area of expertise that you would like to share during what is certain to be a special day for everyone.

#### A VIBRANT SCHOOL

Not a week goes by when we don't receive contributions to the Annual Fund. Two of the gifts we recently received typify the support that is given to Pine Point. At the start of last week, a parent couple made a marvelous gift. Even better, the gift was accompanied by a wonderful note. They wrote, "This is more this year than we pledged for a couple of reasons. Most importantly, our son has had his best year at the school. The growth in his confidence and academic achievement continues to amaze us. For this, we thank the dedication and enthusiasm of his teachers. It's great to be part of such a dynamic and vibrant school!" Soon after, a gift was made by a 9th grader, who gave \$1.00 in honor of each of his classmates! It's that kind of spirit that has pushed the Annual Fund to record heights in what remains a challenging environment. With the end of the school year upon us, can we count on your help? Click [here](#) to make your gift now.

#### SAVE THE DATE – ALUMNI REUNION

Join your classmates from the Classes of 1952-2004 at the next Alumni Reunion on August 7th from 6-9 PM in the Library/Technology Center. This year is the 50th anniversary of the Class of 1960's graduation, the 25th of the Class of 1985, and the 10th of the Class of 2000. It would be great if we could get large turnouts from each of those classes, as well as other alumni! Register by clicking [here](#). Current and former faculty are encouraged to attend as guests of the School.

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