

THE

Parker Way

Ted Sizer's legacy lives on at Parker

by Kathleen Cushman

What does the school look like that Ted Sizer helped to create? As the world mourns his death, Parker offers its own tribute in this issue, to honor Ted's life, his work, and his legacy that we carry on.

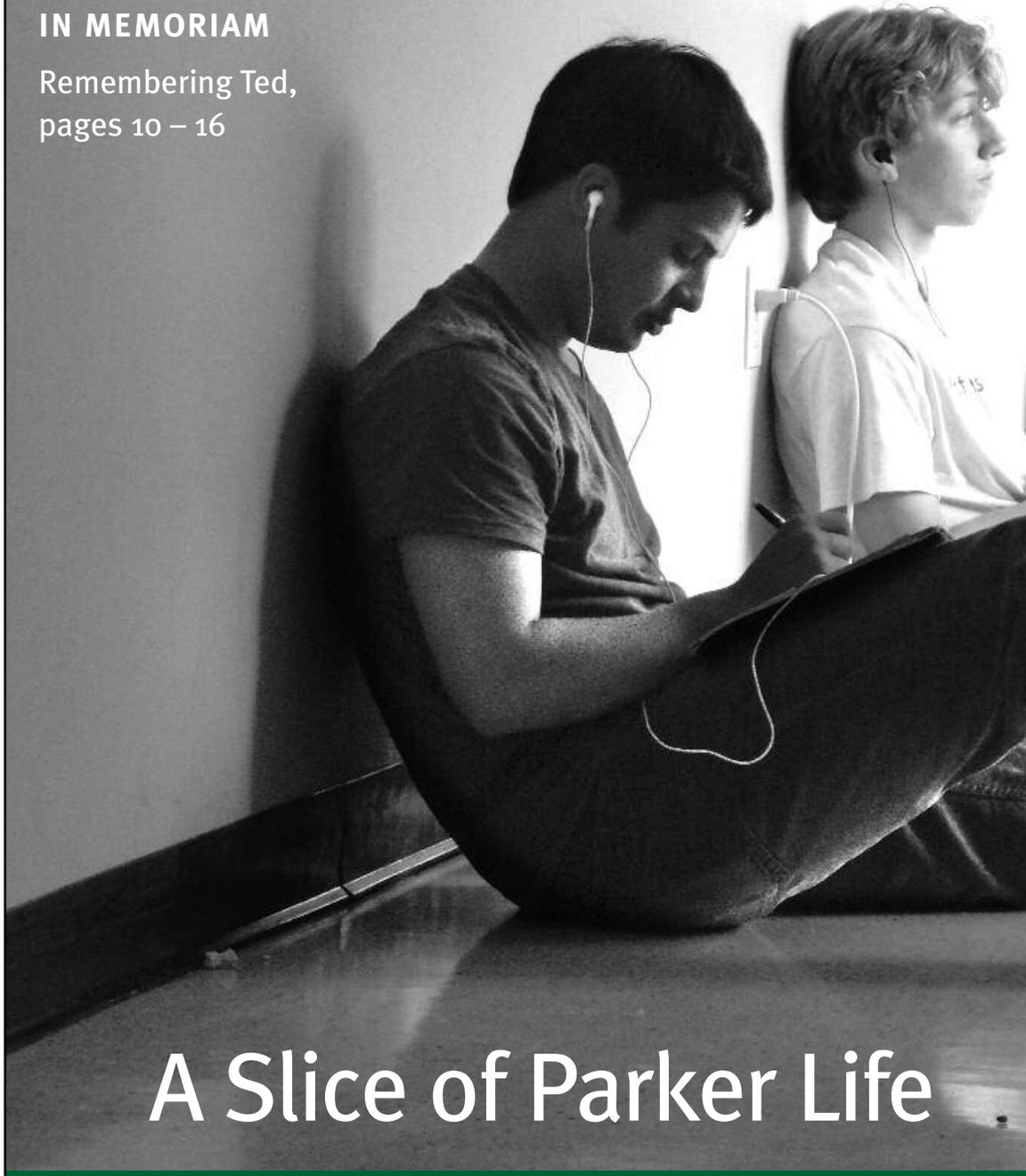
Using the words of students and teachers, we document here one day's schoolwide work and learning at Parker. Ted's own powerful convictions, we believe, show up vividly in three moments on an ordinary school day, when students and teachers stopped work to describe what they were doing and what it meant to them.

Tributes and memories from the Parker community fill our special closing section with more personal reflections on how Ted Sizer—our inspiration, our founder, our principal, our friend—nurtured us and our school.

But this great man belongs to the ages, we recognize, not to us alone. So Parker will show its lasting commitment to Ted Sizer as he would want: through the hard work of using our minds well, in the company of those who know us. **P**

IN MEMORIAM

Remembering Ted,
pages 10 – 16



A Slice of Parker Life

What does learning at Parker look and feel like? In this documentary "slice" conducted on October 1, 2009, students and teachers share what they were doing and thinking at three separate moments in the school day.

Letter from the Principal

Dear Parker friends,

What am I doing right now?

What does it mean to me?

Those were the questions we used to frame this “slice,” our deep look into the rich life of our school. With “readings” taken periodically throughout the day on October 1, we now have hundreds of windows into the inner workings of Parker as defined and described by students and teachers across three divisions and four domains.

Beyond the immediate benefits—having primary source information about what kinds of teaching and learning happen at our school, how students and teachers perceive what they are asked to do, and what meaning they ascribe to their work—the slice also gives us clues about the larger questions we must continually examine as an institution. Our program is a specific set of enactments of the Ten Common Principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools. Our schedule is more than a mere roadmap of where to go and when; it represents a commitment of precious resources. We have created a place that looks like few other schools, with team teaching, an interdisciplinary program, and an insistence upon enough time and space that reflection, inquiry, revision, and relationships can thrive.

With the information gleaned from our slice, we have so much

more than an interesting edition of the Parker Way. We have data.

What do you see?

What questions does this raise for you?

What do you think this school is working on?

What are the implications for our work together as a learning community?

Those are the real treasures we will mine from this slice. And, true to Parker form, they surface not as answers but as questions. They will enable us to look carefully at what makes a Parker education, where we are strong, and where we may need to refine our focus for the long haul.

With so much emphasis on what kids do in a single short standardized test, it is easy to lose focus on what really constitutes and propels a school day. What are students asked to do and to learn, when we do not prioritize filling in bubbles on an answer sheet? What happens between the lines, during all those minutes and hours when school keeps?

When we raise up the actual elements of a typical day, its small moments of life as it is lived, we give ourselves the invaluable opportunity to learn about the range of experiences any one of our students is having. We expose our own assumptions about what is important, and we can question those assumptions. Are we



dedicating the right resources to the right priorities? Are we consistent, diverse, pragmatic, and nuanced enough in providing the kinds of learning experiences our students need?

I hope you enjoy this taste of Parker. I know that in preparing this particular cake, we've guaranteed ourselves a banquet of precisely the right kind of work: enough to last a year.

My very best to all of you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Teri Schrader". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Teri Schrader
Principal

How the “Slice” Worked

Participation was voluntary at 10:15 and 1:30 p.m. All students and teachers “dropped everything” to report at 12:30 p.m. A selection of answers appears here; complete responses are posted at www.parker.org.

10:15 a.m.

What am I doing right now? What does it mean to me?

Division 1 Students

We have just been working on what rhetorical devices to use in our newest Oral Presentations. We are reenacting a case that went to the Supreme Court, and using evidence to support our side. We must also use rhetorical devices, such as hyperbole (sort of like exaggeration), similes, metaphors, repetition, and hypothetical situations (a false situation used to show points). – Daniel

I am learning about glaciers. I learned that 20,000 years ago all of Massachusetts was covered in 2 miles ice/snow. Learning this I am glad I didn't live 20,000 years ago. – Eliza

We have been working on COW 2 [Challenge of the Week], learning about mountains through vocabulary and creating 3-D sculptures [of] a mountain made out of cardboard, clay, thick paper or any other material we wanted to use. Some of the vocabulary are words like glacier, erratic, bedrock, till, ledge and many others.



8:40 a.m. Caroline's Division 1 advisory group brainstorms its project for the Art Show, deciding on making squares for a quilt. All advisories gather for short meetings at the start and end of each school day, as well as from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. on Wednesdays.

In math we were working on equations like tons to pounds or ounces to pounds. To do this we must find how many pounds are in a ton and then use cross multiplication to find the answer. Soon I will know a lot more than I ever did about glaciers and I will soon be able to convert pounds to tons in my head. – [no name]

I am helping a seventh grader with his government debate essay. This means a lot to me because younger students are able to look up to me for help. – Zayna

I was just listening and learning about goals I have in Wellness. Like getting more fit, improving my mile run. This means a lot to me because it was a teacher caring about me [and] my well being and that is the Parker way. – Adam

Division 2 Students

I was just sitting in class overly enjoyed at the fact that we are doing scenes from *The Crucible* for one of our assessments, and auditions for the school's production of *The Crucible* are today and tomorrow. I love acting and I am so happy that I get these opportunities! – Caitlin



10:50 a.m. Hungry? During the daily 10-minute all-school break, the kitchen is serving bagels, muffins, and the ever-popular sausage-on-a-stick.

10:15 a.m.

.... all-school 10-minute break coming up at 10:45

We were talking about parts of drama and beats. We are beginning to act out *The Crucible* and we are getting our parts to study. I like this part of the year because we get to have more freedom on work—acting isn't that hard and we get to express ourselves. I think this is what makes Parker a different school, because we have more freedom. – Kyle

The first class of the day, I am hungry and bored. We have been talking about *The Crucible* for weeks and weeks, and I really can't find a lot to interest me anymore. Memorization of lines [is] something I feel won't actually help my overall education. I am looking forward to getting this whole production behind me and moving on. – Nick

I was blocking my AH acting scene with my group, trying to teach them not to put their back towards the



Reading scenes from *The Crucible*.

audience! Taking charge cause I have acting experience. . . Looking at the clock, wanting break and food! – Alix

I want to see for myself how good an actor I really am, by judging myself against Division 2's heightened standards for artistic expression. – Jared

I had just been drawing when I was told during an MST lecture that I had to write this. I take my drawings very seriously, it's something I really want to do with my life. Sometimes the desire to reach that goal can distract me from what's really important at the moment, getting through high school. – Matt

In MST class, I was trying to listen to my teacher John explain functions. How grapes are to wine, and dough is to bread, while I had a piece of dark chocolate in my mouth listening to my iPod. It means a lot and a little to me. A lot because I need to gateway this year, and a little because I am more interested in my music and my chocolate. But I know even though it's not very important to me, without it I

can't move on. – Sarah

We are starting a new MST unit and so we are doing review to help us remember and to see where we are on the subject. Instead of doing a test, we try to work out the problem as an entire class. I like that a lot about Parker . . . you are not forced into doing something that you are not prepared for but you get helped into it with other people. The work load is more controllable and not overwhelming. I know that there are others in the same position and I can get help anytime I need [it]. – Emily

In MST, Curtis gave us the example of the "Function Box." The input (also known as the domain) is put into the function box then there is an output (also known as the range). We used various examples (like bread \rightarrow toaster \rightarrow toast), then we related it to math and used graphs (x and y). The idea of the function box made the graphing of x and y much easier. The function box will be with me in life even when I go to college. – Suji

Parker classes meeting at 8:50–10:45 a.m. on 10-1-2009

Teachers' first names • AH = Arts and Humanities • MST = Math-Science-Technology

Division 1 AH with Matt and Liz
Division 1 AH with Amanda and Janet
Division 1 AH with Caroline and Cam
Division 1 MST with Molly and Judy
Division 1 MST with Tanya and Nancy
Division 1 MST with Mit and Thea

Division 2 AH with Liz and Laura
Division 2 AH with Stacy and Emily
Division 2 AH with Ryan and Rachel

Division 2 MST with Jen and John
Division 2 MST with Kris and Curtis
Division 2 MST with Nathan and Tory

Division 3 AH Art of the Essay with Josie
Division 3 AH Banned Books with Anthony
Division 3 AH Foreign Policy with Clay
Division 3 AH Watercolor with March
Division 3 MST Statistics with Jon
Division 3 MST Chemistry with Dawn
Division 3 MST Physics with John

10:15 a.m.

... second 2-hour block begins at 10:55, then lunch ...

Division 3 students

Just now I was doodling in my math class. I doodle because it helps me focus, and when I feel like I'm not focused I doodle. I like the fact that my teachers allow me to do it because it helps me in class. – Jamie

I am learning about Archaeopteryx in statistics class and determining based on the length of the femur and humerus if they are bones from the same or different species. We learned how to use our calculators to make lists and determine the correlation of the numbers in order to find “y hat” through a formula. We are going to be assessed on it in the future. – Cassie

I have just been working on a physics quiz. [Its] purpose is to cement the knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of rectilinear movement. The quiz is maybe a tad bit difficult and requires very careful observation of one's math. The physics quiz and the associated concepts are a way for me to develop understanding of my surroundings and their basic interactions . . . to answer questions that develop within [my] world. – William

In reality this [physics] quiz is important to gauge our understanding of material. So if we don't do a good job the first time it is simply feedback to our teacher, and we will have many opportunities to ask questions and revise. – Elisabeth

We've been discussing the differences between isolationist and neoconservative stances on foreign policy. As a rising member of society (who will be able to vote within the year), it's very



Jon's Division 3 class in statistics.

important to be informed about U.S. foreign policy [and] other issues that will affect where my vote goes. – Matt

I am seeing different sides of “the argument” . . . not having my political views drowned out by the environment in which I am. . . . Understanding bias is a very important life skill. I am glad I am learning it. – Jacob

I was just listening/reading *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, with two other people. I'm not the only one that forgot to read for today, so it's not too bad. – Matt

In chemistry class we are learning the different rules for how electrons are arranged inside an atom. None of the rules really make much sense and I find I have a harder time finding the use in chemistry than other classes. However, [it] forces me to practice memorizing and working on content I don't necessarily enjoy. As a table group we are filling out sheets with the top 56 elements' electron and orbital configurations. It is a lot of

busy work, but working as a group makes it a fun challenge. – Owen

I was just painting a watercolor of an apple. . . working with different colors and trying to give the apple dimension, and make it look realistic while incorporating techniques I recently learned from March. – Kristen



March's Division 3 course in watercolor.

1:30 p.m.

.. each day starts and ends with a brief advisory group ..

Division 1 Students

Just now I was in Wellness listening to my teacher Alan talk about the mile run. It was very detailed in when it will be and what it will be like. He also talked about what Wellness will be like today. He told us that we could tree climb or have open gym. We talked about our fitness goals and went over them. Hopefully my fitness level will go up this year and we will have fun in Wellness. I like the activities a ton. – Isabella

We went out to the outback to practice for our mile run next week. To get ready for that we have been doing runs around the basketball court . . . After our run we have a choice of open gym . . . we can do all different games like four-square, basketball, and we can even organize games among us to do anything from capture the flag to volleyball. We also

can climb up a ladder onto a tree and continue climbing as high as we feel comfortable. There is a limit on how high we can go by markers that Alan put up. This is challenge by choice, meaning we don't have to do this activity if we don't feel comfortable for what ever reasons. – Rebekah

I am in Spanish, and we are working

on the members of *la familia*. Also, we have been conjugating verbs. To me, this means that I will be able to learn and use another language. . . . In the long run, like when I am interviewing for a job, I will have that advantage. – Alanna

In today's AH we are working on chorals which are small little phrases

Parker classes meeting 10:55–12:50 p.m. on 10-1-2009

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- Division 1 Spanish with Ian
- Division 1 Spanish with Aubrey
- Division 1 Spanish with Consuelo
- Division 1 MST with Judy and Molly
- Division 1 MST with Mit and Thea
- Division 1 MST with Tanya and Nancy
- Division 1 Wellness with Alan
- Division 1 Wellness with Laura

- Division 2 Spanish with Ruth
- Division 2 Spanish with Becca

- Division 2 MST with Jen and John
- Division 2 MST with Kris and Curtis
- Division 2 MST with Nathan and Tory
- Division 2 Wellness with Deborah

- Division 3 Math Indep't Study with Diane
- Division 3 Advanced Algebra with Dawn
- Division 3 Animal Biology with Lorin
- Division 3 Calculus with JohnBo
- Division 3 Spanish with Carrie
- Division 3 Banned Books with Anthony
- Division 3 Culture Wars with Clay

DROP EVERYTHING AND REPORT: 12:30 P.M. OCTOBER 1, 2009

DIVISION 1 MST CLASS: We are learning about proportions that will contribute to the 2nd COW – “Mountain Shape.” * I am working on a paper for solving proportions, trying to find out how I got a wrong answer. * We are cross-multiplying to solve for “n”. * I was trying to find the actual distance on a map using the scale. It was pretty hard. * Talking to someone about how they got the wrong answer. They thought I was wrong. But I know he is. I was also thinking about what I will do after college. Maybe I would meet up with friends and all rent a house or something. I'm still not sure. * **DIVISION 2 MST CLASS:** Playing rocket relay and learning about slope and domain and real numbers. I'm learning new things. * Playing a sweet math game. I really enjoyed it. * Playing rocket relay, learning about functions and equations, it means I practice and learn more about it. * A fast paced game demonstrating our knowledge of functions and domain/range. I like the types of math activities that we can all run around in and still be involved. * Walking, a means of movement. Algebra, hard solvable work. * Working on homework. Work time in class is important to me because I get to ask questions. **CALCULUS:** We are planning our calculus psych-up and our new secret handshake as a class. It means our class is creating community (and a secret society). Oh, we're also learning about the product rule. * Learning how to use the Product Rule to find derivatives of functions easier. The handshake means a lot to me. It says we are bonding as a class. The Product Rule is also awesome because now I can find derivatives wicked fast. * For complete responses to “Drop Everything” go to www.parker.org

1:30 p.m.

... and advisories meet for an hour every Wednesday ...

that you add things to to make them better. We are also working on our OP for a court case . . . we will debate if we think our clients are guilty or not. It helps us when we need to debate things so we can back up our facts. — [no name]

Division 2 Students

I am in AH, handing in the homework I actually finished, and drinking coffee strong enough to kill a horse. Today I think we are doing more work with *The Crucible*, which I really am enjoying. I really love [the play], and AH. Enough that I would (and *do*) pursue subjects similar to it outside of school. — Sarah

Division 3 Students

I'm reading about the death penalty and picking out things to paraphrase, 2 quotes, and 2 sets of data to record as practice for Senior Project notes.

This is important so that I can further my research on the art of caricatures and their psychological effects on the people who view them/they are about. Note taking is a big part of research for the Senior Project so

doing it properly is important. — Cassie

Each note card should have only one piece of information, and should be marked in one of three categories: Paraphrasing, Direct Quote, or Data.



Mit and Thea's Division 1 MST: The class is doing a hands-on exercise to help understand how glaciers form.

DROP EVERYTHING AND REPORT: 12:30 P.M. OCTOBER 1, 2009

DIVISION 1 MST: I am with a group and we are learning about glaciers and doing labs to learn about weathering and erosion. * Eroding sediments in MST. It's like being the forces of nature. * Doing an awesome lab about glaciers and having loads of fun! * Mimicking erosion by experimenting how we can move a pile of sand to the other side of the bin. I love experiments. * This is showing me how it works instead of listening to a boring lecture. * I am a 9th grader and I'm still in all Div I classes ANNNNNNN! * Watching a slideshow about glaciation, teaching me about how New England got to be so rocky. I feel glad that I'm learning so much on New England history. * The COW we are working on is about topographic maps. We are climbing Mt. Watatic on Tuesday. * Learning about weathering and glaciers. It's kind of boring but some of it is a bit interesting. Mit made a slide show. * Today's my long day so I'm kind of bored, but lunch is soon. We have spent all of MST today on science and I've learned. * **ANIMAL BIOLOGY:** Watching a video about sponges and their genetic and physical structure and finding out amazing things that make them an animal while taking notes on it. * Learning about sponges, and how they're moist. As well as being the origin of pretty much everything. * Basking in the glory at how completely beast and awesome sponges are! * I think it is important to discuss where life came from because it is a question humans have been asking from the beginning. * For complete responses to "Drop Everything" go to www.parker.org

1:30 p.m.

.. Div. 3 students have a daily “discretionary time” block ..

I'm really grateful we're discussing this, because I've hesitated from taking any notes so far due to my fear I wouldn't be taking them the right way. Now I can finally get started! Senior project here I come! – Matt

While everyone in the senior class will have . . . different projects, information, and learning experiences we will all be using a universal system to collect our information. It is crazy to think that . . . in a year I will have a completely new understanding of so many topics. It's exciting! – Elisabeth

Teachers, All Blocks

I just finished hanging visuals I created to encourage my students to speak more Spanish in class. While my students use a lot of Spanish in class . . . I continue to hear them ask very basic questions in English. These

visuals mean that my students will now be able to ask to use the restroom in Spanish, ask for a drink of water . . . as well as express confusion and state that they have a question in Spanish. We'll see how much more Spanish I hear today! – Aubrey

I updated our Division 2 MST class website so the students could check for their homework and know when their assessments are due. . . Following that, I joined my teaching partner in the middle of a math lesson. I was sitting in the back, observing and learning along with the students . . .



Anthony's Senior Seminar class uses an article about the death penalty to learn note-taking techniques for the Senior Project.

DROP EVERYTHING AND REPORT: 12:30 P.M. OCTOBER 1, 2009

MIXED MEDIA CLASS: Busy making a landscape in my mixed media class. It is frustrating, but I am working very hard on it. * I'm on disresh time right now. I'm painting a picture cause I love it, it makes me happy! * Thinking of a way to incorporate paper and fabrics onto my blank canvas while I chop the painting I created yesterday after school into half-inch horizontal strips. The glue gun is the most inconvenient adhesive tool. * **DIVISION 1 WELLNESS:** Attempting to play two hand touch football. Half the class that was experienced played, and the other half was trying to learn. * I've scored one touchdown and tagged one person. Usually I'm more of a stay inside kind of person. I am kind of proud of myself. * Throwing and catching footballs. It's not fun but I am trying. Playing four-square. And we have the option for climbing. * Taking off harness and helmet after climbing 30 foot oak tree. **DIVISION 2 WELLNESS:** Playing capture the flag. Epicness is happening in class. * Learning how to create teams without teacher supervision. It helps me learn how to stay focused without needing a teacher, helping me become a more independent student. * Getting out energy, hanging out with friends and having fun. Wellness at Parker means trust and a way to stay healthy for me. **ACADEMIC SUPPORT:** Practicing proportions so I can do taxes when I am older. * I am practicing patience right now. This is important because you will always have to wait for people. * I'm learning how to work with other students who don't like to do work. * For complete responses to "Drop Everything" go to www.parker.org

1:30 p.m.

. . teachers have daily planning time with colleagues . .

also trying to keep a few students focused on learning. – Jen

Talking with my students about the end of *The Catcher in the Rye* and debating whether or not Holden Caulfield has had a breakdown or a breakthrough. I enjoy trying to get students to come to their own conclusions . . . There is so much mystery in

the story, and I wanted to them to see that it's not cut and dry. – Anthony

A student just asked a clarifying question about applying electrons to orbitals. That helps assure me that they are really trying to think through what they are doing, rather than just going through the motions. This is a part of chemistry that I find a little difficult to teach, because it can be

quite dry, but the big topic of looking at periodic trends I find really interesting. – Dawn

Responding to email, organizing the fall trip debrief, sending out the Division 2 advisory schedule, writing Friday Announcements. I have also been following up on PLP appointments, scheduling the remaining few. I also met briefly with the AH and MST domain leaders. Communication is a huge part of my job outside of the classroom . . . a skill that continually needs honing and always needs to be applied with compassion. – Deborah

I just finished meeting with the peer tutors and matching them with their “tutees” for the year. They were all excited to talk about what they could do for their student and to share ideas of other ways they could support a younger student. – Christine

Parker classes meeting at 1:20–3:15 p.m. on 10-1-2009

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Division 1 Wellness with Laura

Division 2 AH with Liz and Laura
Division 2 AH with Stacy and Emily
Division 2 AH with Ryan and Rachel

Division 2 Spanish with Becca
Division 2 Spanish with Carrie
Division 2 Spanish with Heidi
Division 2 Wellness with Deborah

Division 3 AH Art of the Essay with Josie
Senior Seminar with Anthony
Senior Seminar with Lorin
Senior Seminar with Jon
Senior Seminar with March
Senior Seminar with Ruth

DROP EVERYTHING AND REPORT: 12:30 P.M. OCTOBER 1, 2009

DIVISION 1 SPANISH: Creating questions so our class can figure out what *beisbol jugador* our teacher is pretending to be. This is to prep us for our assessment where we have to interview a person pretending to be a professional baseball player of Latino descent. * I think she is David Ortiz. I really want to learn Español fluently, so this is very important to me. * **DIVISION 2 SPANISH:** Listening to some funny Mexican song and talking about what it means *en español* and where its origin is. It means a lot to me because *yo encanto español—y yo* would love to *vive en espana...* Div 3 Spanish here I come!! * Looking at connections between the music and culture of a Spanish-speaking country. We have just started and I am curious to see them all. * Talking about the song “*visa para un sueno.*” It’s okay. Today it’s hard to focus in class. * We are trying to connect music and Spanish into a nice little smoothie of knowledge! * **DIVISION 3 SPANISH:** *Estuve aprendiendo sobre la cultura de Puerto Rico, pero has interumpidome. Entonces olvido que estuvo aprendiendo.* * Reading aloud *Vejigantes*, a play about the issue of race and skin color. I’m really happy and excited because it is expanding my understanding of Spanish grammar and culture through a medium I love—theatre. * **DISCRETIONARY TIME:** Discussing college applications with Catherine, getting records sent. * **TEACHER PLANNING TIME:** Meeting with teaching partner about our coming work. I value our collaborative time to plan and design this interdisciplinary work. * *For complete responses to “Drop Everything” go to www.parker.org*

PARKER REMEMBERS TED

At Ted Sizer's memorial service on November 21 at Harvard University's Memorial Church, Laura Rogers, founding trustee representing the Parker School community, delivered the following tribute .

Ted was a man of enormous grace, generosity, and imagination. He beguiled us with his mind and his smile. And after years in august educational institutions, Ted trusted rather than feared the imagination of others.

Schools, Ted knew, needed to embrace rather than flee those subtle, confusing, and controversial issues of “humanness”—because students longed for teachers who could *inspire* them to learn and because if teachers had hungry pupils, they could teach them in a “tumbledown warehouse,” and they would learn. Inspiration and hunger, Ted wrote in *Horace's Compromise*, are at the heart of teaching and learning.ⁱ

He must have been prescient. Ten years later, there were Ted and Nancy, brooms and dust-cloths in hand, helping us take a windowless military intelligence building—a veritable tumbledown warehouse—out of mothballs, and turn it into a school—the Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School.

And why did parents and students come to our “tumbledown warehouse”? For Parker's parents, Ted stirred a sense of possibility. As one parent said: “We listened to Ted and believed we might actually get a chance to *live* what we always hoped for—to see our children love learning.”ⁱⁱ

Our brand new students expressed it a little differently (they were only twelve years old, after all), but you could hear it: “I hope to have fun, make a lot of friends, and learn, learn, learn!”ⁱⁱⁱ wrote one student. Another told us that his first year would be just fine if “I feel better about myself by learning in a different way.”^{iv}

During those early years, and in each successive year, Ted did

not—no matter how dramatically or how often we pleaded with him—tell us just how to make our school work. Instead, he asked us deceptively simple questions.

“What do you and your adolescent talk about at dinner?” he would inquire of parents, with a glint in his eye. (Was he kidding?) Yet by the time a child graduated from Parker, small revolutions had occurred at home. As one parent said: “When we learned what the kids were doing, we got an idea of how they were learning to think, to read—and if we really listened to them, we got a glimpse of how we could change our own thinking.”^v

He asked the students: “Do any of your teachers know you?” And each year at graduation, they



Ted and Nancy in 1998, on the way to Fall Forum in Kansas City with a group from Parker.

answered Ted with their personal stories. Because their teachers knew and cared about them, they had come to know their own minds and to care about each other.

He asked the teachers^{vi}: “Do the students know why *this* lesson, on *this* day?” Or, “What do you think this student needs from you?” Their answers shaped a life’s purpose.

From those very first conversations with Ted and Nancy about *what* the Parker School might be, we learned that the questions would keep coming for as long as Ted and Nancy walked hand-in-hand with us

When, as co-principals steering a storm-tossed school, Ted and Nancy would sit on the creaky risers in the old vault where we packed ourselves in for all-school meetings and parent forums; when the school hosted educational dignitaries (we knew they were important if Ted wore his blue cashmere sweater to school that day)^{vii}; and when students needed a bit of extra attention in the principals’ office; and the questions continued—when Ted and Nancy talked with new teachers around the old oak table, tenderly challenging each other^{viii} and us to think more carefully, speak more carefully, teach more carefully.

With those deceptively simple,



Ted put on his Parker hat to welcome Governor Deval Patrick to the school in June 2008.

deeply respectful questions, Ted reframed the entire endeavor of schooling. He inspired us—and made us hungry.

I can just hear Ted asking now, with that same glint in his eye: “Why are you here? Don’t you have important work to do?”

ⁱ *Horace’s Compromise* (1984), p.218-219

ⁱⁱ Diane Hewitt, Parker parent

ⁱⁱⁱ Sarah Morton, Parker class of 2001

^{iv} BB, Parker student

^v Barbara Weiss, Parker parent

^{vi} Deb Merriam, Parker teacher

^{vii} Martha McLure, Parker teacher

^{viii} Cam Hewitt, Parker class of 2001 and Parker teacher

I could divide my life into three phases: The years before I knew of Ted Sizer. The years I aspired to meet Ted Sizer. The years I aspired to do my best for Ted Sizer. I hope I still have a good number of those years left.

SUZY BECKER, FOUNDING TEACHER

SPECIAL SECTION: IN MEMORIAM

Ted possessed an enormous capacity for friendship. He found room in his heart and in his day for many, many people to whom he happily offered support, guidance, and always good cheer. Though we had been acquainted since the early days of CES, our friendship took root when I came to Parker in 1996. At 65, Ted already had a lifetime of friendships to draw upon and to tend. Still, he found room for me. As a leader, teacher, author, husband, and father, Ted's example always made me want to do better. I miss you, my dear and wise friend.

Jim Nehring, former Parker principal

Ted was always on the side of teachers, which meant, of course, that he was always on the side of students.



On Parker's first day in September 1995, Ted spoke to the 122 students and parents gathered in front of its first home, Building 2602 at Devens.



Ted loved to walk, and he and Nancy often showed up for the annual Parker road race.

His work was about creating places for teachers to bring their best selves forward, intellectually and personally. He forgave our imperfections with the optimism of a man who believed we could, and would, do better if given the opportunity.

Those of us affiliated with the New Teachers Collaborative were fortunate to have Ted and Nancy contribute to our seminars on a regular basis. Ted made us feel that what we were thinking and what we said mattered. That was his gift to us, and to countless teachers and students around the world.

*Clare Fox Ringwall, director,
New Teachers Collaborative*

"How's your dog?" "Tell me about the kids." "What did you like about your

trip to Alaska?" As grateful as I am for Ted's profound contributions to American education (and my own — the Ten Common Principles form the core of my identity as an educator), it is his humble humanity that moves me. Ted's interest in my life was genuine and palpable. The sheer volume of people who could claim the same thing is testament to Ted's ultimate power: valuing everyone's voices, experiences, and selves. We honor him every time we do the same for our students and our colleagues.

Deb Merriam, Parker founding teacher

Before there was Parker Charter Essential School, there was the idea, the hope, and the vision for a thoughtful place for students, families, and teachers to come together in

support of deep learning and a sense of purposeful, joyful, vigorous community. Before there was Parker, there was Ted Sizer. Our school exists as a result of the life's work of our remarkable friend and guide, Theodore R. Sizer, who with his wife Nancy and a group of determined and visionary educators and thinkers, brought the Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School into being.

We knew him as Ted, and his presence at Parker is everywhere and profound. Our sadness at his passing is matched only by our gratitude for all he did and all he shared with us during his lifetime of work on behalf of students, teachers, and schools everywhere. We will miss Ted dearly, even as we know his work lives on in so many ways—including through the ongoing work of so many teachers whose professional lives have been shaped by his ideas, inspired by his humble brilliance, and encouraged by his warm smile.

Teri Schrader Parker principal

One thing that always inspired me about Ted was his belief that all students *could* learn and *wanted to* learn. This learning could take all different forms and be about all different topics, but he believed that all of us had a desire to learn new things, develop new skills, and have new experiences. He believed that our job as educators was to equip students with the knowledge, scaffolding, and coaching necessary for them to dis-

cover new things on their own, and then to get out of the way and let students create their own understanding and opinions. My greatest hope as a teacher is to have the same faith that Ted did in students' desire to learn and to be the best coach possible for those students.

Matt Smith, Parker founding teacher

I will be forever grateful to Ted Sizer for his acute sense of urgency, his dogged optimism, his refusal to accept the status quo, his knack for asking just the right question at just the right time, his unrelenting belief in the potential of “youngsters,” his reverence for teachers, his extraordinary humility, and his ability to make all who knew him feel truly, truly special. May all of us who were touched by Ted's brilliance carry his legacy forth by continuing to be “creatively subversive” and the “informed skeptics” that he taught us to be.

Jed Lippard, Parker founding teacher

In the spring of 2005 for my senior project at Parker I created an oral history of the school. Ted and Nancy were kind enough to allow me to interview them for around an hour about their memories of the school and their thoughts on its mission. After doing background research on the Essential Schools movement for the project and realizing how influential the Sizers were, I gained a special appreciation for how their willingness to be simply “Ted and Nancy” at



Parker exemplified the school's culture of informality coupled with genuine respect.

One of the most memorable things Ted shared in the interview was his initial reaction to hearing that Parker's charter had been approved: “delight and stark terror,” he recalled. It was a feeling I shared when I completed that senior project and graduated from Parker, and recently it was a feeling I experienced once again upon graduating from college. Ted's faith in his educational philosophy and his willingness to throw himself behind the effort to create Parker despite the “terror” of trying something new contributed to a fantastic high school experience for me and hundreds of my fellow students. For that I am deeply grateful.

Fletcher Fernau, Parker class of 2005

2000

ALICIA BENTO is proud to announce the August marriage of her sister, Jenny Bento, to her boyfriend of four years, Jayson Eckhart. They spent their honeymoon in Deep Creek Lake, Maryland. They own a home in Pennsylvania and a dog named Einstein.

TALIA BIGELOW graduated in May from the School for Marine Science and Technology, where she confronted her fear of mathematical modeling and wrote her thesis on lobsters in Rhode Island Sound. After a summer of field work, Talia plans to try for a teaching job and eventually get a Ph.D. Or maybe, now that she knows enough math, she will chase her dream of becoming a meteorologist. She is just glad to be done and to have eaten so many delicious crustaceans. In August, Talia married her longtime boyfriend, Jon.

TIM LANE has followed his interest in nature. Three years ago, he purchased a half-acre of land in southwest Florida on which he recently began growing many rare and strange fruits: mangoes from Panama, India, Thailand, and Egypt, Jaboticabas from Brazil, and Bunchosia fruits, which ripen to have the texture and taste of peanut butter. Tim is running his own company, Bone Thru the Nose (.net), selling Maca, a Peruvian herb and food. He is also propagating many of these rare and interesting tropical trees for trade and sale.

2001

ASHLEY (BERENSON) MOORE attended college in the U.S. for a few semesters before deciding to study abroad in Australia for a semester, because of Peter Garbus's Parker class, "Visions of Aus-

tralia." She ended up transferring, and graduated with a degree in communications and marketing from Bond University in Queensland, Australia. While there, she met her husband, Zeb, a New Zealander, and after graduation traveled with him to ski in Australia and New England. Ashley and Zeb moved back to Massachusetts, bought a house, got married, and had their beautiful daughter Tegan—all in one year. Ashley now has two jobs, one includes doing part time sales/marketing for a natural soda company called Grown-Up Soda (or GuS). At New Year's, she and Zeb will travel to New Zealand for a month, so Tegan can meet her cousins.

JARRETT MAN graduated in 2005 from Hampshire College, where he studied biochemistry and microbiology. He went on to an ecology internship in Minnesota, spent ten months in India on farms with no electricity, gas, or running water, and then came back to the U.S. to an apprenticeship on an organic farm. In 2007, he started Stone Soup Farm in Belchertown, MA, an ecologically and community oriented farm he heads, where he still lives.

2002

LIANNA (ADRIEN) CONDON has a new addition in her household: Rosemary Grace Condon, born on January 4, 2009. Her older siblings, Selah and Hosea, love little Gracie, as do her parents.

CHRIS CURTIS graduated in 2006 from the University of New England with a B.A. in English and a minor in social psychology. He then worked as a residential counselor/caseworker for boys ages 6 to 12 who are considered at risk. Though he found the work very gratify-

ing, Chris decided to go on to study nursing at New York University, in an accelerated 15-month B.S.N. program with a M.S.N. program that follows. Chris hopes to become a clinical practitioner, focusing on cancer. He chose NYU for the diverse and vibrant culture of the city, a welcome change from rural Massachusetts!

2003

ANDREW SELLARS spent his first summer out of high school in Maine, working for Phish, after which he went to Northeastern University to study music and business. While there, he worked a number of jobs in the industry, including another festival with Phish and eight months on the road as an assistant tour manager with the NY jam band moe. Andy developed an interest in intellectual property law, particularly music copyright, and that focus brought him to George Washington University to study law. So far, he spends most of his time studying how US copyright law should be adapted or applied to Internet music consumption.

Andy notes that the Demons of Stupidity still play off and on in the Boston area (though much less now that Andy lives in DC), and will be celebrating their tenth year as a band this coming February. In other Parker news, he adds that Oscar Goff was recently cast as an extra in the upcoming Martin Scorsese movie "Shutter Island," where he is playing a mental patient.

2004

GREG COLBY graduated in 2009 from U. Mass., Amherst, with a degree in Environmental Sciences, focusing on plant soil and insect sciences. In August, he

started in the Ph.D. program in Ecology and Evolution at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, where he was awarded a graduate fellowship for academic achievement.

2005

ASHLEY HILL is in her senior year at Northeastern University and plans to graduate in spring 2010 with a degree in health sciences. She did her first cop at East Boston Neighborhood Health Center, in infection control. For her second, she worked for four months with an ambulance service in Costa Rica, and then for two months at a clinic in Chorillos, Peru, doing environmental health and well-child visits. Ashley plays on Northeastern's Ultimate Frisbee team, with and against some Parker people. After graduation, she hopes to get a job, save money to travel more, and eventually work in global public health.

JARED WAYNE graduated from the University of New Hampshire with a B.S. in kinesiology. While there, he worked as an emergency medical technician and a leader in the New Hampshire Outing Club, and was awarded membership to the Sigma Alpha Pi National Society of Leadership and Success. He is now working towards graduate school in sociology and law enforcement.

2006

HEATHER CONCANNON is a senior at Simmons College in Boston, majoring in women and gender studies and minoring in social justice and economics. She is currently studying in Chile, in a program in education and social change.

STEPHANIE STOUMBELIS attends Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. She thinks Minnesota is great and thinks everyone should stop hating. She is an American studies major with a minor in women's, gender, and sexuality studies.

2007

SARAH ERICSON studies at Fitchburg State College, where she has worked as a math tutor. Sarah has also spent time in Haiti doing service work, most recently in July 2008.

CHARLIE KATEBI is studying economics at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. For three weeks in winter 2009, he traveled to China.

JOCELYNE MACDONALD is a junior at the University of New England in Biddeford, Maine, majoring in athletic training and studying physical therapy. Her current clinical rotation is at Westbrook High School. She spends a lot of time sailing, and is president of the college's sailing club. Jocelyne loves living near the ocean: At school, she lives across the street from the beach; and during the past two summers, she worked on Martha's Vineyard as a nanny for four kids.

SHANNON STOCKWELL attends Hampshire College in Amherst, MA. She is majoring in theater, with an emphasis on playwriting and literature.

JUSTINE POIRIER is a junior at Bryant University in Smithfield, RI, majoring in marketing with a double minor in legal studies and human resource management. Justine has maintained dean's list status and works for the office of

admissions, coordinating 90 "student ambassadors" and planning various events. Last winter she traveled with the university to Munich, Germany, where she had a wonderful visit with Heidi Kulik, then toured in Germany and Greece. She has held summer internships at Cisco Systems and JCSI Recruiting.

2008

ZACHARY ALLEN attends Warren Wilson College in Asheville, North Carolina, where he plans to major in psychology. This past summer he worked on the college's tech crew. He is learning how to play the fiddle.

ANASTASIA DOLPH attends St. Michael's College in Vermont, where she plans a double major in political science and history. She belongs to the ski team.

MELINDA HARVEY studies math and elementary education at Middlebury College, with a minor in Portuguese. She plans to study in Angola in spring 2011.

JULIA STEVENS spent one semester at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, but now attends Framingham State College and lives at home. She is majoring in English, with a writing concentration.

MICHAEL WHITE is majoring in computer science at Tufts University. He enjoys being nocturnal.



GRADUATES AND FAMILIES!

Please send news and photos of what Parker alums are doing. Email rkane@parker.org or call Rebecca Kane at 978-772-2566.

Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School
Theodore R. Sizer Teachers Center
49 Antietam Street
Devens, MA 01434

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From the Board Chair

Dear Parker community,

As many of you may have heard by now, Principal Teri Schrader announced in September that this will be her last year at Parker. How fortunate we've been to have had an educator of Teri's caliber leading our school during its most formative years.

The Parker that Teri leaves behind is thriving, with a remarkably talented team of teachers and staff, a firm commitment to the Ten Common Principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools, exemplary academics, healthy finances, a permanent home, and more families on the waiting list than we could ever hope to accommodate.



Please be assured that the board is placing utmost priority on finding a school leader well able to lead Parker during its next decade. We're confident that Parker's national reputation will put us in a position to choose exactly the right person to fill this role.

Teri has led Parker with passion and skill for nearly a decade, and the school shines. When you next see her, or if you have a chance to drop a note, please don't forget to say thank you.

Anne G. Perkins
Chair, Parker Board of Trustees

The Parker Way

FALL 2009

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Editorial Director: Kathleen Cushman

Managing Editor: Rebecca Kane

Contributors to this issue: Kathleen Cushman, Katrina Folger, Rebecca Kane, Anne G. Perkins, Teri Schrader.

Please send news and photos to rkane@parker.org. For ongoing news and information, visit Parker's web site, www.parker.org.