



THE FACULTY CORNER

FROM THE ANACAPA SCHOOL ENGLISH DEPARTMENT . . .

Anacapa students have been working hard to finish up the year in their English classes. In April after Spring Break, Laura Mercaldo joined the school to substitute for Beth Wirth, who is on maternity leave. The students “bonded” instantly with Laura, who is offering challenging work in fun and creative ways.

Laura is teaching both of the Lower School English classes. The students have been studying *Macbeth* and are using the Classic Comic edition, which has the original text of the play accompanied by drawings. The students are loving it! Lines from the play, like “Double, double, toil and trouble,” echo from the classroom. These students are also reading *Three Cups of Tea*, the inspiring tale of how one man, Greg Mortenson, builds schools in Pakistan after being cared for in the tiny Pakistani village of Korphe after almost freezing to death descending from a climb up one of the world’s highest mountains. This is a wonderful story for students because they learn life lessons, information on the culture of the region, and how one man can make a positive contribution to the lives of many.

Both Peggy’s and Laura’s Upper School students are studying *Macbeth* in the standard form. One of Shakespeare’s great tragedies, it has some of the most admired passages in all the plays. While students are puzzling over the cryptic predictions of the witches and following Macbeth’s relentless drive toward his own downfall, they are also studying the aspects of formal poetry and how to enjoy the elegance and beauty of Shakespeare’s language. They enjoy taking roles and reading the parts of the various characters.

Upper Schoolers are also reading one of the all-time student favorites, *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut. High school students never fail to be intrigued by Vonnegut’s experimental style, his unforgettable characters, and the esoteric ideas of time and reality the author asks them to contemplate. Who wouldn’t be entertained by a book that has aliens from the planet Tralfamador who look like toilet plungers? The book’s main character, Billy Pilgrim, survives the fire-bombing of Dresden by allied forces when he is a prisoner of war in Germany during World War II. Readers are asked by Vonnegut to contemplate some pretty difficult ethical questions based on this event at the same time they are reading about Billy’s comic adventures on Tralfamador.

On April 22nd, eight members of the Advanced Placement Literature class attended a luncheon and lecture as guests of the Santa Barbara Literary Society. In preparation for this event, the class read *The Legend of Colton H. Bryant*, by Alexandra Fuller. We had the distinct pleasure of having a private session with the author. Besides talking about her writing, Ms Fuller asked the students about their concerns and values. During the luncheon, students had the opportunity to converse with some of the Literary Society members and enjoy Ms. Fuller’s lecture to the Society. (See our class’s photo and brief write-up on Facebook: www.facebook.com/anacapaschool.)

As always, Anacapa students are working hard, thinking a lot, and enjoying the challenges offered them. Anacapa English teachers are having a wonderful time working with such fine young people.

~~ Peggy Lauer, Laura Mercaldo, and Beth Wirth