

Applying Ishmael

DANIEL SILVERMAN

Last year's summer reading program was a disaster. Our survey showed that many students didn't even read their summer reading.

However, there were no consequences for not reading due to the fact that there were no organized attempts to follow up on the summer reading. One meeting of juniors and seniors took place just before school started to discuss studying and ethics, and it left no impression on the collective student mind.

This year, Ishmael was assigned to all students and staff. In addition, juniors were required to read sections of Study is Hard Work to aid in study skills. The question should be asked again this year: Has there been an organized attempt to use the summer reading assignment?

Tuesday, August 27, during Supervised Study, the Humanities department went to the participants and discussed how to improve study skills. Drawing on Study is Hard Work and their own personal experience, the teachers gave students their perspective on how to study for Humanities classes. On following Tuesdays, teachers from the other departments of the school will have a chance to discuss how to study for their particular subject. Dr. Warshaw said that "Each department has organized it so that each teacher is going to one of the Supervised Study sessions, saying pretty much the same things."

This concept seems to cover the usage of Study is

Hard Work, but what happened to Ishmael?

Dr. Warshaw informed me that a sheet was distributed to the teachers discussing possible applications of Ishmael to their class discussions. Did teachers use this sheet? Obviously teachers of the science and math departments would have a hard time using it, with a few exceptions in Biology; what about the English and History teachers?

After speaking to many Humanities teachers from both junior and senior classes, my conclusion is that a good number of teachers are using Ishmael. Although there are some courses, such as AP US History, where teachers had trouble integrating the lessons of Ishmael with the material they cover, many teachers used the suggested concepts in their class discussion. Others, such as Dr. Manring in his Science of the Mind class, used ideas developed independently. Overall, there is a great deal of usage of Ishmael in the classroom.

This year has shown a marked improvement in the usage of the summer reading program. The effective organization behind this year's program was obvious. Could more be done to improve?

The one suggestion that I received was giving teachers slightly more time to prepare lesson plans using the summer reading. Beyond that, kudos to the decision-makers behind the summer reading for selecting a book that everyone seems to be enjoying!

Confessions of a public restroom

GEORGE KACHERGIS

After helping our new juniors move, as a member of the Orientation Committee, I quickly escaped public scrutiny and the endless introductions and awkward conversations by lurking in the multitudinous safe havens found throughout campus.

I admit it was somewhat antisocial of me - some may even say grotesque before reading this article - to nimbly dodge into the nearest restroom whenever I heard the stirrings of a pack of ravenous juniors, eager to devour my identity, to place me in their ever-expanding hierarchy of Science & Math-ers.

The two days following

August 10, before the seniors arrived, found me fleeing from bathroom to bathroom, like a hunted rabbit running from thicket in the wake of baying hounds. I subsided on water and damp paper towels for 48 hours,

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huddled on the toilet, legs drawn up.

Often in the past I have found peace and solace in the anonymity, quietude, and Catholicism of a public restroom. In public restrooms I have found an escape from uncomfortable situations into a universal situation; all people must use toilets, and the language of the toilet knows no bounds.

Public restrooms provide us with something familiar and constant in a largely ephemeral world. They are

dependable and ever-present: eateries are required to provide restrooms, just as towns have churches where one may find sanctuary from the antagonistic activities of everyday life.

Indeed, public restrooms are similar to Catholic confessionals. Where else can one receive anonymous secular advice from perfect strangers? Once safely ensconced in your stall, you are free to liberate your conscience, to ask advice, or even to merely ask for a roll of toilet paper. There is a certain type of camaraderie that flourishes only in the utilitarian, tiled recesses of a communal commode.

This article was conceived on a toilet. I simultaneously realized that much wonderful thinking is done on the toilet. I'm sure I'm not the only person to have scrambled out after having an epiphany about some problem or another. Perhaps kings, under duress, would escape to the bathroom, where thoughts may be quickly turned over. This may be why toilets have earned the respectful nickname of "throne."

I find myself comforted, wherever I may be, when I spot the universal pictorial sign for a restroom. I know I have a place to escape, to think, to rule the world! Sometimes I simply slip into a restroom for a quick breather; a check in the mirror, cool water on my face and hands, and the sometimes painful reminder (auditory and olfactory) reminder that everybody else is human, too.



Vera Dadok

Intramurals: a senior's perspective

CHRIS HAAGEN

The sun shone down on the fresh Bermuda grass, which was holding on to the last bits of life



Dhruti Patel

Chris Haagen supports Second Hill's IM team from the sidelines.

until the chill of winter flushed out its brilliant green. Thoughts of looming tests and worries of unwritten papers faded away into a silent hush.

No longer was I a lonely, confused individual lost in a world of academic competition. For twenty minutes, unwritten college applications and ignored math homework did not exist. This was the sacred time for IM games.

Upon arriving last year, I was met with many assignments and lots of stress. Time was not a luxury that I could throw around by watching TV and hanging out with friends. To think that I would use this scarce resource to play in a pointless twenty-minute game seemed irresponsible and childish.

Yet I was a lonely junior and craved the high of seniors' approval. I put down my American history book and picked up some tennis shoes that had been neglected since my arrival.

When I arrived on the small soccer field, I was surrounded with almost all of my hall mates. Though some seemed to have an idea of the game, most of them had just wandered onto the field, laughing at the idea of competing in an sporting event.

But for twenty minutes, no complaints of fly labs and DBQs rang out from this crowd; no cries of the injustice of super study could be heard. For those twenty minutes we were united as one hall. We were given a break

from the stress that "accepting the greater challenge" carries. All we were worried about was how we could show that our hall was synonymous with perfection.

"Show me something," a senior yelled at me as I walked onto the field. "Be beautiful out there." For that moment, I could be. For that moment, physical inadequacies would fall into the shadows, and the void of forgotten childhood hopes for athletic success could be filled. I could blow the dust off ignored dreams of stardom which had been beleaguered by years of being picked last.

For those twenty minutes, hope breathed its sweet thoughts into me: thoughts that told me I could be a hero,

if only for the moment. That moment when the ball of manhood rolled between the goal posts could be perfection - the moment of ecstasy that blinded all thoughts of the difficulties in my life.

No physics lab reports. No chemistry quiz. No math problem set. Only myself, there in the moment surrounded by forty-one of my new closest friends.

The IM game ended, and I walked back to my room filled with the effects of procrastination. But wrinkles of stress were absent from my forehead - no John Smith passage could hinder that happiness. The high of others' approval would carry me through that day.