

FOCUS

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Craig's Corner

by Rose Gendelman '15

After interviewing Mr. Sellers about rumors circulating about possible changes in our school, we received an interesting inside scoop on his plan for the future of our school. We asked if uniforms were going to be required in our school, mainly because most if not all of the private schools around us have uniforms. Mr. Sellers told us that what the other schools choose to do will not make an impact on our school, and he wants to make decisions that will be the best fit for our school. In short, he doesn't believe that uniforms will be in our future.

Next, we inquired about student-teacher relationships, particularly how he felt about students calling teachers by their first names and where the line might be drawn in his perspective. Mr. Sellers told us that it depends on the teacher and the student, and that if you are comfortable with being called by your first name then that's great; but if not then that's fine too. He also touched on the fact that at his old school, some kids just weren't comfortable calling teachers by their first name, and that he was called "Principal Craig," because that was a middle ground between Mr. Sellers and

Craig. "It's a Quaker practice," he added, "that adults enjoy being called by their first names because it breaks down the barriers and makes it so that the adult or teacher isn't superior to the student or child."

In our last few minutes, we talked about the "battle" between arts and athletics. He told us that to him it didn't seem that "out of balance," and that when he was a candidate that was a question that he was asked a lot. What he wants to do is talk to kids and see what they think should change, because he wants to make this school the best he can for everyone. Lastly, he told us that he thinks it would be very difficult to manage being the lead in the play and a starter on the basketball team, and that sometimes you may need to choose what is best for yourself, even though it's a difficult choice.

All in all, Mr. Sellers

wants to make this school the best it can be for students and teachers, and he wants to watch, listen and learn and make decisions based on everything he comes to learn about the school. ❖



Great Gifts to Give

by Kate Forrest '14

It's that time of the year again. The time when you rush to the mall last minute to pick up all the gifts you forgot to get earlier. But all the good stuff is already taken? Well never fear, this year you have a complete guide to the best gifts to get your loved ones! Granted, not all of these gifts are for everyone, but these are just some of the things that have worked for me in the past.

Siblings can always be hard to purchase gifts for. Having an older sister and younger brother myself, I have had a lot of experience with getting the right and wrong gifts for them. I have found that some of the best gifts for a 8-12 year old boys are a baseball hat of their favorite sports team, a remote control car, or an xbox game. The key to getting you sister a present is knowing what she likes. It doesn't hurt to even just ask her what she wants; that way you can't go wrong. I tend to buy my sister clothing, jewelry, or a gift card to her favorite store.

Getting presents for mom and dad is always fun. Good presents for Dads are books, sports team apparel, or even a nice tie he can wear to work. Sometimes the best things for mom are the most personal things. Sometimes I like to frame a picture of my siblings, and I and give it to my mom for her office; or a new mug for her early morning coffee.

Presents for your girlfriend or boy-

friend should always be personal. It doesn't necessarily have to be store-bought. Sometimes, it is the little things that count. Use an inside joke you have and turn it into a type of funny gift, or you could always go for the classic jewelry or sports jersey purchase.

And of course you can't forget the present for your dog! I tend to go with the classic bone, but who knows, maybe your pooch is more of the fashionable type and could use a new collar every once in awhile. ❖



It Was a Black and Starry Friday

By Isabel Nardi '14

As many of our teachers slept cozy in their beds, many of the FCS students were out and about partaking in the Black Friday festivities. While many were shopping, a few were behind the cash register or on the floor making sales. Although most people enter stores expecting to get incredible deals, junior Drew Winig pointed out, "Even with all the deals, the total savings were only around twenty to thirty dollars." This may sound like a hefty savings but when its only twenty dollars off of a receipt that adds up to two thousand, is Black Friday worth all the hype and commotion?

Another student declared Black Friday a "people-watching heaven," speaking to Becca Sloane's notion that "it's unfair to ask mall employees to come in at midnight on a holiday. Most of the people

come just for the exciting experience, anyways." Becca is an employee at The Justice located in the King of Prussia mall.

Jamal Sample headed in the opposite direction to the Rehoboth Outlets, down-the-shore to steal some deals claiming, "It was a ton of waiting and was very crowded." Jamal stayed out from ten pm until seven the next morning and saw some sweet deals at the Polo store. Whether you're out shopping, behind the register or sleeping, Black Friday is entertaining for us all. ❖



Hester and Pearl Prynne make the walk of shame to KOP.

Wacky Holiday Gifts

by Peter Dissinger '14

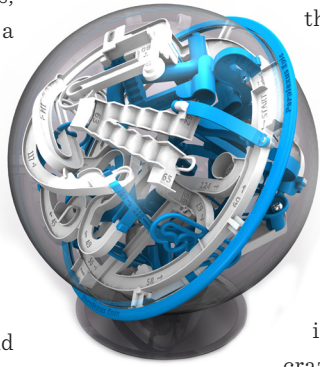
Sometimes, giving gifts to your parents, siblings, friends or family can get a bit boring. A classic fruit cake for your grandma, perhaps a cookbook for mom, maybe your brother wants an iPod for Christmas, and by gosh Dad's living on the wild side - he wants a waffle iron for the holidays! It's always the same old stuff and honestly, Dad won't ever use that waffle iron and Mom already has a million cookbooks. If you're like me - and you want to spice things up a bit this year, then here is a list of crazy, wacky and awesome christmas gifts for your entire family.

1. Silly putty is weirdly addictive. If you give me a piece of putty, I could be occupied for a long time. It's also just as entertaining for teens (see older kids who discover silly putty and light up like toddlers) and young kids.



Same goes for magnets—anyone remember those magnetic “magic” stones that were insanely fun to play with? So why not combine the two? Introducing Magnetic Thinking Putty—silly putty embedded with millions of micron sized magnets. Put it near the magnet included in the box and you'll be having a blast instantly. Definitely a good stocking stuffer for your brother or sister. *\$13.95 on Amazon.*

2. When I was growing up, I had a marble labyrinth that I loved to play with. Impos-



sibly hard and secretly addictive, I spent hours trying to conquer that beast. As I got older, I found myself drawn back to these mazes on my iPod; apps that mimicked what I had as a kid. So I sort of got back into the labyrinth craze, but I quickly got bored of the games and lost interest. Until I found the Perplexus Epic — a wickedly cool combination of a marble labyrinth and 3D puzzles. It's basically a 3D labyrinth inside a small bubble (which means no cheating for the lazy kids) that's as complicated the DNA inside us. I've played other versions of this game before and this one looks even more awesome! *\$22.09 on Amazon.*

3. Candy is always a must have in my family at Christmas. We stuff our stockings to the brim with chocolate, gum, gummies and all sorts of other delicious treats. But sometimes, a bar of Hershey's chocolate or a package of Starbursts gets pretty old. You have those all of the time and you're looking for something new. Maybe you like bathroom jokes and you want to get Reindeer Poop (or any variety of chocolate covered candies that carry the “poop” label) for Dad. If you happen to have a Spin Art Machine lying around, how about getting edible spin art paint? Are you a gummy person? Maybe you need some Zomb-

ie Bullets for the impending apocalypse.



Or if you're like me, and you just love chocolate and you can't bear to live without it, how about getting a chocolate bar! But not any normal chocolate bar. Ghirardelli Chocolate produces the world's heaviest chocolate bar on the market weighing in at a whopping five pounds. That's the equivalent of over 50 chocolate bars! You'll be sick to your stomach by the end of Christmas day. *\$65.00 on Ghirardelli.com.*

4. Is anyone in your family into the Main Line iPhone fad? Then get them a customized phone case for the new iPhone 5 or any old iPhone that includes a photo of your choice on the case's back. Maybe a baby picture for dad or a humorous picture that's just right for your sibling. *\$10.45 at Personalizationmall.com.*



5. Every year, it seems that someone in my family wants something for their kitchen. Whether its a cookbook, a gadget or some utensil, I can always count on making a visit to the nearest kitchen store. I'm a big fan of finding things for your kitchen that are easy to clean, use and specialize in something that you like making. Last year, my family bought a panini press, which allowed us to make delicious sandwiches on

the cheap. While we won't be getting anything this year, I think that ice cream makers are the perfect gift for families who want a cheaper and more fun alternative than going to Coldstone or the nearest Froyo place. The Cuisinart Soft Serve Ice Cream Maker is a great starter set, cheap, and it can hold cones and your favorite toppings! *\$99.99 at KitchenCapers.*



6. Now for the grand finale! This isn't for the faint of heart, coming in at over four thousand dollars! But if you love going to arcades—they are incredibly fun and downright addictive, then maybe you should consider this present. Since going to an arcade takes a lot of time and wastes a lot of money, why not bring the arcade to your house? Maybe you want a foos-



table, or a driving game like Fast and Furious, or even a crane machine. But a pinball machine is especially enticing because well, what's more classic than a game of pinball. Then why not get Monopoly Pinball—an addictive game like Monopoly combined with an awesome game of pinball, what's not to like? *\$4299 on eBay.* ❖

So Much Drama, So Little Time

by Chiara Neilson '14

Do you have a short attention span? Do you want to be constantly entertained? On December 4th and 5th the drama students presented the ten minute plays that they had been working on for about six weeks. Each play was only ten minutes long, but the plots were jam-packed. There was never a dull moment! The drama students were first assigned to a partner and then they both decided on a scene. Some were very funny while others were more serious, but each one required a lot of time and dedication. Learning lines was the first (and probably the most simple) battle in mastering the scene. The next step was to incorporate props and movement into the short play. The scenes were rehearsed outside of class and presented for the other drama students before they were ready to perform at the showcase. By showtime the ten minute plays were polished and ready to present.

If you missed out on this amazing drama showcase, don't fret! There will be another one on February 10th. ❖



Benj on Broadway

by Emma Xu '14

For Friends Central's students and faculty who are interested in theater and music, this November delivered them a wonderful trip to New York City for a great Broadway show called *A Christmas Story: The Musical*. It is a production based the movie *A Christmas Story*, adapted from the writings of Jean Shepherd, a classic Christmas tale which centers on Ralphie, who really wants a BB gun as Christmas gift. The music in this musical is by FCS alum Benj Pasek and his working partner Justin Paul from the University of Michigan. Benj and Justin concentrated on musical theatre at college and their works include *Dogfight*, *Edges* and *James and the Giant Peach* in addition to this musical.

Students and faculty spent one day traveling to and hanging out in New York City. They joined together at Lunt-Fontanne Theatre on 46th street and enjoyed this wonderful performance. Everyone was

amazed by the amazing talent the young actors and actresses presented on a Broadway stage. *The New York Times* commented on them, "They are wonderfully showcased in a couple of fantasy numbers that are the highlights of each act." The music added great energy to the show and was the most delightful part of the performance. Enter-

tainment Weekly gave the entire performance a B+ in their review 2 days later.

After the show, all the members from the FCS bus were able to talk with Benj about the composing process for the musical, his time back in Friends' Central and his future plans. Benj and Justin will be composing for the ABC TV show *Smash* next

season. During the Q&A, they also met the director of the show, John Rando, who is an award winning director for *Urinetown*, The musical, the winter musical for Friends' Central this year.

A Christmas Story: The Musical will be performing all the way until December 30th, 2012 on Broadway. ❖



World's End Survey Results

by Daniel Banko '13

In honor of the doomsday predictions for the end of 2012, FOCUS sent out a survey to the entire Upper School asking what students and teachers would do during their last 10 days on Earth. Here are the top 10 responses:

1. Sweetmal.
2. Prank the people who believe the world will end on 12/21/12
3. Sweetmal.
4. Trying to figure out how to beat the odds and survive.
5. Sweetmal.
6. I'd go to this gorgeous hillside town in NE Spain, Cadaquez on the Costa Brava, rent the same apartment I rented years ago—the one with a seaside view—sip wine on the balcony, eat seafood from this tiny restaurant on the beach, swim in the Mediterranean, and in the mornings sip a double espresso al fresco at the nearby cafe.

7. Sweetmal.
8. I will be watching the movie 2012 on the night of.
9. Sweetmal.
10. On a beach, perhaps in Hawaii, with my family and close friends, reading great books, sharing great memories and eating Ben and Jerry's every day!

Thanks to everyone who responded! ❖



Into it

by Max Ginsberg '14

I did not even bother to watch the Philadelphia Eagles-Carolina Panthers Monday Night Football contest on national TV. No thank you. This die-hard E-A-G-L-E-S fan was not interested. I wasn't even surprised to see the "L" on my ESPN news App Tuesday morning indicating 7, yes 7, losses in a row for those wounded birds. There probably hasn't been a seven game losing streak a long time- to my knowledge never in the entire Donovan McNabb era (and that is saying a lot!). The fact that the Eagles just waived their best defensive end to let younger guys get more snaps makes is embarrassing.

Much like the talking heads that litter the TV and radio airwaves, I place a large portion of the blame for this gridiron debacle on the Head Coach and Executive Vice President of Football Operations Andy Reid. Andy's coaching record on paper is quite good, but tactically he is often out-manned

by the coaching staff on the other side of the field on any given Sunday. And then we have to sit through essentially unbearable postgame postmortem interviews where Reid says nothing over and over again (and again), and defends his players without giving any specifics to how the team is playing or learning over the course of the season. This was lame half a dozen years ago, and is now downright unwatchable and unlistenable. Needless to say, his presence will not be missed by me and countless eagles fans next year when he is likely to be let go by the Eagles ownership.

Andy will no doubt land another job, as his old partner in crime, Joe Banner, is now the Chief Executive Officer in another franchise, the once renowned (back in 1950s I think) Cleveland Browns. So we'll probably see an orange and brown sweatshirt on Mr. Reid next year, where he will likely maneuver a lousy team into a mediocre one. ❖

What FCS Wants for the Holidays

by Marissa Gratz '15 and Jess Miller '15

The Winter holidays are just around the corner. This is a time to gather with family and friends, drink egg nog, sing songs, and give gifts. Gift-giving is not only looked forward to by some but it is also a struggle when trying to find the perfect gift for someone special.

So, *Focus* writers went undercover to find helpful tips for that best gift, based on some FCS students' holiday wishes of the season. We first interviewed senior Ian Lopez ('13) who asked for Nike sneakers, a popular response from some of the boys in the upper school. Another popular wish was for new iPhones and iPods, says Aidan Plunkett ('16). Another idea for the holidays is cuddling up with a cute puppy: Cyrus Farivar ('15) exclaimed to us "I want a Yorkie puppy!" Junior Drew Winig ('14) would be a very good holiday companion with Cyrus Farivar since he told us he wanted a camera to "take pictures of his dog." And if you just want to go with something simple and classic, choose chocolate and pajamas, Julia Lynn's ('14) holiday wish. ❖



Hurrah! Hurrah! FCS Orchestra and Jazz Band perform for the holidays!

Artist in the Spotlight: Aqeel Phillips

by Emilia Weinberg '14

Aqeel Philips is a constant presence in nearly all of Friends' Central's instrumental concerts and assemblies. If you've ever attended one, you've definitely seen and heard his impressive bass playing. While the bass is generally thought to be an instrument mostly present in the background of songs, Aqeel makes it anything but. Every time he plays, you can't help but be awed by his talent. However, Aqeel's musical career did not begin with the bass. He was originally a guitar player, but in 8th grade decided to make the switch. He is entirely self-taught on both.

How does one decide to take up the bass? Aqeel says, "I think it's a neat instrument particularly because it's underrated; I have the opportunity to show people a side of



music that's largely oversimplified or completely irrelevant...I'd like to keep the style alive."

Aqeel doesn't plan to stop playing any time soon. When I asked about his plans after graduation, he told me, "I'd love to participate in some instrumental ensembles in

college and plan on continue playing for as long as I am able." He also mentioned that he would like to write and record his own music on the side. Judging from what we've already heard, that's sure to be great. After hearing Aqeel play, I, and I'm sure many others, have a new appreciation for the bass. I think I speak on behalf of the entire Friends' Central community when I say that Aqeel, and his bass, will most definitely be missed next year. ❖

Focus
would like
to wish
you a safe
and
happy
break!



FCS students experience the World AIDS Day exhibit on campus.



Phoenix in the Phast Lane: Karonn Davis

by Max Ginsberg '14

Senior Varsity Boys basketball player Karonn Davis is this issue's Phoenix in the Phast Lane. Since coming to Friends' Central three years ago, Karonn has started every single game for the basketball team and has played crucial roles on the back to back state championship winning teams. When most people think about Karonn they probably first think of how he hit the two game winning free throws against the Hill School in the state tournament, capping a ten point comeback in the last minute. But last year, the team went as Karonn went.

He averaged about 12 points and 7 rebounds a game, very impressive as he was usually asked to guard and go against players that were much taller than he was. The same is going to have to be the case this year as Karonn is going to be asked to take on the role as team leader and leading scorer as the team loses six seniors from last year that all contributed a lot to last years team. We wish Karonn the best throughout this season and as he makes his college decision! ❖



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