

Parkmont News

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 1

FALL 2003

Swamp Ecology

By Wendel Landes

Two months after the conclusion of the Upper School trip to Okefenokee Swamp and long after finally washing the dirt and grime from our bodies, a student was talking to me about a movie and was visibly excited that she had identified a Bald Cypress tree from it. She knew instantly that the movie must have been set in some wet, soggy place in the South. While it may not sound

Nika Phillips, Ariel Silver, Nikki Gross, Bricanna Jordan, and Astryd Luna enjoy a tour of the swamp in a motor boat.

like a remarkable moment—remembering the name of a tree—to me it was a sign that our reading, traveling, and exploration had indeed penetrated the more mundane part of a teenager's experience. As a teacher, what more can you ask for?

In an effort to bring some diversity to our study of ecology at Parkmont, we have rotated through a number of ecological topics in the past several years. We have found ourselves in the Smoky Mountains, the Everglades, on the coast of the Carolinas, and this year in the swamps of the southeast.

The major stops on our swamp tour last April were Great Dismal Swamp, Merchant's Millpond, Congaree Swamp National Monument, and Okefenokee Swamp. We also covered some serious distance in a heavily loaded van, making stops in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. In each location our goal was to see for ourselves the variety of swamp and wetland habitat and identify the unique features of each location.

Consider for a moment that one hundred years ago the concept of *continued on page 3*



Fall 2003

Dear Parkmont and Somerset Families and Friends,

The month of September has become a more anxious one for those of us in Washington. At Parkmont we're always ready to be back in school and start another year of adventures. And on the outside we're trying to figure out what happens next after bombings, snipers, and now hurricanes. We are now off and running, and grateful for being minimally disrupted by Isabel. This newsletter recaptures some of our school activities since last winter and also includes our Annual Report of charitable giving.

This summer was a particularly agreeable one for me personally as I took my family to places in California that I'd first visited 41 years ago on a 66 day summer excursion with my teacher parents. And in doing so I was reminded of where my penchant for traveling and camping began and why it's always been such an important part of what we do at Parkmont. In 1962, the 45 days we spent in national parks were tightly budgeted at \$10 a day (this didn't cover gas, which we paid for with a new invention at the time—a gasoline credit card), which I at 13 recorded every penny of when I wasn't helping with the map reading. It was a bit daunting to see how quickly one can drop the equivalent of our '62 summer's expense in just a couple of days in Yosemite by throwing in a rock-climbing class or a raft trip. But thrilling none-the-less to see again how remarkably beautiful much of this country is and that it's available to us at little expense if we're willing to drive a bit and sleep under the stars. Parkmont students have been doing the same for years as they visit the Okefenokee (last spring) and Everglades (this winter) and other sites near and far in our adventuring.

We did spend 3 hours in Nevada this summer, not enough time to interview any of the 2,195 students that the Post reported in June would not be graduating because of their failure to pass statewide literacy exams, even though in a number of cases they had all their credits and college acceptances lined up. It's a better and better time to be an independent school, with an under funded Leave No Child Behind initiative driving more and more high stakes testing (what higher stake for an 18 year old than to work hard throughout high school and find that you can't get through the math exam, regardless of what you've done—an exam that any amateur in the area of learning differences knows will not be an equitable challenge for any number of perfectly intelligent human beings). The number of students in the same predicament in Florida is 13,000. These are kids who stayed in school and want to be educated. Their younger siblings may not.

At Parkmont we remain grateful for the opportunity we have to adjust the height of the hurdle as needed, knowing that in the country with the greatest range of educational opportunities in the world, there is always another learning opportunity for anyone who's motivated. Algebra proficiency may go up as a result of more statewide testing; so will dropout rates. It was pleasing to read recently about Bill Gates's recent contributions to N.Y.C. to create small college-preparatory high schools. Researchers have figured out how to confirm what Parkmont and Somerset families have always known intuitively—that small schools provide personalized learning, increased student achievement, engaged communities of parents, teachers, and students working toward common goals, and more equitable learning environments for the economically less advantaged. And teachers in small schools know they make a difference and it inspires them.
<http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Education>

Bill Gates hasn't yet donated anything to Parkmont yet, but many of you have and you'll find within these pages another reading of the generosity that has been directed our way. Parkmont has raised more than \$1.2 million in support since Christy Ross took over the development office 10 years ago. We've given out more than \$1.5 million in financial aid during that period. We've got a delightful home, almost paid for, and the most experienced staff we've ever had, and so many of you, with gifts of time, money, and supervision, are a part of our success as we venture forth in our 32nd year.

Thank you all for being on our side.



Ron McClain, Director



The group listens intently to instructions for canoeing before exploring Merchant's Millpond, NC.

have had several decades of conservation behind us and can now find these wooded wetlands regaining some of their former range.

The real draw of Okefenokee is the alligators, some 10,000 make their home in the 400,000 acre National Wildlife Refuge. It probably sounds strange to most people and it surely was frightening to my students, but our plan was to see this alligator infested wilderness while seated a few inches off the surface of the water in canoes. On four separate occasions we paddled among alligators and with each successive occasion, students actually became more and more comfortable with the idea that they were sharing space with a large predator. While no one is likely to believe this until they actually see it, alligators are in fact very shy creatures and swim for cover at the smallest sign of human presence - that is, if they are not sitting in a really prime sun-bathing location and thus less inclined to move. In any case, the thought of a large-toothed critter lurking somewhere under water and maybe even under your own canoe is never too reassuring.

After several days visiting nature centers, listening to speakers and

studying a swamp would have been laughable, that is unless you happened to be studying routes for removing virgin timber or plans for canals to drain what was considered useless space. In fact, one hundred years ago would have already been too late in most cases. There simply were not real swamps to study in 1903. They had been logged and drained in devastating fashion using the new metallic beasts of the industrial age, the railroads, and the much more primitive tool of fire. Fortunately for us, we

Canoeing among the Bald Cypress of Merchant's Millpond.



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Ron McClain, **Head of School**

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Inquiries should be directed to the Development Office.

Christy Halvorson Ross, **Editor**

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doing day hikes, we set off on a two-day canoe trip toward the interior of Okefenokee Swamp. To this point our forays had mainly been limited to the safe perimeter of the swamp, but this trip would take us eight miles into the wilderness. Considering that there are over 100 miles of canoe trails in the swamp, ours was still a modest endeavor.

After carefully loading tents, sleeping bags, food, cooking pots, and everything else needed for a comfortable night in the swamp, we began paddling down a wide canoe trail on the eastern side of the refuge used in the 1920's for excavating peat from the swamp. The peat was then dried and prepared for sale as fuel in the very parking lot from which we launched our canoes. The economics of the peat trade were never very lucrative and the wide, deep trail that was dredged for peat slowly narrowed until only one canoe could pass at a time.

The landscape around us was predominately wet prairie with grasses and small shrubs that yielded vast views of the swamp. Cypress domes dotted the vista and the chorus of frog noises was ever-present. One of the most fascinating features of Okefenokee and the reason for its name is its floating islands. As peat slowly decomposes on the bottom of the swamp, methane gas accumulates in pockets that eventually push large pieces of peat to the surface. Grasses,

shrubs, then even trees eventually grow on the floating mass of peat. In their mature form, the floating islands can support the weight of a person wobbling back and forth.

Our canoe trail was not billed as a haven for alligators. The highest concentration of alligators was found on the west side of the refuge where the wet prairies gave way to forests and larger lakes. Most students were able to find some security in this fact and were by now accustomed to encountering alligators silently sliding into the water as we approached. Nonetheless,



Above left: Meal preparation was one of the daily assignments for students on the trip. Above Right: Everyone enjoyed the clear, but cold waters of Itchetucknee Springs, FL. Below: Group discussion on the conclusions of our water testing in Congaree Swamp, SC.



Group photo following canoe trip. Back row from left: Wendel Landes, Nika Phillips, Bricanna Jordan, Sean Hunter, Nikki Gross, Andrew Hanawalt, Astryd Luna, Elias Kennedy, Phil Christiano. Front Row: Andrew Goldstrom, Ariel Silver.

we did encounter some small alligators in the first eight miles.

In Okefenokee, terra firma is a rarity. While dozens of so-called islands dot the refuge and were at one time inhabited by Native Americans or the hardy swamper of the early 20th century, most of the camping in the swamp is done on large wooden platforms that sit three feet off or so above the water. After coaxing and cajoling several weary individuals and paddling through a large open lake, we found our platform at around 3:00 pm. After tying our canoes and unloading the gear, most collapsed on their sleeping pads and slept. Life on a 20 x 20 foot platform with ten teenagers could potentially pose a challenge to the group and to the sanity of a teacher. Ours, however, was a group that always remained in good spirits and was quick to pitch a hand when necessary.

Canoeing among the Bald Cypress of Merchant's Millpond.



The rest of the day was spent resting, playing cards, setting-up tents, and preparing dinner. Following a well-deserved dinner and the official arrival of a swarm of mosquitoes, several students and I paddled back to the large open lake to spot alligators by flashlight. The sky was immacu-

lately clear and the sounds of the frogs, which at this point were simply unnoticed background noise, were punctuated by the hoots of Barred owls calling back and forth. Other than their general reptilian predatory character, the most eerie aspect of an alligator is their eyes at night. With a flashlight, from up to 200 yards away, we were able to spot the glowing orange globes of an alligator's eyes amongst the vegetation on the perimeter of the lake. With all possible stealth we paddled as near as possible before they gently dropped beneath the surface of the water. We spotted seven alligators in the lake that night and enjoyed a moment of quiet wonder so rare in the lives of city dwellers.

The next morning we slept in a little, and then reloaded the canoes for the eight-mile return trip. There was a not so subtle motivator pulsing beneath the group's focused and efficient effort to pack and paddle that day. They were now intently focused upon a different type of destination: a seafood restaurant, a warm shower, a bed, and a hotel television. They had completed what they had set out to do. They had experienced the swamp in a way that could never have been done from the confines of the classroom and were now due a good dose of some of the finer things in life. ●



Poetry at Parkmont

By Nijole Gedutis

Springtime has inspired poets for ages, so it's no surprise that Spring 2003 was, once again, the time to celebrate poetry here at Parkmont. On Saturday, May 3, Parkmont hosted its 21st annual Poetry Festival. Students from all over DC submitted poems, and 40 of them showed up to share their winning pieces with a packed audience of friends, family, teachers and poets. Four Parkmont Upper School students were finalists—Norman Daniels (grade 9), Miriam Doyle (10), Andrew Hanawalt (9), and Maddie Collins (9). Please enjoy their poems below!

Just a few days later, we held the second annual Parkmont Coffee House. We filled the commons with students, families and teachers who were all there to share and hear poetry. From Lauren Daniels'(6) reading of some Shel Silverstein pieces, to Kim Schraf's hilarious recital of "Did I Miss Anything?" by Tom Wayman, to Astryd Luna (12) sharing her own piece about Guatemala, the evening was another fun and inspiring celebration of poetry.



Celebrating Poetry at the Festival are, from left to right, Miriam Doyle, Ron McClain, Abby Kabaker, Andrew Hanawalt, Rachel Lande, Maddie Collins, and Abby Ferensten (front).



Eighth grader Thomas Hailey and author (and Parkmont English teacher) Nijole Gedutis at the Parkmont Poetry Festival.

The Irish Church

By Miriam Doyle

You were once mighty, and venerable.
Kings worshipped the Christian God in you,
While at the same time secretly placating
 their old pagan gods.
Monks spent their lives in you to worship the
 glory of God.
Who believes in you now?
You were once a tower of strength.
Now pigeon droppings lie on your altar,
And cigarette butts lie scattered in your crypts,
Along with the ashes of martyrs and bishops
 and heretics.
You once had the highest prestige in the land,
And it is gone.
You will never get it back,
Because people's faith is gone.
Who believes in you now?

Darkness

By Norman Daniels

I see darkness it sees me it makes me feel
Down it makes me real angry I feel evil I
Want to destroy I want to cause corruption
I fall into a pit a real deep pit it gets hotter
And hotter until I melt I turn into a monster
I kill my foes I squash my foes I make them
Suffer I get revenge I get revenge I laugh and
Then I get silent as a mute for them I feel guilty
I weep I weep at the slaughter that took place
Through my hate

Spreading My Wings

By Maddie Collins

Spreading my Wings
I fly high and hear
The Angels sing
They sing in such
Beautiful harmony
The sweet taste of the Sun
Dances on my back
But when darkness falls
The dance of the
Moon and Stars
Begins
The fairies and the Elves
Come and Join in
They dance along
They dance and dance when the sun
Awakens once again
They sleep
Again
I spread my Wings
And hear the
Angels sing

Former Parkmont teacher Sharan Strange (center) came back to emcee the Poetry Festival. Here she stands with teachers Nijole and Kim Schraf and Parkmont students.

Forced Poem

By Andrew Hanawalt

This poem is a forced poem.
I never wanted to do this.
Expressing my feelings,
I don't have feelings
That I feel like expressing.

You think I'm joking
Ask the man on the moon who tried
To question me.
Or ask Nijole, my English teacher
Who made me sit down and do this forced poem.

I'm an okay writer
You can probably say.
I write poems that I never wanted to write.
Do you like to sit around
Writing a poem that no one will ever notice?

Computer, Computer, Computer

I love to go on a computer.
I like to play games
On my computer.
I write for school on a computer.
I wrote this poem on a computer
That I never use.
To write a poem on a computer
You'd think I would have a muse
To write this wonderful poem.
I'll let you decide if I have a muse.



The Yucatan 2003

By Michelle Banks

During session four, ten Parkmont students traveled through Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula for eleven days on a trip led by Nijole Gedutis and Michelle Banks. The trip was part of the Latin American History class and the students visited pre-Columbian ruins, colonial era cities, fishing villages and a wildlife reserve. Here are some of their observations:

1/30/03

For the past two days, I've anticipated this trip. Now, I'm sitting on the plane in seat 17a. Seems like these last two days have taken a year. I've packed, prepared, and bided my time and now time is almost standing still. I know this trip is going to be fun. I've already met someone famous. Mr. Marion Barry himself. We met him while waiting in line to board the plane.

1/31/03

I woke up at 7:00 this morning to the sound of LOUD BIRDS!!! To be honest, I was too tired to even get dressed, but everything started to look up when I had breakfast. ...When we got to Chichen Itza, I didn't find the pyramid to be that intimidating, but when we started to climb up, I got a little nervous. Then when I reached the climax it kinda caught me. I'm not scared of heights or anything, it's just that I zone out a bit when I peek over edges. It was one of the most BEAUTIFUL things I've ever seen. It was really amazing to see how many stones they used. What interested me most was how they got the actual temple on top of the pyramid. Chichen Itza was a place that I won't forget...

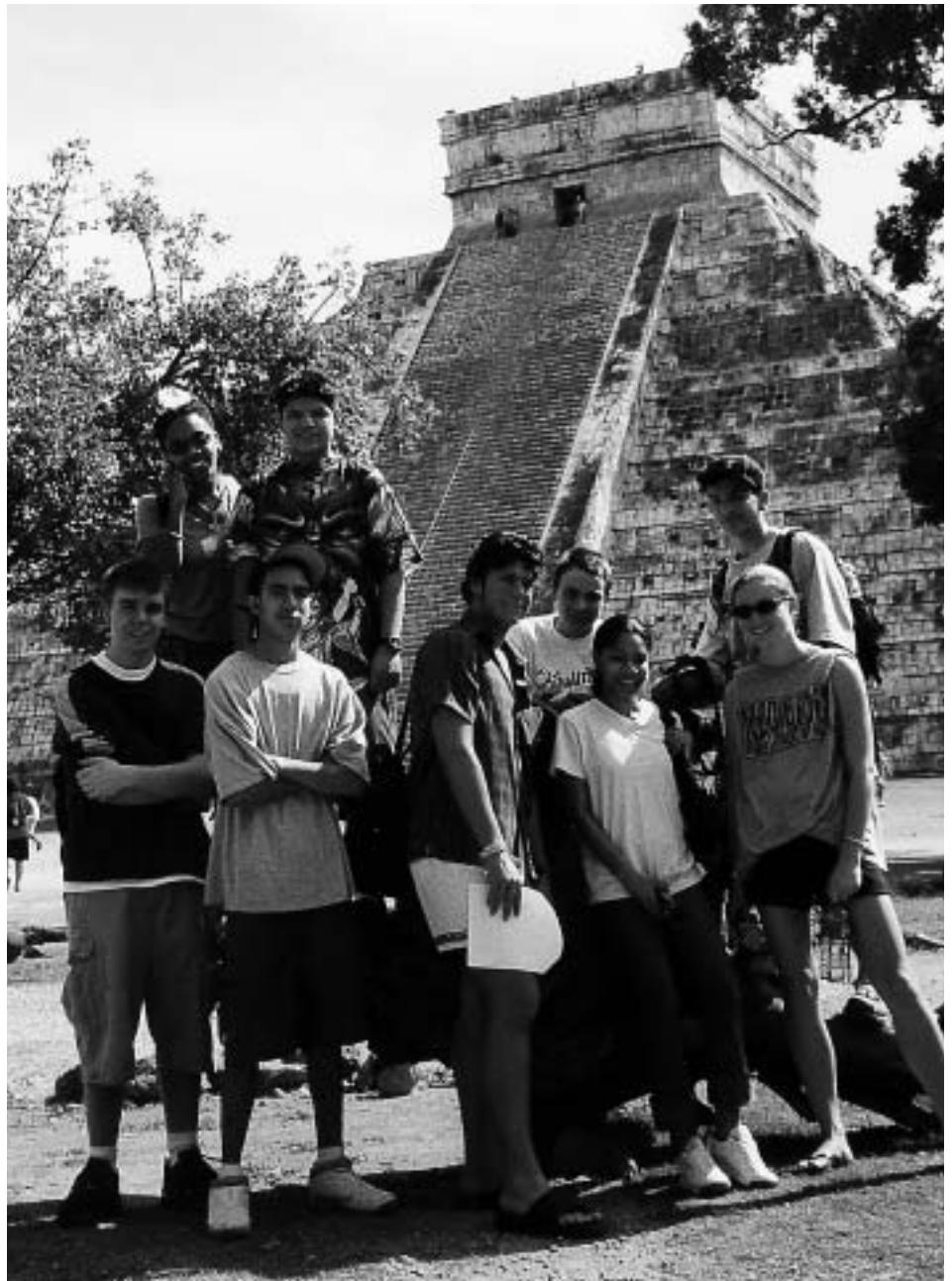
...then we went into this cave, I was wondering where we were going to swim, then I saw the water; I was amazed when I saw it. Then we got in the water...it was pretty cold, but it felt good. Joey and I decided to

climb some roots so that we could jump off this little cliff. We did it twice and decided to jump off a bigger one. When we got there we got pretty scared, but the only way down was to jump off. Joey went first, I was scared, but I did it. I thought that I was in the air for about 5 minutes, but it was more like a second or two. It was scary, but fun...

2/1/03

People here are so much nicer than they are in America. I would so move here, it would be tight.

I feel so cool being in Mexico. It is neat that this country borders us, but it is so different. Right now, I am sitting by myself. Tourists keep looking at me as if I am a native or something; I don't even look like a Mexican.



Students studying the history and culture of Latin America here are at the pyramid of Chichen Itza on the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico.

The whole no flushing toilet paper thing is not working for me. I always forget...I remember at the last minute.

2/2/03

...Fifty pesos? Good lord that's a lot of money! Well to say the least, the monetary system is going to take some getting used to...

Okay it hit me, I'm not in the States. I don't know how to act. I haven't been on a vacation in two years and that was to Florida (wooppy—doo!) Today was okay. When we went to the church, I felt a stronger presence than at my own church. It kind of freaked me out, so I just stood still. It was kind of a good



Above: Shana Hargrove and Jake Goodman on a nature walk in Celestun, on the west coast of the Yucatan, where they also observed a flock of flamingos. Left: Michelle and Shana taking a rest on a long climb down from the Kukulcan pyramid.



feeling though. It's the feeling I should have when I go inside of a church.

Today was the best! I think that this will be the high point of the trip. Merida is the place to be. When I got there, I just got this very good vibe that it would be a lot of fun and I was right. First, the hotel was dope. It had this cool dark jungle type atmosphere. On Sunday, Merida has all of this ill street music and dancing, and vendors, merchants; you name it. Merida at night is the dopest place to be. There was music on every corner and it was so live. LIVE! So, we are out talking to girls, when I see this girl with a couple of friends. So I say to myself, hey self, this a good time to go practice your Spanish. Long story short, they spoke perfect English, lived in California, they're sisters, and they're down here in school for six months...

I thought Valladolid was nice, but Merida is bigger and much livelier and it brings up your mood. The people here are even nicer than Valladolid. At dinner, I got served a Spanish menu and everyone else got an English one...points for me!

continued on next page

Breaking open coconuts in Tulum, the Yucatan's east coast.



Teacher Michelle Banks points out design features in the architecture at Chichen Itza.



Thomas Meagher and Jermie Castro in the caves of Loltun.



2/3/03

...The road again...we hit Celestun around 3:00. This place is alright. Our hotel is on the beach, which is cool, a real Jimmy Buffet type of town; it's nice. There was an amazing sunset, probably the first one I've seen in seven years...

2/4/03

Today we woke up early to go see the flamingos. They were cool. I was amazed when I saw them because I had never been that close to them.

I will admit that I'm a little ready to go home. I am having fun and I've seen so much already, but I feel like I've seen enough and can go home. I still appreciate the things that I've seen.

2/6/03

Twelve days is a long time to be with the same people 24/7...

2/7/03

Four o'clock in the morning was nuts! When I heard you say that we had to wake up at 4:00a.m. I thought you were crazy. But it wasn't that bad, I slept most of the morning except when Joey was taking up the whole seat and I had to make sure that I didn't fall off.

2/8/03

Well we are finally on the Caribbean. I'm lying in a hammock, which is pretty relaxing. Tulum to me is very relaxing. This is me. I'm kind of sick of people defining whether or not a city is interesting based on how many people they see. I think they are confused. This is a class trip, not a vacation. It's for experience not for pleasure. Although I will admit, my pleasure is all here in Tulum.

2/9/03

On the last day, finally we have a hot shower...

I am happy that I got to see the "real" Mexico, not the "fake" Mexico (Cancun, Cozumel, Acapulco, etc...).

2/10/03

When we left Cancun, there was the prettiest view from the plane. You could see the bottom of the ocean. I'M SO GLAD TO BE HOME! Oooo, McDonald's, the best thing ever invented. The fries and double cheeseburger were sooo good! We're back in DC! YEAH! BOO! ●

Parkmont's Fantastic Silent Auction

By Cille Kennedy, 2003 Auction co-chair and mother of Elias, grade 10

Rumor has it that it was a great success! Great food, great company, great decorations, great items, great fund-raising! Let us not be Silent about this Auction!

On April 26th, our Silent Auction raised over \$12,000 toward computer equipment and financial aid fund for Parkmont—the most money any single fundraising event has raised for the school. We were thrilled to have such success, especially since it was so much fun.

This year's Silent Auction was notable in the wide array of items available for bidding. All of the vacations went like hotcakes, along with the sports and recreation, restaurants, goods and services, and entertainment! We think the baskets were the biggest hit among a group of superlatives! It was fun to watch the bidding wars escalate as time arrived to close out the auction. It wasn't even a problem that the food was so delicious and diverse that we had to remind people to go upstairs and bid!

Some thanks are very much in order. There was a special esprit de corps (though I think properly an esprit de coeur) among all those who participated in making the evening—and the process leading up to it—so wonderful! First, let's thank the staff. Robin provided the impetus by calling all of last year's donors and lining up nearly half of the items before any of us even thought to convene a meeting

to get organized! She calmly explained that it was easy and do-able. She undertook all this while Christy was still on maternity leave and her own schedule was full to the brim. When Christy returned, slim and trim already (how did she do that?), she smoothly coordinated with Robin, creating a seamless, competent combination of support and leadership to the parent volunteer committee chairs.

The Committee Chairs could not have been a more enthusiastic, creative and hardworking group of parent volunteers! Where to start? Alphabetically? Okay:

Bartending: Paul Meagher provided and poured all the wine and other drinks. Not only did he donate them, but also he schlepped everything up to the landing and back down again. He was 'on duty' the whole time. Thank you, Paul. Clean up: Nicole Manley headed up a team of workers who were so efficient that the job was done easily and quickly. Her spirit made it enticing for people to pitch in—and many did! Only an occasional twinkle of glittering confetti betrayed the festivities that had taken place. Decorating and set-up: Sharon Hess, capably aided by Ray Nunez, turned the school into a fantasyland for us. Sharon brought armloads of fresh flowers, atmospheric lighting, and swiftly set it all in place, absolutely transforming Parkmont for the evening. Event Organization: Andrea Kline had an incredible sense

Save the Date!

The 2004 Silent Auction will be held on Saturday, April 3rd from 7-9 p.m.

of how things should flow when people walked in the door, needed admission and raffle tickets, and needed to check out. She set up the master plan and staffed the tables to see that things ran smoothly. Food: Ingrid Goldstrom and Linda Black organized the most varied and delicious spread. They have a wonderful knack of getting parents to bring in ample delicacies! Jackie Parker, Master Shopper, found us a spring-theme color scheme for our paper products, candles for ambiance, and delicate lighting for the stairway to entice people upstairs. Special thanks to Jackie for being one of the two Silent Auction Parent Co-Chairs. Her expertise, sense of organization, boundless energy, and willingness to shop relentlessly, are without equal. Thanks, Jackie.

As you can see, these are only the Committee Chairs. Each Chair was supported by parents willing to volunteer their time, energy, and donations to make this evening the success it was. We are extremely grateful to you all. The Silent Auction really could not have been possible without your help.

We are so enthused that we have already started planning where to expand, where to cut back, and how to streamline for next year. Would you like fewer phone calls next year? Do you want to join us? We would love to have your help!

Editor's Note: We would be remiss not to mention the hard work, true dedication, and happy help of above author, co-chair Cille Kennedy! She brought her inspiring energy and enthusiasm, high aspirations, and devoted support of Parkmont to the auction and contributed HEAPS to the event's success. Many thanks!!! All of us are excited to work with you again next year. ●

Memorandum

To: Parkmont Parents, Students, and Employees
From: Ron McClain
Subject: Notification of Asbestos Management Policy

In accordance with Environmental Protection Agency Regulation, C.F. ss763.93(g)(4) and ss7763.84, this is to give notice that the Parkmont Asbestos Management Plan documents are maintained in the office of the Head of School and are available for inspection at any time upon request.

For your further information, the management plan was established in 1988. Our most recent EPA reinspection was conducted in July 2002 by Jenkins Environmental, Inc. Reinspections occur every three years.

Should you have any questions or wish to review the Management Plan, please contact Ron McClain at 202.726.0740.

Photographs from the Middle School Assateague Beach Trip, June 2003



Ben Buchbinder on his boogie board



Devon Watson on the beach at Assateague



Parkmont's Middle School beach goers

The Somerset Reunion held at Parkmont on May 17th

Letter posted on the Somerset listserve on May 18th, 2003, from Llyn Peabody, Somerset Class of 1980

Hello Everyone,

We had fun last night at Parkmont. There were about 15-20 people.

Yummy food in abundance and, after chatting in small groups for awhile, we formed a "School Meeting" circle and took turns sharing about what Somerset had meant to us, or reminiscing favorite memories. It was a warm, rich sharing. I'd say that the theme of the communications (if there was one) was that people appreciated the love they felt in the Somerset community and that many of us really had a door opened in terms of getting

confidence about speaking in groups and saying what's on our mind (sometimes with mixed results :-).

Today many people will gather at Mike Weaver's for a barbeque—though they'll need scuba gear if they're going to hang outside much...I'm headed on the road in a few minutes to drive to NC where I'm going to be trained, and then lead an 18 day expedition with a group of teenagers with ADD/ADHD. Backpacking, rockclimbing, rafting, Mt. Biking and caving. Should be quite the adventure!

Love, Llyn

Parkmont and Somerset Alumni and their Parents!

We are trying to update our database with current addresses of our alumni.

Please take a moment to help us get up to date. Look at your address label on this newsletter. If you are receiving a newsletter with your child's name on it, or if your child is not receiving our materials directly, then would you please drop us an email or call us with their updated information? We'd love to get back in touch! Many thanks.

Please contact: Christy Halvorson Ross, cross@parkmont.org or 202.726.6140

Parkmont Alumni News

Austin Browne (1981) has been married for fifteen years and has three wonderful boys. He's an engineer at the largest fire department in California and has been working there for seven years. His wife is currently in cosmetology school. They live in San Diego. Austin would love to get in touch with anyone from his era. His email address is fyrmanvc72@pacbell.net.

Hasani Issa (1993), formerly Jeff Wilburn, appeared in Ten Short Pieces by Robert O'Hara: "Booty Candy" at the Kraine Theater in New York City this past February.

Betsy Miller, mother of **Josh and Matt Gruenberg**, wrote in with all of their good news: Josh (1989) is a senior software designer, aka "architect", for Microsoft in Redmond Washington—he's on the project spearheading the new "nanny" project, and lives in his own home in Kirkland, Washington. (He graduated from Reed College, '97 majored in math, and wrote his senior thesis on artificial intelligence.)

He spends much of his free time on the golf course, reading science fiction, and decorating with his girlfriend.

Matt (1987) just completed his first semester of law school (4th in his class!) at Thomas Jefferson Law School in San Diego, and was recently interviewed by "Juris" magazine for the fall issue—revealing his secrets of success. (He graduated from the University of Colorado, Boulder, '01 majored in journalism, and wrote his senior thesis on privacy and the internet.) He worked first as a loan officer, and then as an assistant for a former Boulder County District Attorney, before heading to law school. He hopes to intern for a judge next summer. This summer he's sea-kayaking two blocks from his home in La Jolla, and of course playing soccer.

{I maintain that it's Ron McClain's tolerance and good humor during those nasty turbulent years, which help create good citizens! (BTW...Neither Josh or Matt think that anything but their own talents have gotten them where they are! I know better.)}

Rachel Tyner (1999) was married to Jamison David Leech in D.C. in August. She graduated from Rollins College last spring. Many congratulations, Rachel!

Aaron Wiseman (2000), a rising sophomore at Syracuse University, earned a place on the spring-semester's dean's list. He is majoring in social work at the College of Human Services, and Health Professions.

Katie Wohlford (2003) is attending Warren Wilson College and loves it. She's already thinking about going to graduate school to get a masters degree in music performance, composition or education.

Michael Hopkins (2004) recently completed Syracuse University's six-week Summer College program on the law. Former teacher **Sandra Miller** eloped with her beau David Lau on August 20th. She is an Assistant Professor at the University of Iowa. She and David are also starting an experimental press.

Somerset Alumni News

Beth Keegan (1978) wrote in with lots of news: "I'm living in Portland, Oregon. I'm self-employed, work at home for a company that publishes bibliographies, and also do some freelance business writing. I have a 19-year-old daughter, Erika, who's just finished her first year at St. Lawrence University in Canton, NY. I'm in a writing class at a place called Mountain Writers Center and I'm going to start an internship there promoting events and writing press releases and whatnot.

I run into **Sue and Llyn Peabody** every couple of years, Sue lives in nearby Vancouver, Washington. It was great seeing Llyn at Sweat Your Prayers ecstatic dance in Portland at the beginning of her cross-country trip."

And of course **Nancy Mack**, also of Somerset's second graduating class, lives about 3 blocks away. She's an accountant, married with two teenagers, Megan and Andrew. Her brother **Ken Mack**, also a Somerset graduate, was in town recently with his wife to commemorate Nancy and Ken's father's passing. We all

attended one of Andrew's many plays at his arts magnet middle school.

Liz Edmondson (1981) also wrote in: "A quick snapshot of my life: My husband, Jose, my two kids, Tucker (6 1/2), and Chloe (4) and I live in Silver Spring, MD. Jose's a Landscape architect, and I'm a busy at-home mom. Life is incredibly hectic now...was it like this when we were kids? (Probably not). I'm gearing up to launch back into the work force once Chloe's in kindergarten, but in the meantime, I take Irish dance classes, perform and compete a little, read as much as I can and stay involved in the kids' schools.

I have so many wonderful memories of my "Somerset years," for it was there that things shifted for me considerably (for the better). I credit the trips, amazing teachers and even the scholarship hikes, as some of the highlights for me. School meetings were always quite entertaining! I learned a lot about democracy, public speaking and humility from them.

Bill Lynch (1977) also had a posting on the Somerset Listserve. "Currently I'm still in NYC with my Shain (we got married in '97) and our 5 cats. She's a dancer and Artistic Director of her own dance company (she does Duncan choreography) and I'm doing documentaries (started a DV production company aka Canon XL1S and Final Cut Pro 3 with a Mac G4). Our 5 cats are physio-therapists.

I'm happy to say that after 17 years at ABC and ABC News, I can NOT have to be involved in keeping up with this Gulf War. Otherwise, no fargin comment [and don't] get me started....

Manhattan is still fun and summer is soon to be here so I hope to be able to see you all before the Washington heat settles in."

Please send in YOUR alumni news! We'd love to hear from you! Please send all correspondence to Christy Hakvorson Ross, Director of Development, at cross@parkmont.org or to Parkmont School, 4842 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20011.

ANNUAL REPORT

2 0 0 2 - 2 0 0 3

Total Support

\$111,648.00

Many thanks to our donors in 2002-3! As always, we are so grateful to have the generous support of so many of our families, staff, alumni, friends, auction donors, and internship sponsors. All of your help really does make a tremendous difference to Parkmont.

This year we were excited by the growth of our Annual Fund, our Auction, and our Building Campaign. We had our largest-ever auction, which you can read more about in Cille Kennedy's article in the newsletter on page 11. Thanks to the help of our co-chairs, volunteers, and many donors, we raised close to \$13,000 for the school, which was 44% more than last year! Our Building Fund reached the public phase of its campaign last year, and got us \$6,890 closer to reaching our \$400,000 goal (we

have only about \$90,000 left to go!).

We were also pleased by the generous help of a number of foundations. The D.C. Commission on the Arts & Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts once again supported the 21st Annual Poetry Festival. The Children's Fund of Metropolitan Washington (previously the German Orphan Home Foundation) helped fund our Support Services program. And the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation generously assisted a number of students on financial aid at Parkmont.

2003-4 will be another exciting year at Parkmont, and we are looking forward to being in touch with a number of you over the course of the year. A heartfelt thanks for the generosity of each and every one of you in 2002-3!

Gifts for Current Operations

Annual Giving	61,983.00
Auction/Yard Sale	12,850.00
The Parkmont Poetry Festival	2,500.00
The Parkmont Somerset Financial Aid Fund	24,425.00
Support Services	3,000.00
Total Current Year Support	\$104,758.00

Gifts for Capital Purposes

The Building Fund	\$6,890.00
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Total Voluntary Support

\$111,648.00

THANK YOU!

Ways to Give to The Parkmont School

Cash or check

- These gifts are immediately available for use at Parkmont.
- Gifts may be unrestricted or restricted to special projects or funds.
- Donations may be made with a Visa or Mastercard.

Securities

- Appreciated stocks or bonds can be donated to Parkmont and can be deducted at full market value on the date of transfer.

Matching Gifts

- More than 1,000 employers will match donations made to Parkmont.
- You can obtain matching gift forms from the personnel office of your employer.



Upper Schoolers on the bus ride to the river, excitedly anticipating the tubing trip ahead.

Types of Gifts

Unrestricted Annual Gifts

- Annual gifts are used to support our continued needs. These funds become part of our operating budget.
- Be sure to have your employer match your gift to Parkmont School if applicable!

Restricted Annual Gifts

- Gifts can be made to The Popkin Fund (Social Studies), The Pellaton Fund (Outdoor Education), or The Lentz Fund (Financial Aid for Travel Classes).

Building Fund

- In 1999-2000 Parkmont School began a campaign to pay off its building mortgage, which is approximately \$400,000. We have only \$90,000 remaining to raise.

The Parkmont-Somerset Financial Aid Fund

- Parkmont School raises funds to cover immediate financial aid costs, as well as to build a financial aid endowment. Many Parkmont families do not pay full tuition, so the School gives out more financial aid on a per capita basis than any other school in the Washington area. Gifts to the endowment can be given over a three-year period.

The Parkmont Poetry Festival

- Our 21st annual citywide Poetry Festival occurred in May, and celebrated the talents of many young D.C. poets. Funds for the Poetry Festival over the years have been raised primarily from foundations.

Support Services

- Parkmont raises monies from foundations and individuals for our Support Services program. This program provides tutoring, study skills help, study hall, diagnostic testing, computer skills and counseling to students who need it.

Events

- Members of the Parkmont community donate their time, services and goods to several events each year to support the goals and mission of the School. These events promote a sense of community and school spirit among students, parents, faculty, administration, trustees and friends. Included are:
 - The Silent Auction
 - Parkmont Poetry Festival
 - International Dinner and Talent Show

Gifts in Kind

- Gifts in kind include goods donated, which directly support our programs and enhance our facilities. Books, computers, art supplies, equipment, landscaping assistance, etc., are listed here.
- Parents, friends, trustees, and businesses who offer their professional expertise or services free of charge to Parkmont provide a significant savings to the School. We appreciate your support and recognize your gifts of service under this category.

Volunteers

- Dozens of volunteers—current parents, parents of former students, and friends of the school—volunteer their time to help out the school each year. Volunteers make meals for school events, place phone calls at our Annual Giving Phonathon, organize our fundraising yard sale and silent auction, and work at our Poetry Festival.

Internship Sponsors

- Internship sponsors aid the Parkmont community by offering to work with students in our Internship program. Upper School students work 6 hours per week all year and Middle Schoolers work 3 hours per week in the spring at internship sites where they get real-life work experience without pay to enhance their education and their knowledge of the working world.

Annual Giving Restricted Fund Updates

Popkin Fund

The Popkin Fund was established in 1991 to enhance the Social Studies discipline at Parkmont School. The Fund was created by Susan Willens and her family in memory of their mother, Bertha Popkin.

The Popkin Fund has continued to build the resources for teaching Social Studies at Parkmont, and has helped generate a library of video materials. This collection of videos is repeatedly used by comparative government classes, American History and Government classes, and many others.

During the past few years, the Popkin Fund has also helped create a relationship between Parkmont School and Las Pacayas Escuela in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala. One of our teachers has been working on site there for the past several summers, and this summer a Parkmont student visited there and worked with the students. Parkmont and Las Pacayas students have begun to correspond via email, to share stories about their different cultures, as well as practice their Spanish speaking skills.



Children from La Escuela Oficial Rural Mixta Aldea Las Pacayas.

Pellaton Fund

The Pellaton Fund, created in memory of Robert Andrew Pellaton's life and interest in nature and the outdoors, was founded in 1977. This fund supports Parkmont's Middle School outdoor education programs.

In 2002-3, the Pellaton Fund helped our Middle School use an extensive ropes course at the FLOC (For Love Of Children) Learning Center in West Virginia. The middle schoolers spent two days at the ropes course last fall playing trust games, walking the high wire, and doing other adventure and confidence-building activities. The experience our students have at the FLOC Outdoor Learning Center is one of the high points of the year for the Middle School. We've been able to provide that opportunity at no direct cost to students because of the Pellaton Fund.



Jatna Breton, in Parkmont's Middle School, works on FLOC's Ropes Course.

Lentz Fund

The John Lentz Adventure Fund was created in 2001 to support students who need financial aid to participate in the travel classes that are an instrumental part of Parkmont's Upper and Middle School programs.

In 2002-3, the Fund helped support Upper School students on financial aid who went on the Swamp Ecology trip to the Okefenokees and on the Latin American History trip to the Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico.



Students relax on a wooden platform in the middle of Okefenokee. This was home for the night for the Ecology Class trip in 2003.

Annual Giving

\$61,983

2002-2003 PARKMONT SCHOOL FAMILY DONORS

Elaine Aldrich
Linda Black
Joan Cushing and Paul Buchbinder
Sally Pfund and William Bush
Barbara Platt and John Butler
Cedric and Lana Cade
Elisa Braver and Austin Doyle
Claudia Schur and Neal Goldfarb
Cally Jordan and John Halbrook
Sharon Hess
Maureen Hoyler
Terry Jodrie
Andrea Kline and Harvey Kabaker
Cille Kennedy
Jeri Roth Lande and Robert Lande
Thomas Mostowy McDermott
Jacqueline Parker and Paul Meagher
Marilyn Dickenson and Jean-Claude Nascimento
Frederick Phillips
Lisa Nickerson and Nelson Rimensnyder
Shirley Thompson Solomon

Jane Perkins and Andy Stern
Margo Cowtun and Henry Terrell
Nancy and George Watson
Pat Wohlford
Pat Wohlford

PARKMONT ALUMNI AND ALUMNI FAMILY DONORS

William and Roxanna Andersen
Susan and Robert Avjian
Patricia Jayne and Chris Barr
Jerry Knight and Janet Battaile
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Patricia Bittle
Ann Breen
Andrea and John Breeskin
Sheila and Oleska Budnyj
Jessica Burkart
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Carol Cunnick
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William Eby
Carl and Jamie Engelhardt
Verrick and Patricia French
Whitney and Irving Fuller
Stephen and Diana Goldberg
Anne and Philip Gowers
Cari and Bill Gradison

Stephen Cohn and Christina Guidorizzi
Ezra Hausman
Peter and Kathleen Higgins
Marc and Judith Jacobs
Deborah and Barrett Katz
Sarah Kelly Campbell
Elizabeth Barnes and George Knapp
Al and Ann La Porta
Maggie Andersen Labillois
Jeannine Ladd
Matthew Ladd
Judy and John Lentz
Judy and Larry Lorber
Felton and Audre Marans
Dorothy Martin
Elizabeth and Stewart Neilson
Josephine and Arnold Nicholson
Dan and Alice Nicolson
David Nicolson
Sally Nicolson
Mike Jones and Leah Noonan
Stephen and Rebecca Press
Jocelyn and Erna Radifera
Sheila and Evan Rotner
Rebecca and Richard Ruff
Roswitha and Jack Scheu
Doug Silverman
Justyna Burr and Neil Simon

Nancy and Steve Smith
Micah Solomon
Joan St. Germain
Martha and Scott Stinson
Estelle Tarica
Ralph and Suzanne Tarica
Lee and Fred Tyner
Peter and Beatrice van Roijen
John and Kathleen Volpe
Jacqueline Wallen
Shoshana Waskow
David Weisman
Judith Weisman
Joy Williams
Mac and Mary Wirick
Mavis and Hal Wylie

SOMERSET ALUMNI AND ALUMNI FAMILIES

Bob and Rhoda Chanin
Jon Cohen
Charles and Barbara Gholz
James and Jill Greenberg
Kate Meade
Wil Pace
Judy Peabody
Llyn Peabody
Sue Peabody
Carol and Ed Pace

FRIENDS, TRUSTEES, GRANDPARENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF, AND MATCHING GIFT DONORS

Frederic and Lauren Becker
Hope Childs
The Frelinghuysen Foundation
Sally and Thor Halvorson
John Kanwit
Wendel Landes
Harwood and Martin
Andrew and Dorothy Mason
Ron McClain
Mike Moyer
Delores Phillips
Stephen and Ruth Pollak
Christy Halvorson Ross
Dick Roth
Peter and Elizabeth Russell
Kim Schraf
Bill Stixrud
Lentz Fund \$1,500
Barbara Clarke and Douglas Leslie
Ron McClain
Sue and Peter Roemer

Building Fund

\$6,890.00

Susan and Robert Avjian
Jessica Burkart
The Frelinghuysen Foundation
Whitney and Irving Fuller
Charles and Barbara Gholz

Sharon Hess
Matthew Ladd
Judy and Larry Lorber
Carolina and Sergio Luna
Dorothy Martin

Ron McClain
Jacqueline Parker Meagher
Mike Moyer
Dan and Alice Nicolson

Mike Jones and Leah Noonan
Carol and Ed Pace
Tej Rae
Eric Randall

Lisa Nickerson and Nelson Rimensnyder
Christy Halvorson Ross
Sheila and Evan Rotner
Nancy and Steve Smith

Immediate Financial Aid Fund

\$24,425.00

The Black Student Fund
The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation
Mary Lynn and Nick Kotz
Pamela M. Tedeschi

The Parkmont Poetry Festival

\$2,500.00

The D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities & The National Endowment for the Arts

Support Services

\$3,000.00

The Children's Fund of Metropolitan Washington



Middle Schooler Sergio Luna at School.

Internship Sponsors

Adams Morgan Animal Clinic	D.C. Jewish Community Center	Honorable Representative Charles Rangel	Prudential Mathis Realtors	Sports World
Adrian Wilson, DDS	DJ Hut	Kemp Mill Records	REI	The Caring Institute
AFLCIO	Dogs by Day and Nite	L'Academie de Cuisine	Revolution Cycles	Trinity Stables
Amnesty International	Dr. Bill D'Alileo	Lutheran Social Services	Salon Jam	US International Trade Commission
Brookings Institution	Dream Wizards Games & Books	Morgan Day Care	Senator Jeff Bingaman	Watkins Elementary School/Library
CD/Game Exchange	Food and Friends	National Capital YMCA	Sligo Child Development Center	Woolly Mammoth Theater
Center for the Advancement of Hispanics in the Sciences	Friendship Animal Hospital	National Cathedral	Spanish Educational Development Center	World Bank
Chrome Photographic Services	Grafitti Audio and Visual	Nature Conservancy		YMCA—Kalorama

Gifts in Kind

Nancy and Steve Smith

Silent Auction Donors

\$12,850.00

Advanced Driving School	Dandy Restaurant Cruise Ships	Wendel Landes
Allsports Grand Prix	Gina Duffin	Lebanese Taverna
American Inn of Bethesda	Duffin Family	Judy Lentz
Amernick Bakery	Duron Paints and Wallcoverings	Light Flight Balloons
Andrews Hairstylist	Emily Strange Basket	Loew's L'Enfant Plaza Hotel
Arena Stage	European Custom Tailor	Made By You
Art and Soul	Face the Nation	Mamma Lucia Restaurants
Art's Advisory	Facials By Camille	Marrakesh Restaurant
Arucola	Fantasy Flights	Maryland Jockey Club
Baltimore Orioles	Filomena Ristorante	Chris Mathews
Baltimore Ravens	From The Ground Up	Elizabeth McDermott
Barnstormer Aero	Nijole Gedutis	Med Catering
Robin Bingham	Claudia Schur & Neal Goldfarb	Michelle Deck Photography
Blair Mansion Inn	Bill Gruen	Minute Man Press
Blue Ridge Outfitters	John Halbrook & Cally Jordan	Morris Miller Liquors
Blues Alley	Sally Halvorson	Morrison-Clark Inn
Brothers Sew & Vac	Hanawalt Family	Nijole's Advisory
Joan Cushing and Paul Buchbinder	Hawk N' Dove Restaurant	Noel Brazil
Brian Butters	Sharon Hess	Old Sarge Handyman Services
Café Deluxe & Tortilla Coast	Hillwood Museum	Olney Theatre Center for the Arts
Caricatures for All Occasions	Ismail's Advisory	Parkmont Middle School
Todd Cherkis	Cille Kennedy	Parkway Custom Dry Cleaning
Chipotle	The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts	Patricia Wohlford, Attorney at Law
Circuit City Foundation	Andrea Kline	Jane Perkins
Congressional Air Charters, Inc.	L'Academie de Cuisine	
D.C. Ducks		



Elias Kennedy in the Potomac River on Parkmont's Tubing trip, fall 2002.

Red Sage	Silver Stars Gymnastics
Results the Gym	Sports World
Revolution Cycles	Teatism
Robin's Advisory	Tenpenh Restaurant
Rock Creek Park Horse Center	The Oval Room
Christy Halvorson Ross	Theater J
Dick & Pat Roth	Washington Capitals
Round House Theatre	The Washington Opera
RPM Hair and Skin Care	Washington Redskins
Kim Schraf	Wendel Landes' Advisory
Shakespeare Theater	Lee Wolff-Silver
	Ismail Yoder Salim

Silent Auction Committee

Cille Kennedy, Co-Chair	Linda Black	Andrea Kline	Paul Meagher	Clyde Solomon
Jackie Parker, Co-Chair	Ingrid Goldstrom	Judy Lentz	Ray Nunes	Barbara Stewart
Elaine Aldrich	Sharon Hess	Nicole Manly	Jane Perkins	

Volunteers for Poetry Festival and Parent Events

Elaine Aldrich	Ingrid Goldstrom	Andrea Kline	Audrey Mosely	Barbara Platt
Elisa Braver	Ronnet Gross	Elizabeth McDermott	Nicole Manly	Rebecca Razavi
Alvita Cooper	Mary Gathercole	Jeri Lande	Lisa Nickerson	Claudia Schur
Austin Doyle	John Halbrook	Jackie Parker	Delores Phillips	Shirley Thompson/Solomon
Aracelio DeLeon	Sharon Hess	Marie Munu	Jane Perkins	George and Nancy Watson

Fiscal Year 2002-2003*

REVENUE:

Tuition	970,215.00
Voluntary Support**	104,758.00
School Fees/Events/Trips	30,059.00
Financial Income & Other Revenue	8,849.00

TOTAL **\$1,113,881.00**

EXPENSES:

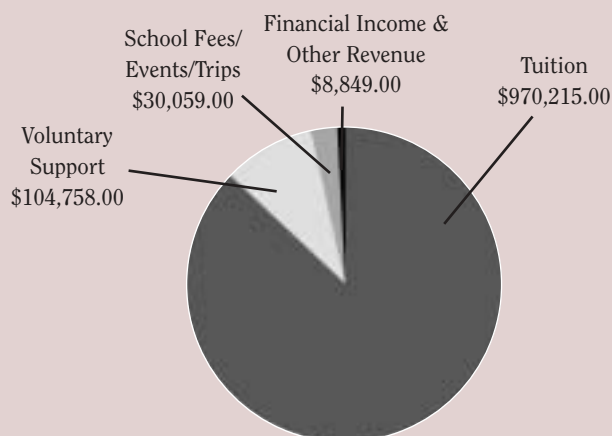
Salaries and Benefits	625,839.00
Financial Aid	200,200.00
Facilities	48,505.00
Operating Overhead	116,983.00
Program Expenses	160,048.00

TOTAL **\$1,151,575.00**

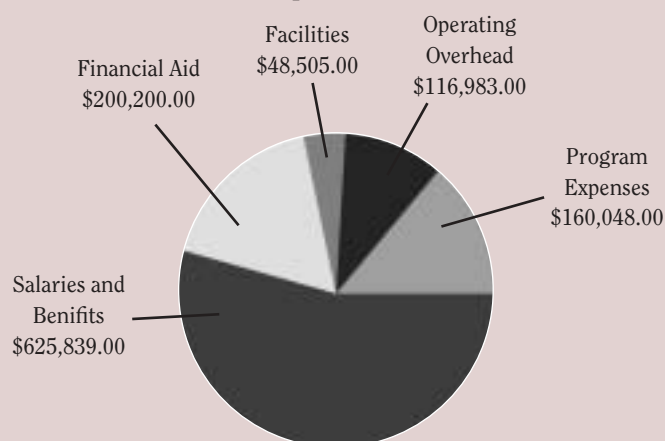
* These numbers have not yet been audited.

** Does not include incoming funds to Endowment or to the Building Fund (which are not for operating income).

Revenue



Expenses



A happy group on Parkmont's Upper School Ski Trip to Whitetail, winter 2003.



The Parkmont School Annual Report is published by The Development Office at the end of each fiscal year.

We have attempted to make these lists as correct as possible. If any inaccuracies are found, please notify the Development Office and accept our apologies.

For more information on Parkmont School's development efforts, please contact Christy Halvorson Ross, Director of Development, at (202) 726-6140.

Parkmont School

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"I have so many wonderful memories of my 'Somerset years,' for it was there that things shifted for me considerably (for the better). I credit the trips, amazing teachers and even the scholarship hikes, as some of the highlights for me."

*—Liz Edmondson
(class of 1981)*

Parkmont*School*

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