

News from the Upper School

Dennis L. Calkins

Head of the Upper School

Tuesday, October 4

The second group of freshmen returned from their Freshmen Orientation trip to the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge. This year's trips were marked by beautiful weather for both groups, outstanding leadership from the juniors and seniors, and a true spirit of adventure and cooperation from the freshmen. A special thank you to Kurt Luitwieler for 16 years of dynamic leadership of the Freshman Orientation experience at Holland Hall.

Wednesday, October 12

While the students in grades nine, ten, and eleven were busy with standardized testing on our annual X-Day, our seniors took part in various community service activities that had been organized by Nancy Baumann, our Community Service Coordinator. The seniors were hosted by Wright Elementary School, Little Lighthouse, Tulsa Community Food Bank, and St. Simeon's Nursing Home. Without exception, our seniors were exemplary representatives of Holland Hall as they all provided valuable assistance to these organizations.

Monday, October 17

Parents of our current grade eight students were invited to attend an informational session in the Upper School Commons to learn about life in the Upper School for their sons and daughters next year. The program centered on the four A's of life in the Upper School as Steve Dyer spoke about the Arts, Crystal Lawson gave information about Athletics, Phil Muir discussed Atmosphere, and I introduced the Academic program along with the modular schedule. This was the fourth year for this orientation session and attendance was higher than ever before. A special thank you to Joel Bicknell for publicizing this event in the Middle School.

Tuesday, October 18

First quarter grades were submitted for all Upper School students and mailed home the following day. Comments were written for students about whom there were concerns regarding effort and performance at the end of the quarter. I was pleased to note how high the grades were in general, how few students required comments to be written, and how well our 33 new students have adapted to life in the Upper School.

Wednesday, October 19

The faculty met to discuss students who had encountered difficulty during the first quarter. I am pleased to report that the list of students for discussion was the shortest it has ever been during my tenure as head of the Upper School. The reasons are many. Among them: the solid preparation and background provided by our own middle school faculty, the excellent instruction and classroom experiences provided by our upper school faculty, strong and consistent support from home, and students who care about their studies and set high standards for their performance.

Thursday, October 20

The second meeting of the Upper School Parent Council was held in the Middle School Alumni Center. Attendance at this meeting was higher than at any meeting in recent memory. The parents heard reports from Phil Muir about the freshman experience in the Upper School and from Richard Hart who presented information about enrollment for the current school year and projections for future enrollment.

Thursday, October 20

The Upper School students heard a presentation by Romy Owens, our artist-in-residence for the 2011-12 school year. Not only is Ms. Owens' artwork unique in its combination of photography and sewing, all of her work on display in the Holliman Gallery was created from photographs taken on our campus last spring. I was extremely proud of the attention our students gave to Ms. Owens during her 45-minute talk in the Branch Theater.

Thursday, Friday, Saturday, October 20, 21, 22

The Upper School fall play, *The Rise and Rise of Daniel Rocket*, was performed in the Newman Theater to near capacity audiences on all three nights. A combination of newcomers and veteran performers made up the cast of the play, a fantasy about a young boy who overcomes the limitations others try to impose upon him to realize his dream of being able to fly. Directors Gary Sweeney and Jody Ely, and the cast and crew once again gave us a wonderful and memorable dramatic experience.