

NEWS FROM GRAFTON HIGH

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Activity Period Cancelled

by Rachel Donze

In addition to athletics, jobs, and homework, trying to squeeze in school-sponsored clubs seems nearly impossible. During the 2005-2006 school year, this conflict was tackled with the proposal of an "activity period" to occur twice a month during seventh period. The thinking was that an activity period would enable students to attend club meetings during school without the interference of after-school extracurricular activities.

Since school administration approval of the idea in October 2005, clubs' membership has increased, and sponsors and students alike boasted increased productivity and efficiency. However, in February of this year administrators decided to cancel the activity period believing that it did not meet the needs of clubs, and the benefits did not outweigh the cost of lost instructional time. School administrators also explain that many clubs

were no longer convening during the allotted time because their attendance was declining. Dedicated members were often involved in more than one club, and thus they had to choose which meeting to attend. Junior Haley Lee agrees: "I had to choose between several clubs that all held their meetings at the same time. French Honor Society stopped having meetings during activity period because there was just too much going on." Another scheduling problem arose for students taking classes outside of Grafton with either New Horizons or the Governor's School who frequently could not attend activity period meetings. Thus, the activity period was no longer fulfilling its original purpose.

For SCA, Interact, and Key Club, the cancellation of activity period seems to have had a negative impact. "We used the activity period to make peanut butter and jelly

sandwiches for the homeless. Although there are conflicts during seventh period, there are more conflicts outside of school hours. Everyone is always so busy," said Lauren Clark, Vice President of Key Club. However, these clubs seem to be in the minority. The general consensus amongst the various club sponsors revealed that a greater number would not be affected by the new change cancelling the activity period.

Although it was agreed that activity period was not accomplishing its original purpose, the administrators wanted to continue to use that time for student involvement. In order to increase the students' voice, the SCA created a school-organized meeting to occur once a month during seventh period. Effectively, the SCA is creating a network to receive feedback from the entire student body.

Grafton Girls Say "Ciao" To Italy

by Rachel Donze

Thirty-three girls, eight cities, six chaperons, five hotels, four flights, three airports and countless breathtaking views...the nine-day Italy trip over Spring Break is hard to sum up in words. Senior Meredith Routt could not agree more. As she cheerfully tried to recall her entire experience she said, "I absolutely love talking about my trip. I would tell anyone who was willing to listen." Routt's only complaint: not enough time.

Fitting in most of Italy's major sites is quite a feat given less than nine days, but there were no regrets. "By the end of the trip we were all kind of crappy. Still, we enjoyed every second of it," said junior Lauren Clark. "We stayed out late to get the most out of our days, and we slept on the bus. We did not want to miss anything." But even on the bus, the group enjoyed a completely unique Italian experience. "When we were going through a tunnel on our way to Florence, a cop stopped traffic because there was a log in the middle of the road. He attempted to shove it in his car, but that did not work, so he put it in our bus. He came back on later and took it back off. There was not one time in our trip I would consider boring," laughed Clark.

When asked "What was your favorite experience?" each girl responded with a different story, though all had some difficulty in picking only one.

Regrettably, the girls had to eventually return to reality and Yorktown, Virginia, but with many memories to share. "Rome, Vatican City, Florence, Pisa, Venice, Assisi, Spoleto, and Bologna...I could not forget one of them," said Clark.



Junior Lauren Clark stands on a bridge overlooking the waterways of Venice.

Grafton's Green Team Promotes Eco-Friendly Goals

by Rachel Donze

The Green Team's goal is to educate and inspire students to promote eco-friendly projects and help make America a greener culture. On Earth Day, the team organized a hat day to raise money in order to sponsor more activities. "Although there was almost no participation; we hope our persistent efforts inspire others," said Meredith Routt, one of the club's leaders.

Despite low school interest for the environment, the Green Team's enthusiasm has yet to wane, and they continue to raise awareness for the local environment and for the conservation of natural resources. "We meet every other Wednesday and collect each class's recycling, sorting out the plastics and different types of paper," said Routt. Their efforts paid off on April 22 when they were awarded the most outstanding school-recycling program for the Williamsburg, James City County, and York County region. "They gave us each a tree," said Routt. "I went home that same day and planted it."

The Green Team is also planting and maintaining a school garden for the special education students to give them an opportunity to work hands-on with the environment. "Everybody should have the chance to get involved and help protect our world," said Routt.