



Family Tree²⁰¹⁴

A magazine for the extended family of Ojai Valley School



The 50th Commencement



Family Tree



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“OVS truly educates the whole child through a consistent and well thought-out program that encompasses all aspects of academic and character development”

It is always challenging, and somewhat stressful, to be evaluated. In education we are constantly in review mode, both in the classroom and outside. We continually seek pathways to impart knowledge, improve student learning, and develop sound character traits in our students. Indeed, it is only through close scrutiny and reflection that we grow and prosper as a school community.

So it is that every six years Ojai Valley School elects to undergo a comprehensive process of school improvement to be accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS). As part of this process the school completes a rigorous self-study, which is then reviewed by a visiting team of volunteer school administrators and teachers.

The self-study process for OVS began more than 18 months ago as members of our entire school community met to gather data and form thoughtful responses to challenging questions posed in a new pilot version of the WASC/CAIS accreditation document. In February, we welcomed a seven-person visiting team whose members visited classes and met parents, teachers, administrators, students, and members of the Board of Trustees to review our self-analysis and to confirm our strengths and suggest areas for improvement.

In their conclusions, the team members were unanimously complimentary of our rich and diverse curriculum and the way in which the learning experience is balanced by the co-curricular offerings on both campuses. “OVS truly educates the whole child through a consistent

and well-thought-out program that encompasses all aspects of academic and character development,” they wrote. “The school is small, but the offerings are very broad.”

The accreditation team members praised our dedicated and caring teaching faculty for providing “an unusually rich, diverse and differentiated curriculum to meet student needs.” They highlighted our commitment to cultural diversity and our plans to improve facilities on both campuses. Numerous times they cited the installation of the solar energy plant as “a shining light” in our conservation and sustainability efforts – areas in which they recommended we continue to develop curricular opportunities for our students. The team praised our efforts to unify the two campuses and also recommended we redouble our efforts, both internally and

externally, to see OVS as “One School” as opposed to two campuses.

My sincere thanks to everyone involved in this process. As we reach new milestones, including this year the renovation of the historic Founder’s Shop at the Lower Campus and the celebration of the 50th graduating class at the Upper Campus, it is truly rewarding to hear an affirmation of our philosophy and mission, and the great work being done each day at Ojai Valley School.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Hall-Mounsey". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Michael J. Hall-Mounsey
President/CEO

CONTRIBUTORS

Thank you to photographers Alex Mooney, Malory Taylor, Darcie George, John Boyd, Will Wyman, and Fred Alvarez for their contributions to this issue of *Family Tree*. Alex's creativity and design skills have graced every OVS publication for over a decade. In addition to designing this issue, she showed her skills behind the camera by capturing the cover photo and many photos seen here and on the OVS website. She will be missed.

Thank you to Upper Campus history teacher Fred Alvarez and admissions director Tracy Wilson, both former *Los Angeles Times* reporters, who write and edit for *Family Tree*.

Special thanks to Fred's journalism students who contributed campus and sports news as well as articles by junior Daphne Psaledakis and senior Emmy Addison. Fred is immensely proud of the accomplishments of his journalism students this past year. More of their work can be seen online at www.ovs.org/OTH.

Finally, a special thank you to Elizabeth Curran Hermes, an alumna, past parent, current grandparent and member of the Board of Trustees who, in addition to editing *Family Tree* with her red pen, contributed two wonderful profiles of alums Beth Pfeiffer (L66, U69) and Varnnee Ross (L77, U81).

“What they will choose to demonstrate after their departure from this stage is subject to speculation. What they have done to get here is a matter of record, and nothing short of spectacular.”

– Head of School Carl Cooper, addressing the Class of 2014

Dear Alumni,

We are happy to report on yet another successful year of alumni outreach and engagement. Thanks to all those who participated in the spring Alumni Survey, we were able to reevaluate our communications and also create a comprehensive strategic plan. To read about the survey and to enjoy some select quotations, please see page 48.

The Alumni Council, with a number of more recent graduates adding their voices, has been diligently working to pull together our annual events as well as add new ones. We continue to offer a Guest Speaker Series for high school students, host the “Senior to Alumni Dinner” each year, serve in an advisory role for the Alumni Office, and help plan various regional gatherings. Our annual Alumni Weekend celebration was hosted June 13-14 at the Upper Campus, where we enjoyed a weekend full of fun activities, music, food, and good company.

Alumni Weekend 2014 also marked the beginning of a year-long series of events celebrating 50 years of the Upper Campus, where we are proud of our past and are focused on our future. In honor of this milestone, the council and OVS Alumni Office staff are working closely to coordinate events all around the world. The grand finale will take place at the 2015 Alumni Weekend celebration, which will take place on June 12-14, 2015. Please save those dates. We look forward to a wonderful celebration with alumni telling stories, leading seminars, making music, showing movies, playing golf and tennis, horseback riding, and much, much more.

If you would like to become involved with the Council or assist with one of next year's alumni events, please contact alumni@ovs.org. We are always in need of alumni to host events, recommend venues, or share ideas. Lastly, we would like to thank all our loyal alumni for their generous annual support and also extend our gratitude to everyone on the Alumni Council for their dedicated service. It's truly been a great pleasure working together to help strengthen and sustain our alma mater.

Sincerely,



Paul Donlon (L74) & Alan Newsum (L75, U79)
Alumni Council Co-Chairs

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OJAI VALLEY SCHOOL UPPER CAMPUS

Ojai Valley School recently celebrated its 50th graduating class from the Upper Campus – a milestone that launches a year-long celebration of achievements, memorable experiences, and notable individuals whose contributions transformed a pocket of rugged canyon land into a top college-preparatory high school.

This celebration of 50 years at Upper Campus will culminate next June with the reunion of the first graduating Class of 1965 at Alumni Weekend.

During the recent graduation ceremony, OVS President Michael J. Hall-Mounsey reflected on the era of conflict into which the high school was born as an extension of the already established academic program at the Lower Campus. And he reminded the seniors of the colorful characters – 1,145 past graduates, including their own headmaster – who walked the stage before them.

“Think back to the 1960s when the Upper Campus was established,” Hall-Mounsey

said in his commencement address. “The Vietnam War was raging, the Beatles were making everyone scream, push button phones were new, a stamp cost 5-cents and gas was 30-cents. The population of the world was half what it is today. Concern for the environment was in its infancy. What a time to establish a high school campus.”

Hall-Mounsey recounted how, on the first night on that campus, dorm parent Mike Hermes (L53) and teacher J.B. Close invited two boys, Dok Smith and Dave Cosgrove, to bunk with sleeping bags in the new dorm, even though only the framing was complete.



“The four talked long into the night about their hopes and dreams for the new ‘Upper School,’” he said. “Discussions involved student government, the prefect system, the lap system, the athletic program, an appropriate college preparatory curriculum and, of course, fair rules and regulations for older students soon to be off to college.”

From that first night to the present, dedicated educators, including Wallace Burr, Robert G. Cooper, Art Biscoe, Otis Wickenhaeuser, Wally Drew, Gary Dinkins, Judy Oberlander and countless others, shared their knowledge and passion for the subjects they taught to

generations of OVS students, and leaders such as Mike Hermes (L53) and Carl Cooper (L64, U68) helped transform the campus into the school it is today.

The 2014 graduates are off to college, pursuing their own passions in science, humanities, arts, mathematics, engineering, and technology.

For their younger classmates and the alumni, the coming year will be filled with events and activities celebrating the past 50 years and focusing on the future of Ojai Valley School.

We invite you to follow the celebrations on the OVS website at www.ovs.org/50-years.

“The coming year will be filled with events and activities celebrating the past 50 years and focusing on the future of Ojai Valley School.” -- Michael J. Hall-Mounsey, President/CEO

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CELEBRATING
50
YEARS
OJAI VALLEY SCHOOL
UPPER CAMPUS



Save the Date!

ALUMNI WEEKEND

June 12-14, 2015

It's not too early to begin thinking about the
2015 OVS Alumni Weekend!

We're looking for a few good men and women to join the Reunion Committee to help plan next year's activities and round up classmates. The 2015 reunion will mark the 50th Anniversary of the Upper Campus and is sure to be a grand event.

Classes ending in "zeros" and "fives" will be celebrating their milestone reunions, but, as always, all classes are encouraged to attend.

Help to make your reunion a smashing success by encouraging your classmates to attend. To learn more about becoming a Class Agent, contact the Alumni Office at alumni@ovs.org or (805) 640-2578.



Beth Pfeiffer with her two sons, Stuart and Andrew

Meet Beth Pfeiffer (L66, U69)

by Elizabeth (Curran) Hermes (L66, U69)

She's in esteemed company. Carl Cooper was one. Mike Hermes, too. Beth Pfeiffer was also a "faculty brat," though, on the application Mrs. Pfeiffer, who was joining OVS as a teacher, filled out for her youngest daughter to attend the school, she described Beth as "an extrovert who is utterly cheerful and unsuspecting." As unbrat-like, in other words, as could ever be. And, as Beth's teachers and classmates quickly realized, her mother's assessment had been spot on.

Beth's parents, Homer and Betsey, had come to Ojai from Japan, where her father, an architect and a captain in the Navy, was employed by the Atomic Bomb Commission to build facilities in Hiroshima and Nagasaki after WWII. Betsey had majored in math at Wellesley College and had received a master's degree in aeronautical engineering. Working for the defense effort during the war, she had helped develop fuel injection systems for aircraft. WWII presented unusual opportunities for women, and Betsey was eager to play a part. In Japan, as a young mother, she used her exceptional education as a teacher of English to Japanese medical students, a foretelling of her life-long career in teaching.

In 1950, as the assignment in Japan ended, the Pfeiffers considered various locations in California, but the beauty of Ojai's natural setting and the burgeoning artistic life of the community appealed strongly, as did the unusual cluster of private schools. They moved their young family to Ojai in time for Beth to be born a California native.

Beth and her older siblings, George (L63) and Dorrit (L64, U67), initially attended Monica Ros School, where their mother was a teacher. She became Beth's teacher in both first and second grades and then again in sixth grade after Mrs. Pfeiffer, then a single parent, had taken a job at OVS. Beth began at OVS as a fourth grader only because there was no third grade at the time. She remembers Pearl Heath, her teacher that year as well as the next, with great fondness and appreciation. "She helped me fill in the gaps," Beth explained. "I loved her."

Mrs. Pfeiffer sometimes had weekend duty and that meant the kids accompanied her to the Lower Campus. Beth remembers hitching Joker, an ill-tempered pony, to a cart on some of those weekends for rides around the grassy

Lower Campus fields. Although Betsey knew nothing about horses, she saw the good of it and encouraged Beth's early interest, an interest that quickly grew into a passion. Jack and Margaret Huyler at Thacher were good friends, and there was no one in the valley more knowledgeable about horses than Jack, who helped arrange for the Pfeiffer children to have horses, care for them, and ride.

Joe Singleton ran the horse program at Lower, and he also helped Beth learn horsemanship. When, in the fourth grade, she entered her first horse show and was cut from the initial round, she made herself a promise: "I am going to learn to be a good rider."

Determined, Beth dedicated herself to improving her riding skills and successfully competed in gymkhana shows throughout her remaining years at OVS. Beth was coached and encouraged by her classmate and close friend, Ginny Haley, herself a champion rider, as well as by Joe Singleton, whose horse, Blaze, was Beth's primary steed.

Also, Jack Huyler saw to it that Beth had free reign, so to speak, to ride on Thacher's campus when she was a teenager, and she rode there and back from her home on Reeves Road whenever she could, which was often. As Upper had no horse program at the time, this kind arrangement was a godsend for a girl who knew the outside of a horse was not only good for the inside of boys, as all Thacher boys were taught; it was equally beneficial for the inner development of girls.

Case in point: As a responsible horse owner, Beth learned to take care of her horse before she saw to her own needs. She remembers attending to her ill horse, Flicka, all night, and another time walking her horse, Beaver, afflicted with colic, all night. She also learned to anticipate and plan: she had to stuff her wet cowboy boots with newspapers right away, for instance. Otherwise, she'd never be able to wear those boots again.

"The horse experience really defined my OVS years," says Beth. "Not just the pleasure riding and the horse shows, but trail riding in the Ojai hills and the OVS camping trips. That freedom to explore and all that is required to care for horses on a pack trip. So different from caring for them in a barn!"

After leaving OVS, Beth says, "I was ready to do something different." Among the hobbies that would supplant horseback riding included skiing, sailing, dancing, playing tennis, playing piano, painting, cooking, traveling... But first came college.

When it came time for her to decide which college to attend, Beth was trying to make up her mind between Wellesley, Middlebury, and Colby. Her mother had gone to Wellesley and was a tireless advocate. But Beth also took into account a rhetorical question some Cate boys she had met posed. They were headed to Harvard and asked her, "Why would you want to go anywhere else if you could attend Wellesley?"

That did it.

"Those four years at Wellesley were the most transformative years of my life," declares Beth. She completed her undergraduate degree in history, focusing

on U.S. history. Art history and economics emerged as new areas of interest. She rowed crew at Wellesley and sailed. She also developed her cooking skills. She got involved in student government and participated in various clubs as well.

Her first enterprise after graduating was a summer foray in the catering business with her close friend (and Thacher faculty brat) Comfort Halsey. That fall, yearning for adventure and new challenges, Beth took part in a job exchange program for college students and spent four months in South Africa, working as a research analyst for a chain of retail stores. This was in the fall of 1973, when apartheid was still in place. "My eyes were truly opened as I lived in that racially tiered system. Everything was divided," says Beth.

After returning to Boston and working for a few years as a securities analyst, Beth married Joe McNay in 1977 and followed up her undergraduate degree with an MBA from Harvard Business School the next year. "Finance was what I wanted to do," she explains. Her resume includes having arranged corporate lending at the First National Bank of Boston, doing consulting work for the media company Boston Broadcasters, Inc., and designing a graduate program for Emerson College, all of which kept her busy and challenged until, in 1987, she quit to become a full time mom. Her sons Stuart and Andrew had been born in 1981 and 1983, and she was ready to focus full time on them.

After five years of being a full-time mom and equally full-time volunteer, Beth and two friends formed Gamewright, a company that made print-based educational games and became a market leader in fun educational games. (Signature products include card games Slamwich and Rat-a-Tat Cat). Beth ran the company until 2000, when she sold it to a puzzle company. At that time, her twenty-five year marriage to Joe McNay also ended, and Beth's life turned toward new and rewarding directions.

Both boys had attended the Roxbury Latin School, a boys' day school in Boston. Stuart went on to earn a degree in architecture from Yale University, but his true passion was and is sailing, both as a paid professional in big boat events and as a member of the U.S. Olympic

sailing team. He was all-American at Yale, and Beth has cheered him on in national as well as international competitions, including twice in the Olympics: China in '08 and England at the 2012 games.

Andrew started at Stanford but finished at Yale, majoring in the fine arts. He makes his home in Brooklyn, New York, and is now earning his MFA at Hunter College. For his day job, he works for a metal shop designing and creating various metal structures, and, in his graduate studies in the arts, his focus is abstract painting.

Beth said she had an epiphany when watching Andrew painting and drawing for his studio art class at Roxbury Latin; "I know I can do this. I know I have this in me," she told herself. She enrolled in art classes offered by museums and then, in 2003, re-enrolled at Wellesley College as a post-baccalaureate undergraduate student to study studio art.

For the last decade, she has spent every June on an organic farm in Tuscany, where she rents a 17th century farmhouse. Beth says that part of the appeal is how like Ojai Tuscany is. She worked with a printmaker she met there and became especially fond of printmaking because of the combination of design and creativity and because, as Beth puts it, "I love to get my hands into something." She likes the technical challenge of the process: the need to deconstruct a work and separate colors, using as few blocks as she can and working with the effect of overlapping colors. "It's an intellectual game," she explains. At Wellesley in her post-baccalaureate studies, she turned her focus to printmaking and now works in her studio and press at her home in Maine.

Beth has also pursued her interest in dancing for the last several years. "I'm such a student in my heart; I love learning," says she. She has taken classes in ballroom dancing as well as in West Coast Swing, and, when in Maine, she takes a whirl at line dancing and "country partnering."

In addition, Beth has traveled extensively in recent years: to Turkey, Italy, France, and England, as well as to Thailand and Cambodia. Two years ago, she added Ecuador and the Galapagos to her list of exotic travels. Stuart will likely compete in Rio in the 2016 Olympics, and his mom will be there to root for him.

(Continued, next page)

Beth Pfeiffer *(continued)*

Beth presently divides her time between Boston and the coast of Maine, with the balance tipped toward Maine. Her Maine roots go back generations. Seeking nature and rustication, her great-grandfather, a renowned professor of geology at Johns Hopkins, had bought property on Seawall Point on Mt. Desert Island in 1920. The family home on Mt. Desert is a drafty, old 6-bedroom farmhouse which Dr. Reid had rolled on logs from an inland location to Seawall Point, and it was in this house the Pfeiffers spent most summers. In June, Betsey would pack the family station wagon with Beth, her brother, sister and the family dog, and make the six-day drive from Ojai to Mt. Desert. In the pre-interstate days, that trip followed the circuitous Route 66. Beth fondly remembers a childhood of hiking,

sailing, swimming, and exploring the coastal tidepools of Mt. Desert and speaks reverently of the “unique and compelling beauty that characterizes the rocky coast of Maine.” It is here at Seawall Point that, in 2010, Beth built a year-round home, where she now principally resides.

An active volunteer, Beth was a member of the Wellesley College board of trustees for fifteen years and now serves as trustee emerita. She currently serves on the board of trustees of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. She has mentored incarcerated prisoners in Boston University’s College Behind Bars degree program and has previously served on the Planned Parenthood of Massachusetts board of trustees as well as on the WGBH board of overseers, among others.

The OVS motto “Nothing less than your best!”—often intoned by then Headmaster Wallace Burr—was an imperative that Beth truly took to heart from her early days as an OVS student and that guides her still. Also, her mother’s example of discipline, intellectual rigor, and conscientiousness was powerful. Each night after dinner, Mrs. Pfeiffer used to sit down at the dining room table to correct her students’ homework, her children seated nearby her doing theirs. She’d be quite proud, no doubt, of Beth, whose native intelligence, good sense, dogged determination, courage, energy, kind nature, and varied interests have yielded her a full and rewarding life.



BREAKING GROUND

FOUNDER’S SHOP RENOVATION NOW UNDERWAY AT LOWER CAMPUS

by Tracy Wilson

Ojai Valley School has officially broken ground on the restoration of its historic Founder’s Shop, the first step toward a significant renovation of art and woodworking facilities at the Lower Campus that will take place in the coming months.

Donning bright yellow hardhats, students and school leaders dug shovels into the ground outside the Founder’s Shop in March and thanked supporters, whose \$1.5 million in contributions have made the long-awaited restoration a reality.

“This day has been several years in the making,” OVS President Michael J. Hall-Mounsey announced. “As you can see, our oldest building is in need of attention.”

Built in 1924, the Founder’s Shop has been an iconic building for generations of OVS students who have learned to measure, cut, build, and shape countless wood projects under the guidance of teachers who emphasized the importance of hands-on learning. School founder Edward Yeomans served as the first shop teacher, and the building is named for him.

“Our founder taught many students the importance of experiencing learning by doing, by designing, and creating with the mind and the hands,” Hall-Mounsey said. “This wonderful, but now old woodshop was the realized dream of Ed Yeomans. He was convinced that hands-on learning was a vital part of children’s education.”

Committed to preserving the woodshop’s historic integrity, the school launched The Next 100 Campaign to fund restoration of the original 732-square-foot building, as well as expansion of the school’s fine arts facilities for elementary and middle school students.

Hall-Mounsey said the project would meet green-building standards established by the Collaborative for High Performance Schools, continuing the school’s commitment to sustainability. He stressed that great care would be taken to preserve distinctive features of the historic building, such as the chimney and small paneled windows that face the center of campus.

At the same time, the school will more than double its fine arts space to include a spacious art and ceramics studio, an outdoor patio and covered porch, and state-of-the-art technology, including 3-D printers and scanners.

“Edward Yeomans would be proud that we are, once again, pioneers in education,” said Karen Morse, Head of School at Lower Campus. “Integrating the arts with applied mathematics, engineering, and digital fabrication technology helps students think multi-dimensionally and furthers our efforts to create leaders in a changing world.

“This inclusion of technology, however, doesn’t mean that our students won’t go home without paint under their fingernails,” Morse added. “Throughout the year, students are given the opportunity to explore various media, including printmaking, drawing, oil, pastel, charcoal, pen and ink, painting, ceramics, watercolor, and papier-mâché.”

(continued, next page)

Building on Tradition



Annual support from alumni, parents and friends enhances the educational experience at Ojai Valley School and lays a foundation for future generations of students. We invite you to join The Next 100 Campaign and support plans to restore the historic Founder’s Shop on Lower Campus as well as to renovate the dorms at Upper Campus.

Contact Development Director Will Wyman at (805) 640-2578 for more information. Gifts to Ojai Valley School make a difference every day in the lives of our students.

Make a gift to the campaign at www.ovs.org/giving.



The Founder's Shop renovation began just before the end of the school year with a careful dismantling of the building's exterior siding, floor boards, and other historic features. Reducing demolition waste is one aspect of the green-building standards of the Collaborative for High Performance Schools, a national program aimed at promoting energy efficiency and environmentally sustainable building practices.

"It's an ideal opportunity to provide leadership in the community regarding sustainable building practices and to teach our students about the value of recycling and renewable energy," said Mac Lojowsky, Director of Facilities and Grounds.

Missy and Eric Stoen, current parents of three children at the Lower Campus, have

played a key role in the campaign for the Founder's Shop restoration. Last year they created a dollar-for-dollar match to support the restoration effort with the \$50,000 Stoen Family Challenge.

"The new founders workshop is wonderful because it will provide our teachers with a state-of-the-art facility in which to pass on their passion for discovery, and will inspire creativity in our children," Missy Stoen said after the groundbreaking.

During the groundbreaking ceremony in March, Hall-Mounsey thanked alumni donors Marcia Binns (L38), Michael Eddy (L59), and Alan Pearson (L55), who all provided significant lead gifts from their estates.

Hall-Mounsey also gave a special recognition to campaign Co-Chairs Andy and Lorie Helman, and OVS Trustees Liz Hermes (L66, U69), David Trudeau, Ron Rose (L50), and Missy Stoen, who were all present for the event.

The school is continuing to fundraise in support of the project and announced a buy-a-brick fundraiser in which all donors who contribute or have previously contributed at least \$1,000 will be recognized on commemorative bricks in a designated area of the new building's courtyard.

For more information about the campaign, please contact Will Wyman, Director of Development and Alumni Relations, at (805) 646-1423 for details.



BRIGHT FUTURE

A YEAR AFTER ITS LAUNCH, UPPER CAMPUS SOLAR ARRAY IS EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

by Tracy Wilson



A year ago, environmental science teacher John Wickenhaeuser looked across the array of solar panels gleaming in the late morning sun at the Upper Campus and imagined the future cost savings (and future lesson plans) the new array would provide students across the grade levels. A year later, the project has exceeded those expectations, generating 96% of the electricity at the high school campus.

The project has also served as a learning lab, with third-graders discovering the science behind solar, and high school AP Environmental Science students advancing their understanding of alternative energy sources.

The solar project was envisioned as just this – a combination of smart business practices and an educational tool for students for years to come. Now, classroom studies include real-time monitoring of the energy produced by the 1,001 panels that cover 19,016 square feet of hillsides and rooftops at the Upper Campus. After the first week of production last spring, Wickenhaeuser’s students had already calculated that the system had saved 11,974 lbs of carbon dioxide emissions, or about the weight of an African elephant. Since then, the system has saved nearly 150 tons of CO2 emissions, or roughly the weight of 30 full-grown elephants.

“We’ve always been a progressive school, and we’ve always been about caring for the environment,” Wickenhaeuser said. “This really demonstrates the school’s commitment to those principles.”

Across the nation, solar power has become a hot topic. Similarly, Ojai Valley School saw a bright future in solar from both an educational and business perspective.

The project was launched in 2013 in partnership with HelioPower and Southern California Edison. It cost \$1.5 million, but the school spent much less after taking advantage of grants and rebates. At a time when energy costs are increasing in California – 12% in the last two years – the project also allowed the school to fix a portion of its energy costs.

The system was designed to supply 85% of the electrical demand for the Upper Campus, saving more than \$64,000 a year in energy costs and reducing the school’s annual carbon footprint by an estimated 299,000 pounds. In its first year, it produced 18% more power than the design specification. With planned additional energy efficiency measures and greater conservation awareness, the school hopes to move close to 100% renewable energy in coming years.

“The solar project continues the school’s commitment to sustainability and preservation of our natural resources,” OVS President Michael Hall-Mounsey said. “The school has taken a bold step to reduce its environmental impact and demonstrate that sustainable practices will be a cornerstone of the school experience as we enter our second century.”

Director of Technology and AP Environmental Science teacher John Wickenhaeuser teaches OVS third-graders about solar energy during a field trip to the solar array at Upper Campus. Photo by Fred Alvarez

Congratulations to THE CLASS OF 2014



The 50th Commencement

PORTRAIT OF THE GRADUATES

Head of School Carl Cooper Describes a Class Comprised of Leaders, Teammates, and Scholars



What makes the OVS educational experience so special? It is special because it provides an exceptional academic program and there exists a broad spectrum of co-curricular activities that give each student a skill set to pursue his

or her own hopes and dreams. I suggest that, without a dream, you will never go beyond the present. Today, the 24 students on stage are leaving. They are leaving for their tomorrows, their futures. They may have slept through some of their classes over their years, but they have not slept through the OVS experience.

They have led the school this past year in the performing arts on this very stage and at the Greenberg Center at the Lower Campus. They have been an amazing force on our athletic

teams in a year in which we acknowledged individual contributions and success – but also many team victories. The track team registered many personal bests and medal recognition in the Condor League. The boys' soccer team, and one exceptional young lady who joined that team, had only one loss the entire season. The golf team was undefeated. Both squads were anchored by seniors on this stage.

Members of this class have led the charge for environmental consciousness within our community. They have helped us to open our hearts to help others as they ushered us into the "Kids Helping Kids" program, a book-a-thon for a literacy program in Africa, and the Relay for Life, where, through the generosity of many of our community, raised more than \$5,000 to combat cancer and the impact of the disease on so many lives.

They have camped as a class on the beach north of Santa Barbara. Many of these seniors participated on the Honors Ski Trip to the high country of Yosemite National Park. And just a

few weeks ago, several of them camped and rode horses in the Santa Barbara backcountry, while others headed to the eastern Sierra to fly fish.

The Class of 2014 led us through Crazy Fridays, Spudfest, Team Competitions, dress dinners, weekend activities, the Festival of Talent, and our All-School meetings. In the final four weeks of the year, each of them presented a Senior Project, a reflection on their interests and passions that demonstrated their ability for self-guided learning. This is the first class to have fulfilled this new requirement. You would be amazed by the diversity of their interests and the quality of their presentations. They are, in essence, students who epitomize our Portrait of an OVS Graduate.

What they will choose to demonstrate after their departure from this stage is subject to speculation. What they have done to get here is a matter of record, and nothing short of spectacular.

"The 22 seniors sitting behind us have been on the same trail, but right now, on this stage, is where our trails are splitting. At this point in our paths we will fork in 24 different directions, and no matter where one trail leads, our experiences at OVS have prepared us for what is to come, and have also taught us how to find our way back home."

Andrew Keaton Shiffman (L10, U14), a student at OVS since the fourth grade, giving the farewell address at graduation with classmate Carolita Landers (U14).



At left, Nick Giannetti and Grant Spencer welcome families, faculty and guests to the 50th Commencement at Upper Campus. Clockwise from top of this page, Carolita Landers and Andrew Keaton Shiffman address the graduates. Ellen Liu receives the award as the top scholar in her class. Cole McIntosh smiles at the culmination of his years at OVS.

MAJOR AWARDS

WALLACE BURR AWARD
Established to recognize the student who has made a significant impact on the OVS community by giving unsolicited service.
Keaton Shiffman 1

ROBERT G. COOPER AWARD
Honors the senior who has demonstrated the most growth during his or her senior year.
Amanda Webb & Wei Wei Wang 2

A. CARL KOTCHIAN AWARD
Awarded to the most outstanding scholar, not only for academic achievement but also for this student’s level of effort and intellectual curiosity.
Yinan “Ellen” Liu 3

ANDREW KILLE AWARD
Given to the senior who has demonstrated himself or herself to be a leader with a strong sense of community; one who has been consistently hard-working, helpful, friendly, and who has exhibited a good sense of humor.
Carolita Landers 4

ADDITIONAL AWARDS

SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD
Given to the athletes who have most demonstrated integrity, leadership, and, above all, good sportsmanship.
Masaki Takamatsu, Momoe Takamatsu, Amanda Webb, Ally Feiss, Grant Spencer & Cody Triggs

J.B. CLOSE AWARD
Recognizes the student who has exhibited the most enthusiasm and active participation in the outdoor program.
Gavin Floyd

DOROTHY BURR LITERARY AWARD
This award recognizes students for their outstanding writing based on submissions of short stories and/or expository writing.
Kermitt Davis

SANDY BALLOU MEMORIAL TROPHY
Recognizes the student who demonstrates good horsemanship, sportsmanship, and the belief that competition is not as important as the simple joy of being with a horse.
Carolita Landers

JUDY OBERLANDER POETRY AWARD
This award recognizes students for their outstanding writing based on submissions of poetry.
Emery Fine



We are exceptionally proud of the accomplishments of the Class of 2014. At times serious, and at times irreverently playful, these students worked hard in preparing for college and were accepted to an impressive list of schools, ranging from small liberal arts colleges to big universities. The colleges they have chosen to attend reflect the interests, talents, and diversity of this graduating class, and support our goal of helping students to find the “right fit” school as they take the next step in their education.

Emmy Addison
Pitzer College



To use a term this water enthusiast is surely familiar with, Emmy was a force of nature at Ojai Valley School, her talent and intellect cutting a wide swath over the past four years. Her love is the ocean, with underwater photography holding a special place in her heart, but she achieved much in her terrestrial existence as well. She served as Student Council secretary, editor-in-chief of the school newspaper and an award-winning member of the OVS journalism crew. She won medals as a sprinter on the track team, year-end honors for her work in English and history, and acclaim for her contributions to school shows and productions. At a Festival of Talent, Emmy demonstrated the depth of her abilities by belting out a stunning a capella version of “The Way You Look Tonight.” But it is her flair for the written word that really set her apart, a gift she exercised freely and forcefully during her time at OVS, and that she is now ready to share with the wider audience that awaits her off the hill. Wider world, prepare to be wowed.

Min Ju Chai
State University of New York at Albany



Few students worked harder or improved more than Min Ju. Struggling upon arrival with English proficiency, she emerged as a curious and tenacious student, one driven to perform at a maximum level at all times. She found her voice by joining the school chorus, and then discovered her inner toughness as a core member of the cross country, basketball, and lacrosse teams. She demonstrated the breadth of her talent by singing with the chorus and performing a memorable flute solo at the year-end recital. Min Ju appears quiet and reserved, but don’t be fooled. Underneath her laid-back nature is a fun-loving student with a playful spirit and big-throated laugh, both of which will be missed.

Sherry Chen
Kings College, Oxford



Who had a bigger smile? Whether she was holding a camera for a photography class or a microphone as a faithful member of the school chorus, Sherry brought great enthusiasm to every subject she explored. Her teachers spoke admiringly of her talent and tremendous work ethic, while her coaches noted the pure joy she experienced on the basketball court or on the back end of a horse. In so many ways, she soaked up the OVS experience, as she cared about others and cared about improving herself. Those qualities will serve her well as she heads across the pond to continue her studies in England.

Min Ung Choi
New York University



Call him the Renaissance man. From his roles as a leading man in musical productions to his pivotal contributions to the football, soccer, baseball, and track teams, Min fearlessly embraced all the opportunities that OVS had to offer. He took a range of Advanced Placement classes and worked hard to become an honors student. He emerged as a natural leader, whether it was his participation as one of the few boys in the chorus or his show-stopping voice solos during the Senior Recital and the Festival of Talent. He danced and sang on stage, developing his natural talents at every turn, and growing so comfortable in the spotlight that it seemed as if he were born to bask in it. As the spotlight for Min shifts east next year, his presence on this campus will certainly be missed.

Charlie Coe
Santa Monica College



It was tough keeping up with Charlie. At school, she was in constant motion – movie producer one minute, award-winning journalism photographer the next. Honors student, Spud Factory actor, and Student Council sustainability representative. World History award winner and YouTube sensation, famous for her string of lo-fi pop songs produced with the help of her handy Casio synthesizer. An inspired writer and gifted artist, she was selected by the City of Ojai’s Arts Commission to take part in its first summer mentoring program. To be sure, Charlie plunged headlong into all facets of the OVS program, and the school was better for it. Her creativity and ingenuity propelled her to great heights in her high school years, but it’s clear we’ve only seen the beginnings of her contributions to this world.

Cameron Cuthbert
Santa Barbara City College



Cameron left his mark on the OVS campus with his good-humored attitude and his willingness to contribute. While he worked hard in the classroom, it was the sports field where he was most at home, playing pivotal roles on the football and baseball teams. Ask his football coaches and they will tell you that Cameron was tough as nails, that he could deliver a hit and take one, too. Ask his baseball coaches and they will tell you that Cameron could be plugged into any position. No one will soon forget the heart he showed on the mound to help OVS carve out a successful baseball season during his senior year. But perhaps the best thing that could be said about Cameron came from faculty members who gushed about the nice, well-mannered young man he became. Cameron was a gentleman, a title he should wear with honor.

Nick Gianetti
New York University



Of all of the members of the Class of 2014, Nick was among the last to arrive, showing up at the start of his junior year. But no one squeezed more out of his OVS experience. He played football, basketball and lacrosse, served as the day student representative on Student Council, and showed off his dancing and singing talents in the school musical. He was known around campus for his quick wit and sharp humor, and for the boundless enthusiasm he brought to every class and activity. OVS will be a quieter, less-colorful place without Nick, although the East Coast should prepare for an energy infusion.

Carolita Landers
Colorado State University



What a story this young woman wrote during her time at Ojai Valley School. It would be easy to focus on the obvious: she was an honors student, dorm prefect, ASB officer, dedicated Spud Factory actor, and an accomplished equestrian. But really, Carolita’s impact on the student community was far more monumental than those items that packed her resume. As the student government’s sustainability representative, she reminded students and teachers alike about their responsibility to protect the planet. When she studied abroad in Italy during her junior year, she contributed to the school by posting regular blogs in the school newspaper. Her dedication to the equestrian program earned her the Sandy Ballou Award her senior year, and, at graduation, she was handed the Andrew Kille Award, presented each year to the senior who exemplifies all of the best attributes – leadership, a sense of community, a contributor in all ways – that an OVS student has to offer. Carolita was the best of the best, and her contributions, along with her laughter and radiant smile, will long be remembered.

Kermitt Davis
Rochester Institute of Technology



Watch Kermitt run and you’ll know everything you need to know about the drive and perseverance of this young man. He worked tirelessly to achieve his running goals, training early in the morning and then again in the heat of the afternoon, up and down the hills that surround the Upper Campus. As a result, he became one of the fastest milers to ever don an Ojai Valley School track uniform and a model of success for his fellow student-athletes. He applied the same dedication to many of the subjects he studied, especially those that most held his interest. Kermitt’s zeal for history was evident, but he applied the same passion to his study of law and his exploration of the English language. Indeed, he earned the year-end award for “best defense attorney” in Law and Society’s Mock Trial, and took home the Dorothy Burr Literary Award for a series of fearless and honest poems about authority, race relations, and the human condition. We will miss his leadership and voice next year, but we are confident that he will put both to good use on the East Coast.

Sam Du
Boston University



Sam Du is wicked smart. As he heads off to Boston, he should get used to hearing this, because that’s what we learned about him in his four years at Ojai Valley School. He excelled at math and the sciences, taking three AP courses in his senior year. He also was a stand-out on the athletic field. While he tried his hand at a number of sports, soccer and golf were his true loves. He was the lone senior on a golf team that went undefeated this past season, and he could often be seen practicing and perfecting his swing on the Boney Bean lawn. He also worked hard to improve his skills on the soccer pitch and scored a hard-earned goal to end his high school career. Easygoing and always willing to lend a hand, Sam’s humor and good nature will be missed next year.

Ellen Liu
Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design



When did she rest? Ellen served as a dorm prefect, Student Council president and a dedicated equestrian. She was an artist of unique and remarkable ability, producing works of breathtaking quality. We won’t soon forget the image she produced for the school to celebrate the Chinese New Year – a colorful, contorted snake that was published and reproduced on e-cards sent to overseas families in China. Ellen was also an artist on stage, whether she was singing with the chorus or providing perfect piano accompaniment at school musicals and the Festival of Talent. Finally, she was an honors student of the highest caliber, taking AP courses her senior year in English Literature, Statistics, Calculus BC, Psychology, Art, and Physics. Rightfully, on the graduation stage, she was presented the A. Carl Kotchian Award, given to the most outstanding scholar of the senior class. Ellen was that and so much more, and now the world beyond the hill will get to share in her gifts.

Cole McIntosh
Cuesta College



At first you think, “Yeah, Cole McIntosh is the strong, silent type.” But his friends know he is so much more than that. Cole began at OVS in 2008 with interests that needed no fostering. A Macintosh fanatic (no pun intended) and an aspiring engineer, technology was his thing. Students always looked to him for solutions to their tech problems, and he eagerly complied, even if meant taking time away from his own passions: building computers, and remote control cars and planes. Not only a brainy tinkerer, he was also a sportsman. In both seventh and eighth grade at Lower Campus, he completed the challenging 100-mile backpacking trip, and, in high school, he served as an invaluable soccer goalie, a hard-nosed catcher on the baseball team, and a hard-working lineman on the football squad. He was determined, focused, and serious about his work. But make no mistake – this guy was funny, unexpected, clever, and always a pleasure to talk to.

John Olivo
University of California at Riverside



From whimsical rap star to serious journalist, bruising lacrosse defenseman to football fanatic, John left an indelible mark on the school. Who will forget his ear-splitting roar to start lacrosse games? Or the way he pumped his fist when he earned first place for sports writing at the Tri-Counties Journalism Educators Association’s annual live-writing competition. Or the way he rose and fell with each Philadelphia Eagles’ victory and defeat. John brought passion to everything he did and contributed much to the school community that doubled as his home for the past four years. Off the playing field, he was an honors student and a student leader, serving as a dorm prefect, Student Council treasurer and co-editor of the school newspaper. On stage, he assumed the voice and persona of a hip-hop star, delighting students and teachers alike at the Festival of Talent and Senior Recital. His personality, like his heart, was huge, and his presence on campus will be profoundly missed.

Bruce Quinn
Pima Community College



He may have appeared a bit distant and quiet, but that belied Bruce’s gifts as a student and caretaker of the earth. He helped to revitalize the Student Garden and flexed his creative muscle on the ceramic wheel. His English teachers praised the power of his writing, while his classmates praised his power as a computer gamer, particularly when it came to the popular League of Legends game. It was at play, whether on a computer or on a mountain trail, where Bruce was truly transformed, his inner-self awakened. Those who knew him best were able to soak up his playful spirit.

Bella Peek
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo



Most kids are toddling around the floor bumping into things. But not Bella Peek. At age two, she was riding horses, and she has maintained her passion for the equestrian life. To her fellow equestrians, she was known for her exceptional, award-winning – and at times fearless – work with horses, including her dedication to bringing out the best in stubborn, firecracker-like ponies. But her peers also know of the passion she developed for her school work, especially psychology, which she fell in love with during her junior year and which she plans to pursue as a career following her studies at Cal Poly. With her warm heart and generous spirit, Bella was a valued contributor to the Upper Campus.

Kolby Saucedo
California Maritime Academy



After 14 years at Ojai Valley School, Kolby approached graduation day as one of the longest attending students in school history. What an adventure he had. He worked hard in the classroom to earn honors grades, and he was a whiz on the baseball mound, throwing a no-hitter his junior year. Usually quiet and understated, he revealed a different side of himself at the Festival of Talent, joining with a friend to lay down a blistering rap song that had the crowd on its feet. A few weeks later, at the Senior Showcase, he demonstrated his best moves as a fashion model, wearing student-created designs. While Kolby is heading off to college, he has known for some time what he really wants to do with his life: when he was 14, he began training to become a Navy SEAL. A series of injuries have put that ambition on hold, but there’s no doubt, given his focus and dedication, that he will ultimately achieve his goals.

Keaton Shiffman
Occidental College



About him that was hard to miss – and OVS will miss him next year. Whether organizing a recycling program between the classes or launching a new community service project to help kids in need of financial support, Keaton infused heart and soul into the OVS community. He was a deep thinker and dedicated student, a young man known as much for his flair for the written word as he was for his natural curiosity and penchant for debate. He was a true sportsman on the football and lacrosse fields, delivering a bruising blow one moment and a congratulatory handshake to an opponent the next. Keaton also reveled in the spotlight, whether he was singing in the chorus, playing the leading role in the school musical or donning the look and persona of his rap star alter ego. At graduation, he was the recipient of the Wallace Burr Community Service Award for his commitment to helping others, and Headmaster Carl Cooper called

Grant Spencer
Columbia University



Whether he was digging out a ground ball in lacrosse, serving as Student Council president, or mastering Advanced Placement classes, Grant exemplified the spirit of OVS. No one embraced with more energy or zeal all that the school had to offer. He participated in sports with reckless abandon, playing football, soccer, basketball and lacrosse. And, because he wasn’t tired enough during lacrosse season, he sometimes joined the track team to run the mile. Grant took six AP courses his senior year and was chosen by the faculty as a Ventura County Star Scholar, a program that recognizes the county’s top high school seniors for their outstanding volunteerism, extracurricular activities and academic performance. He was a regular in school productions, and no one will soon forget his comic turn as Patsy in *Monty Robin and the Men in Tights*. He was a prince of the prom, a finisher of the 21-mile ski from Badger Pass to Glacier Point in Yosemite, and, in his final days, a devoted stargazer who discovered there was much to explore in the extraterrestrial world through the lens of a telescope. Now he moves on to a new world on the East Coast, where he is sure to make us proud.

Eujena Sohn
University of St. Andrews



Eujena was one of Ojai Valley School’s most accomplished students. She excelled in a range of Advanced Placement courses, including English Literature to her exploration of calculus. Her calculus teacher singled her out for a special year-end award for her accomplishments in that class. But history was her true academic love, and she flourished in classes that explored the past to explain the present. Upon her arrival her sophomore year, she launched a history club for students who shared her passion. And it didn’t take much prompting to get Eujena to engage in a conversation about history or politics. Away from the classroom, Eujena served the community as Student Council treasurer and as a contributing member of the yearbook staff.

Cody Triggs
Cal State University Channel Islands



Generous, kind and hard working, Cody was a man of few words, but his actions and contributions to the OVS community spoke volumes about his character. To those closest to him, he was outgoing and funny. He had a passion for the gym, the outdoors, and traditional American pastimes such as shooting and off-roading. While he was generally a quiet guy, if you put him anywhere near a field or a court he was transformed into a true student leader. His talent shone on the football field; he played a plethora of positions, happy to subject his body to a daily beating for a shot at victory. The same was true on the basketball court, where his hard-nosed work ethic rubbed off on his fellow players. In the classroom, he demonstrated the independence, discipline, and smarts necessary to earn a spot on the Honor Roll. Above all, he was one of the nicest individuals you will ever meet. Spend just a little time with him and you would quickly come to understand that he embodies the notion that leadership is best demonstrated by deeds, not by words. OVS was blessed for a time to be graced with a student of such quality and character.

Weiwei Wang
California College of the Arts



At graduation, Weiwei was presented with the Robert G. Cooper Award, given each year to the senior who demonstrated the most growth during his or her final year. While he was certainly deserving of that honor, many would argue that, of all the OVS seniors, Weiwei demonstrated the most growth during the course of his high school career. He arrived from China as a shy freshman and spent much of his first year simply trying to become acclimated to living and learning in a foreign land. Then he blossomed. He worked hard to shape himself into an honors student and mastered a range of Advanced Placement classes during his time at OVS. He rode horses, anchored the basketball team, ran cross country, and threw the discus for the track team. He sang with the chorus and basked in the spotlight on stage during musical productions. But it was in the art room that Weiwei found his true calling, as he created a series of memorable works that reminded us all of the value of art in creating a better world. He is a true gentleman with a heart as big as his smile. His drive and dedication to excellence will take him far.

Sophia Wu
George Washington University



Sophia attended both the Upper and Lower campuses, growing from a shy, introspective student to a zealous participant who realized her potential to have a positive impact on the world. Being part of OVS for so long allowed her to create strong bonds with the school community. And it allowed her to pursue her passion as well as find new ones. She discovered a love of horses and horseback riding and won awards for her command in the equestrian ring. She took part in a number of school productions, including the Senior Showcase, where she stirred the audience with an elegant rendition of a traditional Chinese dance. But it was in the art room that Sophia found her true calling, creating wonderful pieces and carving a niche as a fashion designer. Her memorable wedding dress, crafted out of plastic bags for the Trashion Fashion show, was a hit on Parent Weekend. She will be remembered with the highest regard by teachers and students alike.

Amanda Webb
Fort Lewis College



Amanda is a rock enthusiast, mountain bike enthusiast, and self-proclaimed gypsy. She was also, at graduation, the shared winner of the Robert G. Cooper Award, presented each year to the student who has demonstrated the most growth during his or her senior year. That sums up Amanda. She was a hard-working student, dedicated manager and athlete, and good friend to all. She was quick to smile and to laugh, even when she was laughing at herself. Aside from mountain biking, her hobbies included playing drums and guitar. If you're lucky, she'll sing while she plays for you, though her shyness prohibits her from performing on stage. On first impression, Amanda might seem reserved, but, once you get to know her, she is anything but. In college, she plans on studying geology, and no senior has chosen a college that's a better fit than she has. In the fall, she will attend college in Durango, Colorado, where she will be surrounded by the rocks she loves and people who love mountain biking as much as she does. While the move will be lucky for her, the OVS community will sorely miss her laughter and unique personality.

Shelly Xu
Boston University



Dancer, artist, journalist – Shelly brought smiles and spunk wherever she went. Starting OVS halfway through her freshman year, she has been a stand-out since the day she arrived. Her style – a mixture of conservative professionalism and feminine freshness – and positive attitude are an expression of the wonderful and accomplished person she is. Shelly contributed much to the journalism program, enriching it with videos and writing every story thrown her way with grace and dedication. And, somewhere in the process, she developed a love for that craft; she now plans to pursue journalism as a career. Along with those tactical skills, Shelly proved herself to be a talented performer, a member of the chorus, and of the dance team, and a regular participant in the school plays. As Public Service Representative, her artwork decorated the campus, illustrating and encouraging school spirit. Though her achievements are impressive and admirable, the truly remarkable thing about Shelly is her incredible spirit. Her kindness, creativity, humor, and mettle are what define her as a wholly singular and spectacular young woman.

CLASS OF 2014
College Acceptances

Binghamton University	Fort Lewis College	San Diego State University	University of Alabama
Boston University	George Washington University	St. Andrews University	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Brown University	Humboldt State	Santa Barbara City College	University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Brandeis University	King's College, Oxford	Santa Monica College	University of Massachusetts, Lowell
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo	Lewis & Clark College	Southern Oregon University	University of Michigan
Cal Lutheran University	Linfield College	SUNY at Albany	University of Minnesota
Cal State Channel Islands	Indiana University at Bloomington	SUNY College at Cortland	University of Missouri, Columbia (School of Journalism)
Cal State Stanislaus	Montana State University, Bozeman	Syracuse University	University of New Hampshire
Cal State Monterey Bay	Mills College	Texas Christian University	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
California College of the Arts (San Francisco)	Mount Holyoke College	The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina	University of the Pacific
California Maritime Academy	New York University	Trinity University	University of Redlands
Case Western Reserve University	Northeastern University	Tufts University	University of San Francisco
Chapman University	Norwich University	UC Berkeley	University of Wisconsin, Madison
Chico State	Occidental College	UC Davis	Washington University in St. Louis
Colorado State University	Pacific University	UC Irvine	Whittier College
Columbia University	Penn State University	UC Merced	Whitworth University
College of Charleston	Pima Community College	UCLA	Willamette University
Cuesta College	Philadelphia University	UC Riverside	Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Drexel University	Pitzer College	UC San Diego	
Eckerd College	Rhode Island School of Design	UC Santa Cruz	
	Rochester Institute of Technology		

**matriculations in bold*



MAJOR AWARDS

SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD

The highest honor we can give an eighth grade student. Its purpose is to commend the student who with his or her actions and attitude, contributed to the school community in a sensitive and constructive manner in all phases of school life.

Jacob Tadlock **1**

PAUL PITTMAN AWARD

Recognizes the student who has exhibited the most enthusiasm and active participation in the equestrian program.

Leila Giannetti **2**

J.B. CLOSE AWARD

Given each year to the student who best exemplifies the goals of the OVS Outdoor Education program. His or her consistent contributions to camping, backpacking, and rock climbing trips, love and respect for nature, and commitment to helping others in the face of adversity set this student apart.

Jeffrey Ran **3**

MICHAEL D. HERMES AWARD

Given to the most outstanding eighth grade student-athletes.

Emily Burns and Kase Skillern

HEAD OF SCHOOL AWARD

Given for the significant contributions an eighth-grader has made during his or her years at Lower Campus.

Devin Smith

MICHAEL J. HALL-MOUNSEY AWARD

Honors the boarding student who has consistently served as an outstanding role model for his or her peers and who has most demonstrated initiative, leadership, and responsibility.

Devin Smith and Jacob Tadlock **4**

LESSONS IN PERSERVERANCE

Head of School Karen Morse Tells Graduating Eighth-Graders to Face Challenges with Strength and Patience.



This story has been passed down through my family for generations. I have often thought of its message when I had to face difficult situations and it has helped me to persevere.

Once the river flowed free

and easy over its rocky bed, but one night the temperature dropped, and continued dropping all the next day and night, and formed a thin coat of ice under which the river flowed. Accepting the best of it, the river flowed under the ice. But that night the coat thickened, crowding the activities of the river farther down. This went on until the river was a frozen mass.

“Oh, dear,” said the river as it tried to move and couldn’t. “Was it ever possible that I was free and could move, and will that day ever come again?”

A south wind passed by and said, “If the sun would shine on you it would help.” And the next day the sun did shine on the river, and the river was full of appreciation.

But after shining hard all day, nothing happened and the river was despondent. The sun, which was more persistent than the river, came again and shined all day. But nothing happened. This little drama went on, day after day, week after week, and the river became discouraged. But the sun kept on shining, and, one day, the river felt a little loosening. The sun came again. It loosened, and again, at night, it was frozen stiff.

“How disgusting,” said the river, “Every time I gain a little bit, immediately I lose it.” But the sun kept on shining. At last, the ice broke up into great chunks and floated away. How easily it all had departed.

And so it is with difficult challenges.

You’ll make many attempts at things and try as you might, your first efforts will not melt the ice, or the second, or the third; and, at night, in your doubt and frustration, it may freeze up again. But, when you faithfully persevere, and you untiringly shine as the blazing sun, the ice will melt and the river will flow freely, sometimes with a force, sometimes gently meandering, but always moving toward victory – just as every source of water finds its way to the ocean.

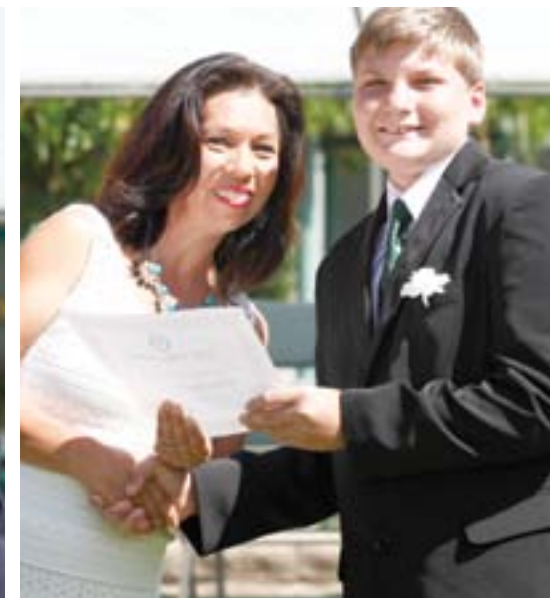
Avoid passing judgments on first appearances; always look more deeply. Neither the first day nor the last melted the river. It took them both, and all the days in between. Who is to say which day had the most impact? It may take more strength than you thought you had to make it through difficult times, but you will, and you’ll feel the freshness of the dawn when you do.





"The best advice I could give you is to make the best out of the next year. Create the best memories, participate in every opportunity offered to you, make friends, forgive, and work hard. Don't let the year just fly by... it will be gone before you know it."

Connor Floyd (L11, U15), speaking with classmate Pinky Cheng (L11, U15) to the sixth-grade and seventh-grade students during their promotion ceremony.





Student Journalists Recognized as Top in Tri-Counties

For a second straight year, Ojai Valley School's journalism program was recognized as among the best in Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo counties after students earned top awards for feature writing, news writing, sports writing, and news photography. OVS also earned third place in the sweepstakes category for overall excellence in high school journalism at the Tri-County Journalism Educators' Association competition held at Cal Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks.

Ten OVS students were among a record field of 182 students from 16 high schools who competed all day in live writing, photography, and layout design contests. They were unable to receive coaching from teachers or mentors. Junior Daphne Psalidakis won first place in the feature writing category. Seniors Emmy Addison (L10) and John Olivo earned second place in news writing and sports writing. Junior Kai Lin earned third place in news photography. Seniors Charlie Coe (L10) and Keaton Shiffman (L10) earned honorable mentions in news photography and sports writing.

In late May, Daphne, John, Keaton, and senior Shelly Xu went on to take top awards at the Ventura County Star's annual journalism competition. Those awards were presented for sports writing, featuring writing, video production, and for the school's revamped online news site, *On The Hill*.



Students Venture to China for Spring Break Trip

Ten students in grades five through nine traveled to China with two OVS teachers during Spring Break. The trip began with three days in Beijing, where they visited Tiananmen Square, the sprawling Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, the beautiful Temple of Heaven, Olympic venues, and the awe-inspiring Mutianyu section of the Great Wall. The journey continued with a flight to Xi'an and a trip to see the Terra Cotta Warriors, and concluded in Shanghai, where walking the Bund and venturing to the top of Oriental Pearl tower were among the highlights.

Students Jacob Tadlock, Siyu Lai, Daniil Bytin, Vlad Voronov (L13), Felicity Davis (L13), Devin Smith, Sydney Fleet, Lucy Orgolini, Caspian Ellis, and Bella Slosberg participated in this amazing trip, led by high school English teacher Brad Weidlich and middle school Dean of Studies Myr Slosberg.

Record Number of OVS Students Compete in Ventura County Science Fair

Each year, thousands of students in grades 6-12 complete science research projects at their schools and earn the right to compete at the Ventura County Science Fair. This year, 30 middle school students represented OVS – the largest number in recent memory – during the event's 60th year.

With nearly 1,000 students participating in categories ranging from animal sciences to physics, the science fair is designed to promote, encourage, and showcase the achievements of students in the various fields of science. This year, sixth-grader Matthew Thacher, seventh-graders Bella Welch and William Campana, and eighth-grader Sarah Finch were recognized in the final awards for their science fair projects.



High Tea Tradition Continues

Thoughtful. Courteous. Generous. These are just a few of the character qualities that we strive to instill in all of our students. And those traits were evident during our traditional High Tea. Continuing an OVS tradition, children in grades PK-2 entertained more than 200 guests in the Greenberg Activities Center during the 24th annual High Tea. Students and their families enjoyed tasty treats, including tea sandwiches and giant chocolate-dipped strawberries.

It was a fun and elegant afternoon with a "Wizard of Oz" theme in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the film. Our youngest students impressed those in attendance with their poise and confidence while performing on stage, serving tables, and dining with their best etiquette.

New Offerings in Outdoor Education

Outdoor Education is a key part of the OVS experience, and this past spring eight boys and two teachers from the Upper Campus participated in a High Sierra fly fishing trip that integrated with their classroom studies. As part of the Humanities curriculum, grade 9 students read *A River Runs Through It and Other Stories* by Norman Maclean. The novella follows the lives of two brothers growing up in western Montana and the connection they share with each other, and their father, through fly fishing. For the OVS boys, the opportunity to cast their own lines while exploring rivers on the eastern slope of the Sierras echoed the literary themes they explored and resulted in a few great catch-and-releases.



OVS Junior Selected as Girls State Delegate

Junior Claire Wickenhaeuser (L11), pictured at center, was chosen by the American Legion Auxiliary to be a delegate to Girls State, a program designed to increase knowledge of the workings of government and the responsibilities of citizenship. Only 500 high school juniors are chosen to be delegates for the entire state of California, and Claire was one of only two delegates chosen from the Ojai Valley. This summer, she attended a weeklong workshop on leadership and government at Claremont-McKenna College.



Students Participate in Relay for Life

For a full 24 hours, Ojai Valley School students and teachers took turns circling the track at Nordhoff High School during the annual Relay for Life, a worldwide event sponsored by the American Cancer Association to honor survivors and those lost to cancer.

Led by the Upper Campus Student Council, the school's relay team raised more than \$5,000 for cancer research and devoted considerable time in the midst of final exams to walk with and for cancer survivors. Students camped on the track infield and took shifts throughout the night. They also participated in the nighttime Luminaria Ceremony, in which participants silently walked a lap to remember loved ones lost to cancer and to honor those for whom the fight continues.





Master Class

Ceramic Teacher Jody Cooper Opens her Studio to OVS Faculty and Staff

by Daphne Psaledakis

It's 6:30 in the evening after dinner at the Upper Campus, and ceramics teacher Jody Cooper (L71, U74) is in her element.

Tucked into her studio just off to the side of the headmaster's residence, she is busy giving after-hours instruction. She helps one student trim a bowl, then moves to another and places her hands over theirs to help mold a mug.

She moves on to teach another how to properly glaze a ceramic cup produced after several hours of class work.

But this class is different from all her others.

Two nights a week, Ojai Valley School staff and faculty members from both the Upper and Lower campuses trickle

into her classroom and take up posts at the wheels.

Since the start of the year, Cooper has been donating her time and supplies to teach her colleagues about her passion and profession, extending an invitation to any who are interested in learning the basics of her craft.

Takers have come from all over. They have included bus drivers and kitchen workers, primary and elementary teachers, and barn managers and other equestrian staff.

"Class, for me, is an opportunity to not only feed my artistic soul but a great social activity too," said Jen Konz, a barn manager at the Upper Campus who began taking the after-hours ceramics class in March.

"I get to spend time with other faculty that I would normally not have a chance to hang out with very much," she added. "It's always fun and we laugh a lot. Mrs. Cooper is really fun and quite patient with everyone asking questions and needing guidance."

The class began when an art teacher at the Lower Campus wanted to introduce ceramics to her younger students, and asked Cooper to teach her the fundamentals.

Since then, Cooper has mentored dozens of OVS employees, using the same hands-on approach she uses with her high school students. During the summer, she is holding sessions for as many as 11 students, spread over two nights each week.

"I love ceramics, and I love sharing it with people," Cooper said. "Both [high school and adult students] are great. I think they all appreciate it, but I think the adults appreciate it more, because they're not in school. It's just something they get to do."

Cooper is a master ceramicist and has studied under some of the best. She has been teaching ceramics at OVS for 14 years, and her curriculum derives from her knowledge and experience as a professional in the craft. Her high school students start with small projects like rattles and pinch pots, then steadily progress to using the wheel and more difficult and impressive projects.

It's different for the adults. They go directly to working on the wheel in sessions that are filled with questions and laughter, and that can last upwards of two hours.

On a recent evening, she and Moises Ferrel, a member of Upper's kitchen staff, worked together to shave off clay from the bottom of a bowl. She leaned in next to him, placing her hands over his, guiding them as they shaped the clay.

"Every once in a while, stop and feel it," Cooper told him. "If it's starting to give, it's getting too thin."

As she's instructing Ferrel, equestrian instructor and OVS alum Caitlin Black (L97) vies for her help with a piece on the wheel.

"I completely get how my beginning horseback riders are [now]," Black says of her own frustrations learning something that looks so easy to do, but is so hard to execute.

Then off Cooper goes to fix another problem.

"Mrs. Cooper is an amazing teacher," said OVS transportation director Julie Cook, who has been taking this class since March and who sometimes brings her daughter, alum Belle Cook (L04, U11), along. "I'm inspired to create something I thought I never would. I feel really fortunate to be able to do this."

For many of the class members, the evenings spent in Cooper's classroom

are a retreat from the hustle and bustle of their daily lives, an opportunity for them to be creative, social and hone a newfound skill.

"It's like therapy for me, I go there and I forget about everything else," Ferrel said. "As long as they have the class, I'll be there."

The class has been so successful that Cooper's students joined together and bought clay from her to work with over the summer. She labeled the clay with their names and set it aside for them to work with when they meet during their regular class or in their free time.

Count fifth grade teacher Michele Floyd (L84) among the ceramics converts.

She plans to utilize a portion of her designated clay by spending time in the studio with her son Connor Floyd, who took Cooper's class this year.

"At the end of the day when I feel like I'm really tired and can't do anything else, it's really fun," said Floyd, who has been in the class for about six weeks. "We don't talk about work. We giggle, we laugh, and I can't believe how much better I've gotten in such a short period of time."



Ceramics teacher Jody Cooper teaches OVS alumna Belle Cook during an evening class in her studio.



Equestrian

In May, the OVS equestrian team, comprised of middle and high school students, rode away with top honors in show jumping and dressage at a regional US Pony Club Mega Rally in Sylmar. The show jumping team of Leila Giannetti, Maya Mullins, Mattie White, Amy Xu (L11), and stable manager Emma Gustafson were the overall champions in horse management and won 1st place in show jumping. In addition to those wins, senior Sophia Wu (L10) participated in a scramble dressage team that won first place in dressage. Sisters Lilly and Emmy Hilgers (L10) were among the OVS participants, and their scramble team tied for horse management champions.



Baseball

The OVS baseball team finished the season with an 8-5 record. A high point of the season came when the Spuds beat Cate School by a score of 10-9 at home. Senior Cole McIntosh (L10) and junior Matt Gustafson (L11) led the Spuds with two hits apiece while Matt also registered two RBIs. Senior Min Ung Choi (L10) also swung a solid bat, notching two more RBIs. Min also recorded two stolen bases. Junior Connor Floyd (L11), named an Under Armour All-American, continued his impressive season with a triple and three runs for the Spuds. "This was another great team win," said baseball coach Craig Floyd (U83). "We battled the whole game."



Track

Brother-sister juniors Masaki and Momoe Takamatsu competed in CIF prelims, setting personal bests in their respective races. Masaki posted an 11:51 time in the 100-meter run, which was good enough to take third place in his heat. Unfortunately, Masaki missed qualifying for CIF finals by 1/100th of a second. Momoe posted her personal best in the 1,600-meter run, posting a 5:50 in the fastest mile heat of the day. She beat her previous best time by about two seconds. "Both of these runners saved their best for last," track coach Fred Alvarez said. "They made OVS very proud."



Golf

Sophomores Davis Smith (L12) and Harris Tsui advanced to the CIF championships after playing outstanding rounds of golf at the regional playoffs in Oxnard. The pair finished in the top 20 of the 106 players who took part in the CIF Northern Individual Regional Tournament, with Davis shooting a 74 and Harris a 75 on a par-72 course. The competition heated up at CIF Southern Section Championships in Palm Desert. The young golfers held their own but fell short of the top spots in the field. Both will return next year and are aiming for another strong season.



Seniors who graduated from Lower Campus in 2010

PONS DINNER

Now in its 19th year, the Pons Dinner was created in celebration of our eighth-graders' forthcoming transition to high school. "Pons" is the Latin word for "bridge" and is the metaphor OVS uses to describe the gap that is being closed when students who have already successfully made the transition come back and share their experiences with our eighth-graders.



Guest speaker Ryan Blatz (L95) opened his remarks with a scenario all too familiar in the hustle and bustle of Los Angeles: being stuck in traffic. As the sounds of honking and yelling polluted the air, his mind journeyed to his days of camping with OVS. Camping, he admitted, was something he took for granted when he was a student but is something he often yearns for as an adult. He urged his young audience to "learn to be aware of and appreciate your surroundings....do not take them for granted."

Senior guest speaker Keaton Shiffman (L10, U14) expressed his readiness to take on the next challenge life has in store for him and credits OVS for giving him the tools he needs to move forward into the world as an adult.



ALUMNI *Games*



It was great fun seeing all the Spud athletes and sports fans who turned out for the Bingo Memorial Alumni Lacrosse game and Alumni versus Varsity Baseball game in May. Grant Spencer, senior attackman, led all scorers with some sizzling shots, but, thanks to some great efforts in the goal by freshmen Josh Han and Jeff Gibbs, the lacrosse game ended in a thrilling 7 - 7 tie. Alumnus Richard Christensen (L94, U98) brought some booming hits to the game and helped to limit the varsity's offensive attack.

Later in the day, the varsity baseball team beat the alumni, winning 11 - 7, thanks to some great relief pitching by sophomore Satoshi Suzuki. Alumnus Jesse Clapoff (L09, U03) went 3 for 3 to take the batting crown for the day. Cooper Hefner (U09) and Parker Colburn (U09) stirred up lots of dust swinging for the fences at the plate and hustling out on the base paths.

Bravo, one and all!

ALUMNI *Regional Gatherings*



It was wonderful to see so many loyal OVS alumni, parents, and friends at this spring's regional gatherings in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Burlingame. The food, drinks, and conversations were absolutely delightful; everyone seemed to truly enjoy reconnecting with former classmates and school staff. Sincere thanks to our alumni hosts; Liza Cass White (L61) and her husband, Stuart, for hosting the LA event at their lovely home in Westwood; and Paul Howie (L49) and his wife, Mihaela, for hosting the Bay Area gathering in the beautiful garden of their home in Burlingame. Don't worry if you were unable to make it to this year's events as there will be other opportunities to reconnect in the near future!

SAVE THESE DATES!

October 4, 2014
**VENTURA COUNTY
 ALUMNI GATHERING**
Donlon Ranch

June 12-14, 2015
ALUMNI WEEKEND
*Celebrating 50 Years at
 Upper Campus!*

2014 Founder's Alumni Award Recipient: *Varnnee Chearavanont Ross*

by Elizabeth (Curran) Hermes (L66, U69)

The OVS Founder's Alumni Award honors an alum whose extraordinary achievements exemplify the principles and values of the Ojai Valley School. This year's recipient is **Varnnee (Chearavanont) Ross (L77, U81)**.

After earning her B.A. and MBA degrees from Fordham University, Varnnee worked as an investment banking analyst in her native Thailand before moving to Hong Kong to take on the role of marketing officer of a prestigious hotel there, and, later, to serve as founder and business partner of an architectural design company.

In 2000, Varnnee changed gears and directions dramatically. Continuing a commitment she had to address the needs of underprivileged children, she says she had no intention, initially, to establish a school. "But I had the chance to visit a school in Hong Kong," she explains, "and I got to know its philosophy: 'To create students who create a better world.' This impressed me deeply and made me re-evaluate what I was doing."

Inspired by her observations at this Hong Kong school, Varnnee considered a new calling. "I asked myself what was missing in education and concluded that a school has a duty to teach each student to be responsible and moral if we want a better world. In fact, creating 'better' people is even more important than creating 'smarter' people."

Consulting extensively with experts in the field of curriculum, and collaborating with some of the top educational organizations, Varnnee returned

to Thailand and established the Concordian International School for pre-k through 12th grade students there in 2001.

"As I was starting the school, I realized that OVS was also one of my inspirations. It was where I got to learn from really caring teachers. The boarding school experience also taught me to be independent and strong. It was truly a life-changing experience, and I hope I can provide that to my students," Varnnee commented.

One of the features distinguishing the school is that it is the only international school in Thailand offering a truly trilingual program of English, Chinese, and Thai that is authorized by the International Baccalaureate Organization as well as accredited by the New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEASC). From the nursery school level through the fourth grade, students learn in an English-Chinese Immersion program, in which nearly half of their instruction is in Chinese. Varnnee's conviction is that this solid grounding in Chinese will ultimately give Concordian students an advantage in the world of economics. Students must also become proficient in English and in their native tongue. In addition to this strong emphasis on languages, the school promotes a balanced combination of science, math, as well as art classes and offers the International Baccalaureate degree.

But at the core of the school is a philosophy that has close ties to the principles on which the Ojai Valley School was founded.

Varnnee asserts, "Everything we do here revolves very much around our mission, which is to promote academic excellence while

nurturing young people to become moral and intellectual leaders, people of dignity, integrity and compassion, who want to make a difference in the world."

In recent years, Varnnee has been recognized with a number of honors and awards, including, in 2013, being named "Role Model of the Education Industry" by the National Science and Development Agency of Thailand.

She is keenly aware of the advantages she has had and is committed to passing on the benefits she has enjoyed to others: "I have been fortunate to have a very supportive family who gave me the chance to explore the world via education, travel, and work," says she, "and I want to make use of my knowledge and experience to pass on this great privilege to the younger generation."

That she is doing. So far, the results of her efforts have been quite promising. Enrollment at Concordian is currently approaching 800, and graduates have been accepted at some of the top-ranked colleges and universities around the world such as Stanford, UCLA, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Oxford, and Imperial College London.

OVS congratulates Varnnee for her commitment to education and for her impressive accomplishments.

Alums: Remember to fill out and send in your nomination form on back page of this page.



Founder’s Alumni Award

Deadline for nominations: January 31, 2015

Nominations are welcomed and encouraged. The final selection will be made by the President, after consultation with the Founder’s Alumni Award Committee and Heads of School. The Founder’s Alumni Award will be presented at the Alumni Weekend Celebration on the evening of June 13, 2015.

In recognition of the school’s centennial, the Founder’s Alumni Award was created to honor an Ojai Valley School alum whose achievements exemplify the values endorsed in the school’s motto, *Integer Vitae*, meaning wholeness of life, symmetry of life, soundness of life, therefore, poise and strength of life.

The Founder’s Alumni Award Recipient will have demonstrated good character, respect for other people, a balance of accomplishments at a level that has a positive and broad impact, whose achievement(s) is/are significant within a profession, career, vocation, or service.

The Founder’s Alum will have achieved distinction in one or more of the following ways:

- Serving his or her local, national and/or global community in an outstanding fashion
- Demonstrating extraordinary commitment to making the world a better place through the promotion of education, diversity, and environmental stewardship
- Ensuring the sustainability of the school through various forms of engagement and support

Please include as much information, such as web links and articles, so that your nominee has the committee’s full consideration.

✂

NAME OF NOMINEE: _____

YOUR NAME: _____

Please describe his or her significant achievement(s): _____

In what ways does this alum exemplify the principles of OVS? _____

Is he/she connected with the school and/or his/her classmates? If yes, how so? _____

Mail nominations to OVS Alumni Office, 723 El Paseo Road, Ojai, CA 93023 or email alumni@ovs.org.

What’s with the nion?

Peeling back the years...

As we approach the momentous 50th anniversary of the first graduating class from Upper Campus, the time is right to dig into some of the fascinating folklore and intriguing iconography associated with the pioneer years at Upper Campus.

Carl Cooper (L64, U68) has given us the back-story on the evolution of the beloved OVS mascot, the Spud, the all-seeing vegetable that has sustained and protected civilization for centuries.

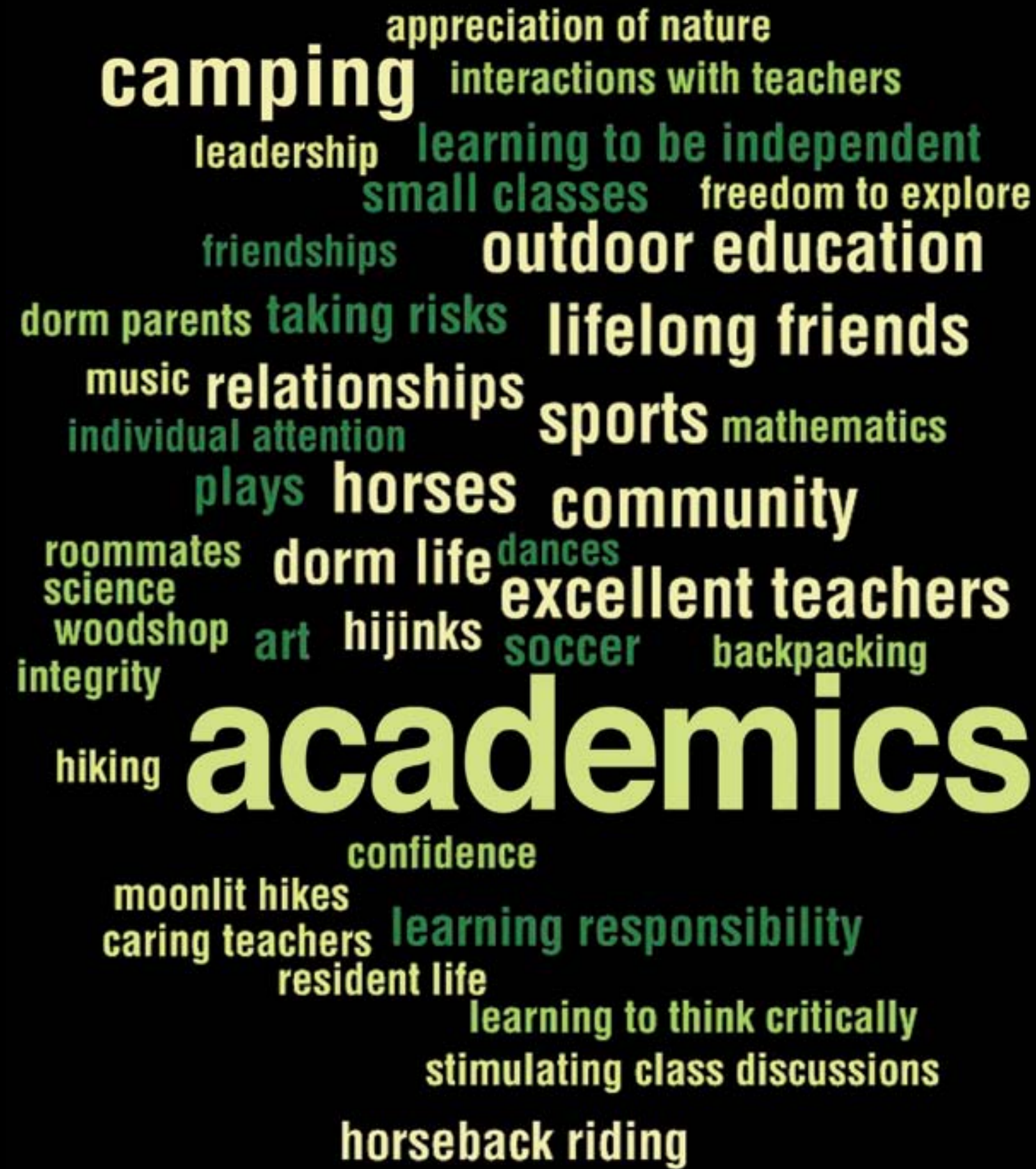
But what about the origin of the ceremonial onion toss by J.B. Close each year before he and his charges headed off into the Sespe on camping trips with the hardy boys known as the Bristol Highlanders?

According to founding members Dave Beaudette (U69) and Jon Van de Venter (U69), “the ceremonial onion toss was meant as an offering to the gods for good weather and good humor.” Jon adds, “J.B. Close was an excellent open air chef. One of my favorite treats was his pineapple upside down cake, which we would eat around the campfire as J.B. read great works of literature.”

Dave and Jon also recall marathon sing-along sessions around the campfire, accompanied by Keith Carradine on harmonica and Ed Littlefield on guitar. This outdoor ensemble, singing in harmony more often than not, sang all the numbers from *My Fair Lady* with J.B. doing a great impersonation of Rex Harrison’s English aristocratic speaking the lyrics on pitch. Dave states emphatically, “I’ll never forget Keith Carradine singing the lead to “All I Want Is a Home Somewhere” in the dark of night with all the Bristol Highlanders chiming in!”

Please send us some of your fond memories of the Spud, the onion, and any other iconic images or moments or faculty during your time up on the hill. All the better to help us prepare to Celebrate 50 years at Upper Campus – We are proud of our past, focused on our future!





SURVEY SAYS

Alumni across the generations share insights on their OVS experiences

by Tracy Wilson

Last winter the Alumni Office conducted an online survey to learn more about how alumni prefer to receive information from the school, and to gather testimonials about the strengths and memorable aspects of the OVS experience.

Alumni ages 18-66+ participated with the highest number of responses coming from those 56 and older. Respondents indicated that they are most interested in hearing stories and receiving updates about other alumni. They are also interested in hearing campus news, information about alumni events, and updates on facility improvements.

Responses about how they want to receive those updates varied. Most alumni who participated in the survey said they preferred to receive news through e-newsletters from the Alumni Office. The OVS website and alumni Facebook pages were also popular forms of communication. Several alums commented that social media and technology have made it easier to stay connected. But many respondents said they preferred traditional print publications, such as *Alumni Notes* and *Family Tree*.

Across the generations, survey respondents echoed common themes about their most memorable OVS experiences. They shared colorful narratives about camping trips,

hijinks, enduring friendships, and lessons learned inside and outside the classroom.

Alumni wrote eloquently about the relationships formed with teachers, coaches, and dorm parents who influenced their lives, including “the inspired teaching of Otis Wickenhaeuser,” “the quiet but firm leadership of Wallace Burr,” and the patient way Joe Singleton “taught you about horses, from one end to the other.”

Learning to be independent, learning to write and think critically, and learning to respect people from different cultures and backgrounds were common responses to questions about the greatest strengths and values of an OVS education.

“I think OVS allowed me to grow,” wrote alum Paul Donlon (L74) co-chair of the Alumni Council. “Some of the growth was in the classroom, some on the athletic fields, some in the backcountry, and some living with the decisions I made. All of them created good memories.”

One Lower Campus alum summed up her most memorable experiences as “Camping, camping, and camping.” Indeed camping and outdoor education were the most common responses to this question, with alumni offering anecdotes about moonlit hikes in the

Sespe and adventures on the trail with trip leaders like J.B. Close and Mike Hermes (L53).

One overarching theme emerged from the survey: Alumni stated that the close relationships they formed with friends and the lessons taught by exceptional teachers influenced who they are today.

“The greatest strength of my OVS education was what characterizes the greatest strength of all good education,” wrote alum Terry Berne (L70), “teaching students how to solve problems and think for themselves in an atmosphere that allows close interaction between teachers and students, and that has little to do with simply learning facts about a particular subject.”

“As often happens, it is only in hindsight that I fully appreciated the extraordinary experience of OVS that shaped so much of the person I’ve become,” wrote alumnus Kenan Block (L69, U72). “The beauty of living surrounded by such stunning nature is something special and rare that few other schools offer. The small size of the school and close friendships of our classmates made it like one big unlikely family all together for four years, learning about life and the world in a magical setting. The small classes, and engaged, creative, caring teachers who always pushed us gave us a first-rate education.”

Alumni Weekend





the main event



1
Pamela Nye (L59), Susan
(Cooper) Shaver (L59) and Gary
Dinkins

2
Rose Chavez Boggs and Bob
Koster (L53)

3
Lisa Boyd, Anita Eckert (U04),
and John Boyd

4
Gary Gartrell and Tony Thacher
(L55)

5
Katie (Clifford) Jeffrey (L99, U03)
and her mother, Anne (left)

6
Natasha (Zuhur) Blum (U03)
and Laurel Colborn

7
Tami Garrison Steinkamp (U84), Lewis Carlino (L80, U84), Monya
(Graham) Manning (U82), Chris Martinov (L80, U84), Lisa Betz (U85),
Tara Salton (U82)



8 Gary Dinkins, Tomoko (Seino) Hotema (U94) and Tony McHale (L79) with his guest, Jamie



11 Michael J. Hall-Mounsey, President/CEO chats with Jason Coudray (L00, U04)



12 Alaedin Tabatabai (U80), Karen (Rascoe) Farmer (L77, U81), Tara Salton (U82), and Richard LaGraff (U81)

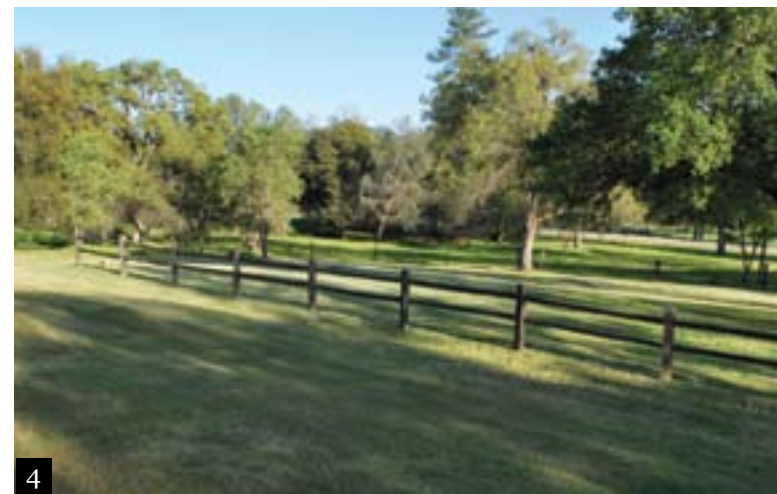


14 John De Nault IV (L89, U93), Tracy Fryer (U93), and Evie Kunewa (U93)



15 Pony Rides
16 Lisa Betz (U85), Vahid Jafroodi (U82), and Tara Salton (U82)
17 Stephen Bartlett and John Wickenhaeuser
18 George Thacher (L85), his wife Marcia (left) and Carl Cooper (L64, U68)
19 Tami Garrison Steinkamp (U84), Chris Martinov (L80, U84), and Lisa Betz (U85)

alumni notes



Lower 1952

Cathy Hertz called to tell us she has been keeping busy as an online editor for a well-known publishing company.

Lower 1953

Mike Hermes' first great-grandchild was born on April 19th. Eloise Grace Matranga is the granddaughter of Lisa (Hermes) Matranga. **1**

Lower 1954

Gerald Becker visited the Lower Campus with his family on Saturday May 3rd. As he walked around campus, he marveled at how much has changed, but said a lot still looks the same. He was pleased to hear that woodshop is still offered to students and that the camping trips are still the highlight for many. "I came in at the 5th and left at the end of the 4th grade," said Gerald. "Mrs. Burr

was teaching the 5th and flunked me, and I had to go over to the 4th with Mrs. Hazard (I think that was her name). I later wrote to Mrs. Burr and thanked her for flunking me because, had she not flunked me, I would have never have met my wife."

Gerald reminisced about the days when there was a pond near Frost Hall and being taken on trips by science teacher Mr. Bigger to the Nordhoff cemetery for ghost tales. **2**

Lower 1955

It was good to hear from **William "Bill" Wilmer**, who checked in from his new home. Here's his update: "It appears that OVS is doing well. Life here in Mountain Ranch has been wonderful for Sue and me. We are fortunate to live on 46 beautiful acres that were wintering ground for the Miwok or Yosemite people, so there is evidence of their material culture on the

property. We also have a major stone aqueduct feature from the mining days of this area and also watering system features from the period when this valley was a large cattle ranch.

"The people of Mountain Ranch are a mix of native families and retirees from the Bay Area. Our life here has been filled these last two year with construction projects: first a shed Sue and I built, next a cabin on the top of our property Sue and I built, and now a three car garage we have contracted to be built across from our house and existing garage. We will use it to store all the equipment and vehicles we have accumulated because of our rural lifestyle.

"I have included two photos to show the contrast between winter and spring in the front yard of our home. It actually snows only once or twice a year at our altitude." **3 4**



Lower 1958

John Fouch let us know he’s on Facebook and serves as a reviewer on Yelp.com. He is retired after a 44-year career as a senior electronic technician with the Fender Music Instruments Company.

Correction: In the Spring 2014 edition of the Alumni Notes we credited the wrong person for the 8-year memoir project (Country Spirit Runs Deep) of short stories for his city grandkids about his “good times just being a kid on a ranch.” It was actually Walter “Walt” Smith’s memoir. We apologize for the mix-up.

Lower 1963

Robb Kay (see U66)

Lower 1964

Nelson Chase reports that after seven years serving as the Executive Director with School Year Abroad, he has left to take up the post of Country Director for Peace Corps, Nepal.

Lower 1965

Jeff “JB” Hanselman (see U68)

Lower 1970

James “Jimmy” Cooper (see U73)

Lower 1975

Tom Farrar (see U79)

Lower 1977

Tom Munds (see U81)

Nina Sugamori placed 1st in five figure competitions for the “50 and Over” division in CA and CO. **5**



Lower 1980

Sanford “Sandy” Ballou is the owner of Sierra Saddlery in Newcastle, CA. He is also an agent with California Outdoor Properties and a member of the Nevada City County Fair Board.

Lower 1983

Tony Trutanich (see U87)

Lower 1985

George Thacher (see next page)

Holly (Ruff) Wiggins owner of Ojai Trophy and Gift Shop, recently filled an order for OVS and brought another special delivery with her. **6**

Lower 1987

Sally (McClenahan) Dyer (see U91)

If you would like to get in touch with a classmate, please contact the Alumni Office at alumni@ovs.org or 805-640-2578.

A Perfect Fit: The Thacher Family



Marcia and George Thacher (L85) are living in Ojai and love having their three children, Matthew, Andrew and Mariana, currently attend the Lower Campus. They shared the following about their experience as OVS parents:

“OVS fits our family in several ways. Our three kids’ personalities are very different, yet they all fit into the school’s Integer Vitae culture.

Our first child loves to challenge himself in many ways and in any subject he takes. Our second child enjoys exploring the great outdoors in adventures with his friends, has always had a lot of imagination as an artist, and is a builder at heart. Our final little one has a self-conscious personality, does not like competition or sports, but she is dedicated to her academics, has a very

social life, and loves both art and music. She is often found singing and dancing at home.

Each of our three children feels very comfortable and safe at OVS; they have the freedom to express who they are at the school and are accepted for who they are. We have to recognize that there are days when our kids complain about schoolwork, but, as every parent knows, it is necessary to discuss this with their teachers. The teacher inevitably supports us, and we find a solution to the situation. There are always two sides to each story.

Each one of our children is developing at his or her own pace in each subject, and, with the support of the teachers, all are working to improve their weaknesses. OVS does not limit our children in their growth, rather, advanced classes develop their strengths.

We see our three children striking a balance in their lives; they know who they are, and respect the different personalities and world cultures around them, including their classmates, teachers, cafeteria personnel, maintenance employees, and community members.

Raising our kids during these times, we see OVS as a great place to keep our children busy with the multiple activities life can allow: academics, sports, outdoor activities, horseback riding, etc. At the same time, we strike a balance within a loving home life. Seeing how much our children have grown academically, physically, and in their personalities, we are in complete agreement that OVS fits within the motto of the school, Integer Vitae.”



Lower 1991

David Moreno during his visit to the Lower Campus earlier this year. **7**

Lower 1994

Eri Maeda returned to the Lower Campus in May with her son, Yuya, and her parents, Keiichi and Mariko. No sooner did she arrive than she was greeted with a big hug from Tami Scott, her former dorm parent, who brought special gifts to share with Yuya, including some very fashionable OVS gear (see photo). Eri also enjoyed visiting with Alumni Coordinator Malory Taylor, as well as with Linda and Gary Gartrell, and reviewing plans for The Next 100 Campaign with Mike Hall-Mounsey and Will Wyman. They all enjoyed a delicious lunch on Hermes Quad with Karen Morse, Lower Campus Head of School. Once Yuya had eaten every last bit of his food, it was off to the stables and playground for some fun in the sun with Sally Pollet, Admissions Assistant. **8**



Lower 1997

Becky (DeMoor) Perry (see U01)

Lower 1999

Kate (Oswald) Dunlap relates to her neighbors. No. Really relates. Here's her story: "I purchased my first home in Ventura five years ago. My new neighbors invited me over for a party, where I met their son Shaun. After a whirlwind romance, Shaun and I were engaged six months later and we married on 10/10/10. Since then, I attended surgical technology school, graduated as valedictorian and class president.

My husband and I recently welcomed our first baby; little miss Molly Ann was born 8/2/13, and I have since left my job to be a stay-at-home mom. And, yes, I still live next door to my in-laws." **9**

Sarah Gates (see U03)

Lower 2009

Miles Munding-Becker (see U13)



Lower 2011

Maria Kryukova is attending school in France. She misses OVS dearly. Especially the Outdoor program and the staff. **10**

Upper 1966

Robb Kay and his family recently visited. "We were up on the Upper Campus to show our daughter, Julianna, where she spent her first three years. We had a great visit with Lynn Whipple and then Carl and Jody Cooper. Carl and I continue to laugh over the shenanigans we were involved in, oh, so many years ago. It was great seeing all the great improvements on the campus.

"Life is good and busy. Judy and I are deeply involved with all our grandkids but still find time to do some travel. We visited Germany, Austria, and Poland this summer. I am busy with the Coast Guard Auxiliary as the National Historian and support Recreational Boating Safety activities. My grandson, Ryan, is a member of the same Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla. Loads of fun." **11**

Upper 1968

Jeff "JB" Hanselman writes, "I'm not working right now," writes JB, but he's not complaining. "It's a good to take a break after 40 years producing integrated circuits. I recently worked on the testing needed for some of the finger sensors for smart phones (non-Apple), so you can reach out and 'touch' me. The time off allows me to do more music (I'm in two bands now: The Loma Prieta Rockers, playing classic 60s -80s rock, and Dixon Landing, which does Modern Country-Rock originals) and figure out if I'm actually retired or not..."

Upper 1973

James "Jimmy" Cooper reports that he and Ruth had a wonderful six day backpacking trip in the San Rafael Wilderness. "Backpacking trips are still my favorite vacations. We ran into Matt Inman on our last day, he was just starting his nine-day spring trip with the OVS middle school. Although it was raining when we met, the kids were in great spirits. I think the picture captures how happy when I am out in the wilderness away from my cell phone and computer," writes Jimmy. **12**

Upper 1978

Rosalind (Mather) Lutz writes, "I was fortunate enough to go to OVS in 1976. It was my best school year of my whole schooling.

I loved the experience I had. I wish I had been able to stay longer, but I am forever grateful for the experiences I had there, and it has been the ONLY time I ever succeeded in algebra. There were six students in our class, and the teacher took time with me and explained that I EARNED a "C". That has always been a proud achievement for me, one I have tried to duplicate many times! Lol! I can't recall [the math teacher's] name, but he was a gentleman and a scholar. I learned the most Spanish there, too! Lovely lady teacher. I was well prepped for Spanish II, and still use quite a bit of Spanish.

Camping was great. Going into town was always fun. Ojai is a very special place. Since I hadn't checked in for the last 30 something years, I just wanted to thank you and let you know I feel very blessed having been there. Hoping OVS is an option for my grandchildren. I thank my mother and father for giving me that gift."



Upper 1979

Tom Farrar moved back to Ojai last year. "I am so glad I did," says Tom. "I'm presently teaching Kung Fu at the Ojai Recreation Department and have put together a great team of kids and adults whom I plan on taking to compete next year in Beijing."

Upper 1981

Tom Munds writes, "I would like to thank you for the many wonderful memories of my childhood, some of the best of my life, shared with wonderful friends, whom I will never forget. I guess you could say I had several awakenings. One was to our awful national situation years ago and the difficulties and inability to find solutions, so I verbally beat people into submission to try to make them see it, and the other was looking back at those years wishing there could have been a better way to get my point across. To put it bluntly, I was looking back at not only what I have learned, which was a good thing, but also the carnage which was not so good. I guess

what I am trying to say is if you found me to be abrasive and aggressive, know it is not with ignorance of the subject matter but how to delivery it appropriately.

"Much has happened the last few years; I have become a lover of Constitutional Law, American history, and have become active publically, speaking at rallies, the legislature, a morning radio show contributor and now the Idaho Coordinator for the John Birch Society. If you remember the name, in derogatory terms, then the smear campaign against them is alive and well.

My mission is to teach the principles that have become so foreign to the average American about freedom and liberty. My desire to see that your children grow up in a country that was as free as you and I were and we can offer them nothing less or it is a disservice to them. I will always love my friends and would love to hear from any of them and I promise I won't bite your head off!" **13**

[Caption: Tom Munds introduced the Governor and the Idaho Supreme Court justice on Constitution Day.]



14



15

Upper 1987

"I'm so bummed and happy at the same time," writes **Tony Trutanich**. "I was really looking forward to coming up for Alumni Weekend, but my son has been accepted to the best hockey school in the country. It's in Minnesota, and we had to leave on the 13th. It's a two week hockey school. He's six years old and plays for the soon to be 2014 Stanley Cup Champions Los Angeles Kings junior team. Both my sons are extremely athletic but my other son, Tristan, is more like me, amazing at sports, but to get him to focus for an entire game is a task." **14**

Upper 1988

Chris Winkler and his wife, Amy, welcomed their first child, Casey Jeanne Winkler, into the world on February 25, 2014. **15**

Upper 1990

The Wolf of Wall Street, a film **Emma Tillinger Koskoff** produced, was nominated for Best Picture by the Academy of Motion Pictures.

Upper 1991

Sally (McClenahan) Dyer, husband **Patrick** (U91), and their daughter, Hana Dyer, moved from Colorado to Singapore in July. Hana will start her 8th grade year at the Singapore American School. Sally issued this kind invitation: "We will be located there for a few years, so if anyone finds themselves in SE Asia, do please look us up. We hope all of our OVS friends and family are doing well."



16



17

Upper 2001

Becky (DeMoor) Perry, along with her husband, Jason, recently welcomed a baby girl named Evelyn. "She's absolutely amazing," reports Evelyn's impartial mother. Becky is finishing up her preliminary single subject teaching credential and will be looking for a teaching job in the near future. As for now, she says she is loving the opportunity she has to stay at home and enjoy being a mom. **16**

Tatianna Alpert writes, "Fourteen years ago, I met an amazing partner in crime, Renako Wyborn, during my days at OVS. Now we are both living in Australia with slightly confused accents and a whole lot of fun to be had. Thanks for bringing two gals together to make great things happen, no matter where in the world we may be!" **17**



19

Upper 2003

Sarah Gates graduated from Cal Lutheran with a MS in counseling psychology, her second masters. She plans to start her career as a psychotherapist in August. **18**

Upper 2007

Blake Estes (see next page)

Rosanna Wang "I was ringing the Closing Bell with my friends from The Oil Council at the NASDAQ MarketSite after an Oil Council conference, and they took pictures of everyone and put us up on the big screen in Times

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Office of Alumni Relations: Mail: 723 El Paseo Road, Ojai, CA 93023 Email: alumni@ovs.org • www.ovs.org/alumni.



18



20

Square. (I work in oil and gas, and The Oil Council is the largest network of oil and gas executives.)" **19**

Upper 2010

Angus Beverly just graduated from UCLA and is working for supervisor Don Knabe at the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. Angus visited the Upper Campus to play in the Bingo Memorial Lacrosse Game on May 24th. **20**

Miles Munding Becker and **Jesse Clapoff** (L09, U13) returned to OVS in May to fulfill some community service requirements for the University of Redlands. They said that "coming home" was an easy and enjoyable choice for them. As Miles and Jesse were enjoying their lunch at the Lower Campus, Miles divulged that one of the best things about transitioning from the Lower to Upper Campus was upgrading to the the big cups. Fewer refills. And also the juice machine!

Shooting for the Stars



by Emmy Addison (L10, U14)

Stance wide, arm outstretched, a finger pointing boldly toward the sky, OVS alum **Blake Estes** (U07) towers over the Earth.

Well, at least his picture does.

The picture, which Blake took of himself silhouetted against a sea of silver-blue stars atop Figueroa Mountain, is now the featured image on a freeway billboard in Oxnard advertising Brooks Institute, where Blake graduated last year with a degree in industrial scientific photography.

"I never thought I would see myself on a billboard," said Blake, who saw the billboard for the first time this week. "I couldn't believe it. I actually pulled over and was able to snap a photo of it."

After graduating from OVS in 2007, the 26-year-old Santa Barbara resident enrolled at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Florida to pursue a career as an astronaut. But it wasn't long before he felt the gravitational pull of photography, a passion he credits to longtime OVS photography teacher John Boyd.

Blake took photography his sophomore year at OVS and contributed countless images to the OVS yearbooks in his junior and senior years.

"Blake really wanted to explore stuff on his own," Mr. Boyd said. "He was inquisitive and would just go figure things out himself. Blake just wanted to get better at the craft and learn about the equipment."

Blake enrolled in 2009 at Brooks, where he specialized in science and space photography. He took the billboard photo as part of an assignment for a stock photography class at Brooks aimed at producing an image that depicted key words such as "hopes," "dreams," and "goals."

He took the photo on a whim while waiting for a shot with a half-hour exposure finish. His professor liked the image so much he asked Blake last month to sign a release allowing it to be used on the freeway billboard.

"I had totally forgotten about it until friends started telling me they had seen it," said Blake, whose Facebook page has lit up in recent days with congratulatory messages.

In the fall, Blake is set to enter a Master's program at Brooks in industrial scientific imaging, and he eventually plans to return to Embry-Riddle to complete his aerospace engineering degree.

He would still very much like to be an astronaut but said he would also be happy pursuing a career that marries his love of space with his love of photography.

"I would love to be the guy who tells the Mars Rover which pictures to take," he said.



photo by Walter Scriptunas II

JoAnn Wickenhaeuser

JoAnn Wickenhaeuser, a one-time Peace Corps volunteer and dorm mother at Upper Campus of Ojai Valley School, died March 29 after a battle with cancer. She was 72.

Born November 11, 1941, in Wausau, Wisconsin, JoAnn attended the University of Wisconsin at Madison, earning a bachelor's degree in political science and psychology.

Tall and athletic, she played tennis and volleyball in high school and recreation in college, and maintained a love of sports her entire life that would transfer to generations that followed. In fact, her son, OVS Director of Technology Jo Wickenhaeuser, is proud of saying that it was his mother who taught him to play baseball and developed in him a lifelong passion for all things athletic.

Ever the trailblazer, JoAnn was one of the few women enrolled in the political science program at the University of Wisconsin, and she parlayed her educational experience into a marketing position on Madison Avenue in New York City. She traded in her ad agency job to answer John F. Kennedy's "call to service" by joining the Peace Corps in 1967 and working on a school lunch project in the Brazilian state of Espirito Santo, Brazil as part of Peace Corps Brazil - Group V.

Her Peace Corps activism would prove life changing in more ways than one as she would go on to meet her future husband, Otis Wickenhaeuser, during her South American service.

The two were married September 10, 1967, in Putney Vermont, and they lived in Brattleboro, Vermont until moving to Ojai in 1970, where Otis resumed a teaching career at Ojai Valley School and JoAnn took on the role of dorm mother at the high school campus.

The couple moved to Santa Barbara in 1974, where JoAnn took on a series of positions at Santa Barbara-based institutions including Gilchrist's Jewelers, Kinko's Service Corp., and Our Lady of Sorrows Church, where she retired after 17 years.



JoAnn and Otis Wickenhaeuser on their wedding day.

Throughout her life, JoAnn's love of sports, politics and world affairs was ever present. She would have enjoyed watching her Wisconsin Badgers play in the Final Four of the recent NCAA basketball tournament, and she was dismayed this year when her son's 49ers beat her beloved Green Bay Packers in the wildcard round of the NFL playoffs.

JoAnn was an accomplished seamstress, a skill she developed throughout her life. As a girl, she sewed clothes for herself and for family members. She sewed her own wedding dress, and later created a suit for her son and baby clothes for her grandchildren. Yards of fabric were a constant presence in her home.

Later in life, she grew to love gardening, and lovingly tended to her ailing husband, who preceded her in death in 2009 following a

prolonged fight with Parkinson's disease.

Those who knew her best revered her baking skills, especially her Christmas cookies, apple pies, dill bread, blueberry muffins, and countless other warm baked goodies. They would also agree that she was an independent and determined woman, formidable in so many ways. In the end, in the throes of illness, she exited the world exactly as one would expect – on her terms and surrounded by family.

"She was selfless. She put family above everything," said her son, John. "She retired so she could take care of my dad. She

If family members of OVS alums wish to submit information for In Memoriam, please do so at the Office of Alumni Relations
723 El Paseo Road
Ojai, CA 93023
alumni@ovs.org
www.ovs.org

Parents of Alumni:

If your son/daughter no longer maintains a permanent address at your home, please notify the Alumni Office of his/her new mailing address at (805) 640-2578 or alumni@ovs.org



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