

# SEM Today

A publication for alumnae  
and friends of Buffalo Seminary

MAY 2014

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At SEM, STEM is STEAM

SEM Firsts: Sailing and Chess

Changing Course:  
The New History Curriculum

NAIS: SEM is the Future

## Mark Twain at SEM

Reviewing his 1870 "Report to the Buffalo Female Academy"



ILLUSTRATION BY CAITLIN CASS  
SEM FACULTY

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A publication for alumnae and friends of Buffalo Seminary

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# Message from the Head of School

By Jody Douglass



How does a good school inspire students to achieve at their highest levels? What are the most important resources we can provide for our students? What foundation can we give to our children that will ensure their success and happiness later in life? These are some of the questions that educators and parents ask every day. There are no easy answers, but at SEM we aim for the best possible solutions.

An excellent education includes more than just a strong academic focus, it must also provide an exposure to creative expression, and an understanding and practice of healthy physical growth.

The additional element that seems essential to creating adults who will thrive and contribute in a complex world is the development of a strong character. Good schools can help each student to grow into her best traits and use them well.

Recent pedagogical thinking suggests that students would do well to develop “grit,” as it provides strength when we encounter the difficulties of life. Grit enables us to find resourcefulness and endurance when challenged.

Grit cannot be coerced. However, good schools, like SEM can help each student to find that intrinsic motivation to live her best life, to get involved, and to work hard at all she does, and indeed, to risk failure.

Finding the inner strength to push beyond easy achievements is a difficult element to teach and it is not a quality that can be measured by tests. Instead, it comes from the culture of

a school. At SEM, our culture is built around the Honor Code. We all sign it. We expect every student and adult in the community to be both honest and just – there can be no shortcuts to achievement.



Virtually every day our students are offered a way to get involved in school life or community service. Civic mindedness is not only encouraged, it is built into our curriculum.

In 1870 Mark Twain complimented two of our students for “taking risks and breaking the molds of accepted composition writing that have been handed down for generations in America’s classrooms, resulting in distressing sameness and staleness in academic essays.” Our girls had grit then, and they have it today.

SEM’s goal is to give our students a passion for knowledge and the ability to keep learning. We establish a safe setting to take

chances. We work to help them develop the drive and stamina they will need for the work ahead in college and beyond. For generations, a SEM education has been a strong foundation for many women, and it continues to serve as a great foundation for a life of achievement and fulfillment in a complex world.



# Finding Mark Twain at SEM

## *Yes, that Mark Twain*

By Douglas Hopkins, history teacher and an architect of the new history curriculum

*“It was one of those dreamy, hazy days in mid-summer, when the atmosphere had grown denser and more suffocating until dark clouds gathering in the sky told of a coming storm.”*

**S**o began Lillie Powell’s whimsical story, “The Golden Treasure at the End of the Bow,” which Mark Twain judged as one of two winners of the Buffalo Female Academy’s annual essay contest in 1870. Miss Powell’s story won top honors for the graduating class and Lillie Kelsey’s “Little Fish” won the prize for the “Collegiate Department.”

SEM’s archives closet had yielded these treasures: the original, winning, exquisitely hand-written essays in pencil, contained in a bound volume of 1870 essays by Buffalo Female Academy students. (We became Buffalo Seminary in 1889.)

I found these original documents on a hunch after learning of Twain and the writing contest from former SEM teacher

Harry Schooley’s lecture notes, “A Short History of Buffalo Seminary.” It was a thrill to discover possibly the very pieces of paper that Mark Twain held and read in 1870.

Yes, Mark Twain! SEM lore has it that headmaster Albert Chester invited rival celebrity Buffalo journalists and friends, Twain of the *Buffalo Express*, and David Gray of the *Daily Courier*, to judge the 1870 writing contest. Twain wrote a “Report to the Buffalo Female Academy,” tactfully critiquing and praising the pool of entries and explaining the choices of winners. Gray read the report aloud, as well as the winning essays, at the school’s June 23 graduation ceremony, and the *Buffalo Express* published the report in full on June 24, 1870.

Twain seemed to be looking for simplicity of expression and lack of pretension. He praised Lillie Powell’s story for “the very rare merit of *stopping when it is finished*,” and for its “freedom from adjectives and superlatives which is attractive, not to say seductive.”

*It was a thrill to discover possibly the very pieces of paper that Mark Twain had held and read in May or June of 1870.*

Twain described Lillie Kelsey's story as "nothing in the world but just a bright and fresh bit of fancy, told with a breezy dash, and with nothing grand or overpowering about it." It tells the story of a small fish discovered by the author in a pitcher of drinking water. The narrator finds that the fish exists in a complex world, a sort of fish kingdom. Suddenly, the narrator hears someone in the "real" world call her. Returning momentarily to the room she finds the pitcher empty, the fish gone. She concludes, "...if I had spent less time in thinking of him and more in helping him, it would have been better for the fish and just as well for me." Twain praised the abrupt ending to this essay, including the moral-to-the-story, "inevitable," but effectively conveyed because "it is compressed into a single sentence, and it is delivered with a snap that is exhilarating and an unexpectedness that is captivating."

In his recently published book, *Scribblin' for a Livin': Mark Twain's Pivotal Period in Buffalo*, Thomas Reigstad writes of the Buffalo Female Academy's essay contest. Reigstad finishes with a summary of Twain's rant, "against the traditional, formulas-driven method of teaching writing in American schools" and his praise for the Buffalo Female Academy and its forward thinking.

"To the high credit of the principal and teachers of this Academy (now SEM), it can be said that they are faithfully doing what they can to destroy it and its influence and occupy their place with something new and better.

## SEM Grad Was the First Female Journalist in Buffalo

Twain wrote an editorial criticizing the ineptitude of the Buffalo Streets Commissioner for failing, Twain anticipated, to prevent Memorial Day traffic dust clouds from inundating his front porch. A resourceful and civic-minded neighbor, 16-year-old Buffalo Female Academy student Jane Meade Welch, who had read the editorial which Twain had signed only "472 Delaware," organized a bucket brigade of neighborhood kids. They kept the street watered in front of Twain's home during the busy holiday, and Twain visited her home that evening to express his thanks. Four years later, Jane joined *The Buffalo Express*, launching an extraordinary career and becoming the first woman in Buffalo to make a profession of journalism. Coincidence? You decide.

"But when we of the committee [meaning himself and Gray] take into consideration that much of the atmosphere of old custom and tradition necessarily lingers around this unquestionably excellent Female Academy, we feel that we are more than complimentary when we say that the compositions we have been examining average well indeed."

Twain was right to attack the formulaic model of composition, and he was insistent that fiction include dialect and other non-standard discourse. Whitman did it for poetry, and we owe Twain a great debt for including regional expression in literature. SEM has a long tradition of appreciating Twain, and our students can proudly draw a line from the early, pre-"Huck Finn" Twain who judged our writing contest to the Twain about whom contemporary audiences squabble. He would no doubt delight in this!

By Ben Joplin Ph.D., English teacher





## The Authentic Experience

### *Exploring Primary Sources*

My history students found it nearly impossible to decipher the beautiful and now anachronistic cursive handwriting of the original essays Twain judged. (Few students are still taught in elementary school how to write cursive, and as a result, it might as well be Greek for them to read.) But learning almost first-hand of Mark Twain's connection to SEM made for a memorable couple of classes. Just as there is something irresistible about standing in the exact spot where a moment of history took place, we felt a thrill holding what appear to be the original handwritten essays Mark Twain read in 1870.

The Buffalo Seminary Alumnae Association has lovingly cared for SEM's archives for many decades. That the 1870 volume of student essays is in nearly pristine condition and could be found easily by this history teacher speaks to the BSAA's careful stewardship over the years. With further attention the archives could become a rich source of original

*The original source gave students a chance to think like real historians, and about their own history.*

historical documents for SEM history students, and for other historians. The archive undoubtedly holds many extraordinary insights into not only the school's history, but also that of Buffalo and Western New York.

The original sources give students a chance to think like real historians, and about their own history.

Importantly, the SEM archives might yield a better answer as to why the Buffalo Female Academy was founded. Did SEM's 1851 founding have any connection to the Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention, held just three years earlier? This was a time when virtually no colleges welcomed women, so SEM's founders could not have envisioned the college preparatory school it is today. But what *was* the vision of the founders? Was there a unified vision or were there multiple visions? Who were the driving forces behind SEM's founding and what or who had inspired them? And as a very practical matter, whom did these founders persuade to supply the necessary financial backing? Learning the deeper, more nuanced story of SEM's origins could inspire our immediate school community, but it is also a story that bears on the broader history of women's and girls' education in the United States.

SEM's archives need to be catalogued and curated in a way to make them accessible to historians, including to SEM student historians. BSAA president, Gabrielle DeRose '74, reports that the Association's archives committee is looking into options to do this. - *Douglas Hopkins*

## Where Are They Now?

Where are Lillie W. Powell's and Lillie Kelsey's descendants now? Do they know about their ancestor's connection to Mark Twain? Powell was from Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin and Kelsey of Geneseo, NY. Please email Carolyn Clark at [cclark@buffaloseminary.org](mailto:cclark@buffaloseminary.org) if you can help us track down a descendant of Misses Powell or Kelsey.

# Life After SEM

## *Bridging The Confidence Gap*

By Ben Joplin Ph.D., English teacher

A recent article in *The Atlantic* (April 24, 2014) cited a “confidence gap” between men and women: unlike men, even highly successful women nevertheless found themselves second-guessing their credentials or abilities. Fascinatingly, when SEM interviews alums they report just the opposite: SEM gave them confidence. Is it still a tough world out there for women? Of course; numerous studies prove that equal pay for equal work is a long way off. But we’re talking about a sense of accomplishment and well-being that helps our alums meet difficulties head-on, no matter where they lie.

**S**o what’s SEM’s secret? “The small classes helped to develop positive relationships with teachers and provided the opportunity for extra help,” said Amy Andres ’05. For Kathryn Michaeliek ’10 it was SEM’s, “instilling in me the diligence and leadership needed to be a young professional.” For Lia DiNunzio ’11, “confidence and courage” at public speaking was integral to her success as the current Miss Buffalo International.

Our alums’ kind words speak to a mix of skills and experiences that are rare to find elsewhere. For instance, Jessica Phillips ’13 was shocked to find that when she was visiting several prospective colleges’ classes, there was a comparative lack of awareness of global issues and diversity. She said that SEM is, “more respectful of others and strove to understand” beyond a simplistic level of debate. “SEM students are taught to be analytical and think critically. When we as a whole school watched [the documentary about women in the media] *Miss Representation*, some girls thought it bashed men, some though it uplifted women.” Every girl was heard even if she disagreed with a friend or teacher.

Perhaps the true secret to self-confidence lies in how girls’ school teachers fit into the increasingly larger concentric circles of the SEM community and the world at large. Caroline Horrigan ’10 said that at SEM, “parents and teachers unite to allow their daughters to be vulnerable in a safe environment,”

and continued, “Somehow being vulnerable at 15 and 16 turns into confidence at 18 and 19, but only if that vulnerability is understood, accepted, and nurtured.”

University at Buffalo professor Stacy Hubbard explains that a girls’ school is the place for girls to “to fail creatively and courageously, (and) how to find the fruitfulness in it.” Indeed, a recent graduation speech by Gwen Whittle ’79 related a journey of transferring colleges and changing majors, all of which was in the end, just the right path: she is now an Academy Award nominated sound designer.

So while we find articles about low self-confidence in girls and women no surprise – in fact, they spur us to investigate and address this national and global issue – SEM alums know that the matter is more complicated than simply waking up one day with nerves of steel and the perfect career. Rather, it is precisely when one begins to second-guess one’s abilities that SEM replies with a voice of its own.

“Because every girl can learn and excel if there’s someone who believes in them,” said Kara Kerwin ’98, “that someone was SEM for me, and I take that message cross-country now.”

Julia Papiernik ’10 described SEM’s reach beyond academics. “I wear my signet Buffalo Seminary class ring and it reminds me of the duties I carry with me to work hard, strive to achieve greatness, and be passionate about how I live my life.”

## Athletic Hall of Fame Nominations

*Deadline  
Extended!*



From the 2000  
SEMINARIA,  
the SEM Basketball Team.

The Athletic Hall of Fame Selection Committee is accepting nominations for the Class of 2014. The induction ceremony will be held during SEM’s Fall Weekend 2014.

Nomination forms and criteria are available on the SEM website at [buffaloseminary.org/nominate](http://buffaloseminary.org/nominate)

The deadline for submissions is May 31, 2014. Thank you for taking time to nominate a worthy graduate.

For a mailed nomination form please contact Eva Cunningham, Director of Athletics, [ecunningham@buffaloseminary.org](mailto:ecunningham@buffaloseminary.org) or (716) 885-6780.



From the 2000  
SEMINARIA,  
the SEM  
Swimming Team.

# Changing Course: SEM's History Department Unveils a New Curriculum

By Benjamin Priest, Ph.D., history teacher and Academic Dean

This year Buffalo Seminary's history department implemented a revised curriculum that emphasizes a range of analytical skills and includes a new four-year course sequence.

Students continue to study U.S. and World History, but the new sequence adds a freshman-year class on Western New York and a more diverse selection of upper-level electives. The new curriculum also integrates classes across disciplines, encouraging our students to make connections between history and literary studies.

## Beyond Text Books

The new framework emerged last year as part of a school-wide attempt to fashion a skills-based curriculum. When Head of School Jody Douglass asked each department to reexamine its approach to teaching essential academic skills, Molly Greene, Doug Hopkins and I began meeting right away. Excited at the prospect of tinkering with the curriculum, we consulted local and national standards for teaching history and geography, including the College Board's guidelines for teaching historical and spatial thinking skills. We created a template that featured a renewed focus on showing students how to analyze primary-source documents, interpret maps and other spatial representations, and write organized and well-researched academic essays. Basically, we decided that our revised curriculum should move beyond textbooks, lectures, and exams to highlight the real-world skills that working historians and geographers employ.

## Politics, Civics, and Citizenship

We decided that the history department should provide a more comprehensive introduction to bedrock political concepts, most notably the acquired habits and practices that constitute good citizenship. All three wanted to ensure students were familiar with basic civic institutions and contemporary political debates. We came to see the curriculum-revision process as an opportunity to acquaint students with the principles of liberal democracy, the considerable role that the news media plays in structuring our public discussions, and the events that influence the way we live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Good citizenship entails fulfilling one's responsibilities to multiple communities: to the towns and cities in which most of us spend the bulk of our time; to the nation that binds us together through the history we share and the rights we enjoy; and to the international community that connects us to people

thousands of miles away through economic forces, geopolitical tensions, and global environmental challenges. In short, we realized that by guiding our students through a sequence of local, national, and global history classes, we could teach an array of content and skills while pushing our students to think about their civic responsibilities in a comprehensive way.



L-R: Jessica Silverstein, Ben Priest, Molly Greene, Doug Hopkins.

## The 4-Year Plan

Freshmen will now complete a class on the history and geography of Western New York, sophomores will study the history and geography of the United States, and juniors will take a one-year class on global history and geography. Seniors will choose from a variety of electives that explore nonwestern cultures and themes. We have proposed: Chinese history, South African history, and an introduction to the contemporary Middle East. We also hope to offer a women's studies course that focuses on 21<sup>st</sup>-century women around the world. Each course will reemphasize a number of historical and spatial thinking skills, as students read primary sources, scrutinize maps and other representations of space, and write analytical essays.

The students will learn to identify as citizens of Western New York, the United States, and the world at large. Broadly speaking, each class will encourage the students to think of themselves as custodians of multiple communities with distinct histories and significant 21<sup>st</sup>-century challenges. By learning about the conflicts that marked these communities in the past, students will be better prepared to study, and confront, the political questions that define their own time and place.

Implementing a revised course sequence is a complicated, multi-year process. Since late spring of 2013, designing and refining the new overview of Western New York has been our top priority. With the assistance of the Buffalo History Museum, and in particular program manager Tara Lyons, we constructed a series of units that investigate Buffalo's founding in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, explore Western New York's significance to the rise of industry in the United States, examine the role immigration has played in creating and transforming Buffalo's many neighborhoods, and study a few of the ethnic communities which have made Buffalo home and given the city its unique character. Each unit presents opportunities for historical and spatial thinking, as students read primary sources along with their textbook and research the geographical features of the city, its suburbs, and the Western New York region. Above all, the class encourages students to

begin thinking of themselves as stewards of Buffalo: as citizens whose lives are bound up with the past, present, and future of their city.

The first year of our experiment is still in progress, but the responses from our students, current and future parents have been overwhelmingly positive. According to Doug Hopkins, who is teaching the course on Western New York, our freshmen have thoroughly enjoyed delving into Buffalo's past, especially the histories of their respective homes and neighborhoods. They have taken field trips to research Buffalo's neighborhoods and historical sites, visited the warehouse of the Buffalo History Museum, and even unearthed a few gems from the past stored in SEM's archive closet. (See Twain story.) "Now that we have studied several neighborhoods—

looking at immigration patterns, the neighborhood's changing character over time, and current conditions—the pressure is on to cover every student's neighborhood," Doug notes. "No one wants to be left out, including students whose homes are in the suburbs."

I gave brief presentations on the new course sequence (and new class) to several waves of visiting families at the SEM

open house in the fall of 2013 and encountered some of the same enthusiasm. The energy in the room was palpable as scores of prospective parents gathered in one of our classrooms to listen to the logic behind our changes, express their curiosity, and ask questions. Virtually everyone I spoke to seemed to share our department's conviction that we live in a community with a truly singular and interesting history, and that teaching that history to our students is a laudable and undeniably useful mission.

## Next Steps

Our current departmental work involves fine-tuning the new freshman course

while restructuring our existing courses to fit the revised curriculum. As new department member Jessica Silverstein said, "One of our biggest goals for next year is to move the U.S. History curriculum away from textbook reading and multiple choice exams. Instead, we want to put together a curriculum that relies heavily on a variety of materials:

*The students will learn to identify as citizens of Western New York, the United States, and the world at large.*

*Above all, the class encourages students to begin thinking of themselves as stewards of Buffalo: as citizens whose lives are bound up with the past, present, and future of their city.*

primary sources, scholarly articles, photographs, maps, and more. Because of the complex thinking that will be required to interpret these materials, we also want to move toward assessments that allow our students to demonstrate a deep understanding of the subject matter, so we will incorporate more writing into the course.”

Next fall, both sophomores and juniors will study U.S. History in a series of mixed sections, collaborating across classes to study historically significant documents from every time period, learn about the growth of the United States as a political and geographical entity, research the cross-cultural interactions and conflicts that have influenced the evolution of American identity, and work on their analytical writing. We will continue implementing the new curriculum during the 2015-2016 school year, when the rising juniors complete a one-year World History course and rising seniors select from a range of nonwestern electives. In keeping with the department’s curricular philosophy, all classes will couple a focus on academic skills with an emphasis on the noteworthy issues that have necessitated active citizenship in the past, and that will continue to do so in the future.

### **Collaboration and Integration**

We have also begun to work more closely with SEM’s English department. Although each department will retain its independence and highlight the scholarly methods that are specific to its discipline, teachers will collaborate on a series of overlapping, thematic units and teach many of the same skills. Next fall, for example, our sophomores and juniors will complete a course on U.S. history and geography, and read and study literary works by a substantial number of American authors. Students will explore connections between significant historical events and works of literature in their discussions and activities, and eventually elaborate on these interdisciplinary connections in written assignments.

The academic benefits of interdisciplinary work are self-evident, but we like to think that collaborating with one another will also further our goal of initiating nuanced discussions of what it means to inhabit, and take responsibility

for, particular communities. Literature has always played an outsized role in describing, defining, defending, and critiquing various forms of place, and we believe that introducing our students to literary works that explore these forms of place will help them think seriously about the challenges that have confronted, and will continue to confront, their communities.

Although our new focus on citizenship represents a departure for

the history department, it is worth noting that the revised curriculum reinforces institutions and traditions that are very much a part of SEM’s academic culture. While we rarely articulate a school-wide social or political mission, we do emphasize responsible citizenship in many ways: our community service program gets our students out of the building for several hours every trimester, requiring them to contribute their time and energy to local organizations that improve the Buffalo area; our class trips explore areas of interest and concern in Western New York, and visit

historically and politically significant spaces in our nation’s capital; and our exchange trips introduce students to a variety of linguistic and cultural communities, initiating a process of cross-cultural interaction and investigation that leaves them uniquely prepared to participate in our increasingly global, 21<sup>st</sup> century society.

Organizing the study of the past around academic skills and a specific set of civic ideals will bolster and enhance the focus on participatory citizenship that already exists as one of the subtle but perceptible cornerstones of our school. Doug, Molly, Jess, and I are thrilled to contribute to this legacy, even as we begin a new chapter in our own history as a department.

*With the assistance of the Buffalo History Museum... we investigate Buffalo’s founding, explore Western New York’s significance, and examine the role immigration has played in creating and transforming Buffalo’s many neighborhoods.*

*We are working more closely with SEM’s English department. Teachers will collaborate on a series of overlapping, thematic units and teach many of the same skills.*

# Admission Report

## *A Record Number of Applicants*

By Laura Munson '79, Director of Admission

We have enrolled another exceptional freshman class for the 2014-15 school year. A record number of students attended our open house, visited, and interviewed for admission. The increased number of applicants did not decrease the personal attention each candidate received, but as a result the admissions committee had to make difficult decisions. The class comprises 38 day students and 5 residential students from 25 middle schools. Continuing the SEM family tradition, 13 of these students are legacies.

**W**hat are the qualities we look for in an applicant and which of these qualities lead to success at SEM? Simply, there are five factors considered when applying;

1. Past academic performance or grades.
2. Teacher recommendations.
3. Personal interview.
4. Performance on the SEM entrance exam.
5. Three different writing samples. (*One done at home on the application, one on the entrance exam, and one on the day of the interview.*)

We have always valued academic ability, curiosity, and individuality, and continue to look for students who are unafraid to express themselves, can defend their point of view, and yet

respect the perspective of others. We look for girls who will contribute to, and thrive in, our community.

In choosing SEM, many applicants point to the individual attention students receive, the respect that faculty pay to student work and ideas, and the encouragement for students to try new activities and to push themselves. Those who welcome these challenges and are willing to work hard are those who thrive at SEM.

As of May 1st, we are fully enrolled for next year and have waiting lists at all grade levels for day students. Applications for the waiting list and for residential students are still being accepted.

Save the date...  
for Fall Weekend!



October 17-18, 2014



# At SEM, STEM is STEAM

By Erin St. John Kelly and Beth Adamczyk

When SEM became a 1:1 laptop school in 2008, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) was an emergent educational movement that integrated the four disciplines to promote real-world experience, project-based learning, teamwork, and the application of technology. American education lagged in these areas and in particular, for girls.

**T**echnology is now part of the SEM school culture and it is increasingly integrated into teaching and learning in all disciplines and in school life. Paperless assignments encourage girls to be responsible citizens of the planet; collaborating online encourages them to be responsible citizens of the digital world, and our teachers take full advantage of the opportunities afforded by technology in and out of the classroom. Instead of technology being novel, it is necessary.

The world has caught up. STEM has recently evolved to become STEAM – Art & Design has been added to the core tenets. (Think of how beautiful the design of a piece of Apple technology is, and how beyond aesthetics its form also enhances functionality.) The “A” acknowledges that scientists are creative thinkers. Accordingly, in the fall of 2014, SEM will introduce a freshman

curriculum that embraces the “A” with opportunities for students to explore computer programming, engineering, and the “Maker Movement.” The curriculum will consist of three separate trimester courses and use a new 3-D laser printer.

## Explore Coding

Computational thinking develops problem-solving skills. Writing, de-bugging and re-mixing code forces students to think in a linear and organized manner, an invaluable skill for coders and non-coders alike. Beth Adamczyk, Director of Technology, will teach.

## Explore Engineering

The ability to research, design, develop and apply new technologies in today’s quickly-changing world will open doors for creative work at all levels and in all industries. Science teacher Jennifer Goetz-Bixby will create and teach this class.





*“At college I will major in what I love – computer science – and wish to convince the public, via my own success in the field, that a girl can be a computer wiz.”*

- Yanqing (Marrie) Ma '14 has taken Online School for Girls computer science classes while at SEM and will attend the University of Illinois, Champagne.

### Explore and Make It

The Maker Movement is a social phenomenon which deserves some investigation. For the first time in history, the tools to create real-world solutions are at our fingertips. In addition to being good for the soul, tinkering can blend the arts with engineering, programming and science. Caitlin Cass from the art faculty will teach.

In the sophomore and junior years, girls will be able to enroll in the Online School for Girls. OSG offers rigorous full-year courses of Introduction to Computer Programming, Introduction to Engineering, AP Computer Programming, and IOS development. As the number of interested students grows, and the culture of the school warrants it, we hope to hire specialized teachers and offer some of these courses at SEM.

Women are perpetually under represented in the STEAM fields, and as a girls' school we are particularly well suited to be part of the solution. Learning about career opportunities will be a feature of our STEAM courses. We plan for guest speakers and to collaborate with local organizations and schools to share ideas and resources. We hope to nurture or awaken an interest in our students that will be developed in college and career.

## What's a Maker?

By Caitlin Cass

I want our students to realize they can spend their free time teaching themselves, even if it's not technology oriented – make a 'zine, write a book, start a blog. Be a Maker.

The Maker class will utilize technology to make useful objects. We'll draw inspiration from the maker movement as we learn how new advances like the 3-D printer have brought manufacturing into people's living rooms. We will experiment with 3-D modeling and printing of our own useful objects, from toys like Spirograph wheels to cell phone cases. Maker class will encourage active independent learners, who will thrive on experimenting and finding new solutions to problems.

The Maker Movement is all about creating supportive communities where people actively share and learn from one another. It is about innovation, creation, and sharing. We will build a supportive Maker community at SEM and critically engage online resources as we learn from, and contribute to, the international Maker community. As this class develops over the next few years we will also incorporate basic electronics and microcontrollers.

# SEM Scenes



Julia Paulk '14 and Hiba Al-Naji '14 earned **2014 National Federation of Just Communities for WNY (NFJC) Youth Awards** for their commitment to community. They are pictured with their families, Mayor Byron Brown, and Eric County Executive Mark Poloncarz.

SEM seniors Ke Yu and Natalie Voos were named to **Business First's 2014 All-Western Academic Team - Special Mention**. The team comprises the 100 most outstanding high school seniors in the eight county region.



March 18th, SEM went to the **Model United Nations** at UB representing India and Morocco. Congressman Brian Higgins called on the assembly of high school students from all over WNY to, "Take your rightful place in the world and help promote peace."



## SEM Mother's Book Group Has Met Since 2004

Years after their daughters have graduated these friends meet once a month to lunch and talk about books.

"We all love to read," said Mary Beth Holly, with Sharon Pollock chiming in, "and we all have something to say!" Linda Goodman, who taught all of their daughters said, "We're all interested in each other's lives."

*L to R standing:* Linda Goodman, teacher, retired 2011, and Sharon Pollack, parent of Rebecca '08. Seated: Sue Frangione, parent of Sarah '06, Mary Beth Holly, parent of Katharine '06, and Liz Engl, parent of Jenny '02, Rachel '06, and Jaime '11. Not shown is Susan Lisker, parent of Liz '05 and Maddy '13.



SEM students voted on a Buffalo project to be funded by the **21st Century Fund at the Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo**. SEM voted for three projects including the future "Explore & More Children's Museum," which won, but most importantly, students felt the impact of their voices in the development of Buffalo.

# Sampling Colleges

By Erik Bertelsen, Director of College Counseling

With more than 2,700 four-year colleges and universities in the United States, and collegiate options in Canada and abroad, where is a SEM girl to start?

To get started, juniors must consider what qualities they might find desirable in a college: How big do I want the college to be? What do I want to study? Can I afford it? Do I want to be in the city or the country? Do I want to be close to home or far away? What extracurricular options are important to me? Do I want a college where most students are similar to me, or do I want a college where the students come from many different backgrounds? Is the school's religious affiliation a factor? The questions are seemingly endless and the glossy view books and shiny websites can make answers elusive.

Where does one begin? My advice? Visit. Only then can one begin to figure out the type of college that will suit one best. It was with this in mind that my wife Abby and I headed off on a whirlwind tour of colleges one blustery President's Day Weekend with 18 juniors, both day and residential students. (Abigail Jones is a member of the residential staff and faculty at SEM.) With us were: Yiyang (Yi) Li, Ziling (Azure) Cheng, Xinxin (Nicole) Zhang, Yanying (Yara) Yang, Zhenqi (Amber) Xu, Zhan (Esther) Zhang, Jiahui (Christy) Jiang, Weiyi Li, Ying Zhang, Sylvia Chen, Zhuonan (Shauna) Liu and day students Sydney Mecca, Nyamana Byaombe, Rebekah Alexander, and Susannah Young.

I included visits to Hobart & William Smith (small, rural, liberal arts), Syracuse (large urban comprehensive university), Cornell (large, highly selective, comprehensive, small town university), Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) (medium size, career oriented, technical university), and University of Rochester

(medium size, suburban liberal arts and engineering).

The five colleges were gracious in welcoming us to their campuses. Visits included tours and information sessions, and, of course, we sampled food in college dining halls, met with students, and visited book stores. Occasionally we were lucky enough to connect with a SEM graduate who was attending the college: at RIT we met Sara Scaccia '12 and at Hobart we met Taylor Levin '13.

While the videos, presentations, and viewbooks started to run together by our fifth campus visit in three days, students came away with an undeniable gut sense of both likes and dislikes. Some loved the intimacy of Hobart, others preferred the big college feel of Syracuse and Cornell. A few students were intrigued by the focus and career orientation of RIT, while others were impressed by the academic balance they saw at U. Rochester. To be sure, the girls came away with the clear sense that when considering colleges, "one size fits all" does not apply!

For our international students, who often do not have the opportunity to visit colleges before applying, the visits provided an important first-hand introduction to what American colleges have to offer. As one of our international seniors recently said, "In China, students don't have a choice. You attend the college that picks you. In America, you get to choose the college." For these students, and for so many of our juniors, visiting colleges goes a long way toward making the right choice.

Only two years ago our 45 graduates attended 38 colleges. This year they have applied to 165 different colleges in 31 states and DC, 4 Canadian provinces, and China.

Of those who applied to a college categorized as "Most" or "Highly Competitive" by *Barron's Guide to Colleges*:

- 87% of SEM applicants were accepted. (Top 7% in U.S..)
- 54% of those who applied were accepted to "Most Selective." (Top 3% in U.S..)
- 100% of those who didn't apply to college in those categories were accepted to their first choice.

## College Acceptance 2014

Amherst	College Of	High Point	Mercyhurst	Queen's U	Syracuse	U. Minnesota
Assumption	Charleston	Hobart William Smith	Merrimack	Reed	Tufts	U. New England
Baldwin Wallace	Cornell	Hofstra	Miami (OH)	Rhodes	Tulane	U. Pacific
Bard	Dartmouth	Holy Cross	Michigan St.	RIT	U. Alabama	U. Pittsburgh
Boston College	Denison	Howard	Middle Tennessee	Roger Williams	U. Arizona	U. Rochester
Boston U.	DePaul	Indiana St.	State	Rollins	U. Binghamton, SUNY	U. San Francisco
Bowling Green	Drexel	Ithaca	Middlebury	Rutgers	U. Buffalo, SUNY	U. Vermont
Brandeis	Duquesne	Jacksonville	Nazareth	Simmons	U. C. Davis	U. Virginia
Brigham Young U.	Eckerd	John Carroll U.	New York U.	Skidmore	U. C. Irvine	U. Washington
Buffalo State	Elon	Johns Hopkins	Niagara	St. Bonaventure	U. C. L. A.	Washington College
Butler	Endicott	Keuka	Northeastern	St. Lawrence	U. C. San Diego	Wells
Canisius	Fordham	Louisville	Notre Dame	St. Michael's	U. C. Santa Barbara	Westmont
Case Western	Fredonia SUNY	Loyola (IL)	Ohio State	Steven's Institute of	U. Connecticut	Whittier
Champlain	Geneseo SUNY	Loyola (MD)	Penn. State	Technology	U. Dayton	Wittenberg
Clark	George Washington U	Marist	Providence	Stonehill	U. Illinois	Xavier (OH)
	Hartwick	Mary Washington	Purdue	SUNY Albany	U. Maryland	

# Go SEM! Go Red-Tailed Hawks!

## Varsity Basketball



Varsity Basketball showed improvement throughout the 2013-2014 season. Junior Captain Erica Luciano leads a young and athletic team that is dedicated to becoming the best that they can be both on the court and off. Lone senior Amanda Gareis' dedication to the team has been a positive influence on the young team. Sophomores Sara Smolarek, Natalie Rice, Gabriella Augello, and Kira Yerofeev have become key contributors to the improvement of the team. Freshmen Grace Gallagher, Samantha Burlow, and Alison Gareis provide the team with a strong work ethic and promising future.

Head Coach Eva Cunningham and Assistant Coach Kacie Mills believe they have a talented group of young ladies who continue to show progress each day.

## JV Basketball



In only the second season for Junior Varsity Basketball, the team learned how to work together to reach a common goal. The team showed great improvement throughout the season under the leadership of sophomores Danielle Little, Yicen Liu, and Ariana Bridges.

Head Coach Natalie Brooks looks forward to next year with her returning, hardworking freshmen Emily Jimenez, Justine Rodriguez, Anya Roy, and Fatima Siddiqui.

## Fencing



In his first season as Head Coach, Wesley Roberts was excited about the 2013-2014 fencing season with returning fencers Erin Melber '16, Marivi Howell-Arza '15, Olivia Colon '16, and Brenda Zhang '14, and his new fencers Lauren Phillips '16, Olivia Miller '17, Yuxin Shen '17, Miao Yu '17, and Emily Bulan '17. The season ended a success with many of our fencers placing in tournaments. Buffalo Seminary hosted two fencing tournaments bringing fencers from all over the area. Assistant Coach David Cuifo believes that in each of our fencers lies greatness, whether it be in Saber, Foil, or Epee.

## Squash



The 2013-14 Varsity Squash team had 13 players led by Captain Sarah Obletz '14 and Coach Phil Barth. The season went from early November to late February. The first tournament was in Mercersberg, PA, playing teams from other boarding schools. Next was U.S. Nationals in Philadelphia, PA. The top eight players on the team traveled for four days together and overall finished better than any other SEM team in the history of SEM squash. In our high school league against Nichols School and Nardin Academy each match was a challenge and helped everyone improve individually and as a team member. The season ended with our annual team banquet and a recap of the season and awards. The Most Improved Player went to sophomore Kaitlin Hughes and the Coaches Award went to senior Sarah Obletz. Everyone on the team improved and the girls are definitely ready to take on the 2014-2015 season under the leadership of rising seniors Alexa Rosen and Madison Frank.

# SEM Bowling Rises

By Hiba Al-Naji '14

**S**EM formed its first bowling team only two years ago. By this year the team has 19 girls, many beginners, but some experienced bowlers including new student from Holy Angels, Megan Mazurkiewicz '15. I co-captained SEM's Varsity Bowling team with Elissa Baum '15, and my sister Jenna Al-Naji '17 captained Junior Varsity.

Varsity started off well, playing some great matches and battled between second and third place all season. Megan was awarded 1st place, All Monsignor Martin League, but an injury kept her out of the All Catholic League finals. We worked hard at finals but missed Megan, ending in fifth place.

The bowling team will continue to improve and will be in the spotlight as the girls continue to practice and build on their skills.

Initially, bowling was just another new thing for me to try – I never anticipated liking it as much as I do. Unfortunately, UB, where I will be studying pharmacy, does not have a bowling team but I have heard through the grapevine that a fellow bowler from St. Joe's will be there too next year, with plans to start a bowling club. Whether or not I continue to bowl is yet undecided, but I do know that I will be in the background of every SEM game next year as a fan.



**Varsity**

**Junior Varsity**



# Not in 163 Years!



## SEM Chess

SEM's first chess club had a great debut year. SEM practiced on Wednesdays (no prior knowledge required) and hosted a number of tournaments with four more scheduled for the fall of 2014. In March, coached by parent Antonio Cirillo, Enya Cirillo '17, Jingjing Guo '16 and Danielle Little '16 went to the New York State Scholastic Championships in Saratoga, NY. Jingjing was awarded a Best Newcomer Chess Player trophy.



## SEM Sails

Leah Trow '15, Kelsy Waack '14, and Caroline Dunbar '17 formed SEM's first sailing team, part of the Buffalo Yacht Club high school sailing program. SEM practices on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3-7 p.m., with Lew-Port, City Honors, Sacred Heart, Fredonia, Nardin Academy and Grand Island. Buffalo teams are in the Mid-Atlantic District (MASSA) of the Inter-Scholastic Sailing Association (ISSA). On May 10th the team won 1<sup>st</sup> place at the Buffalo High School Sailing Seasonal Open Regatta – the first regatta of the season! In the fall, the team expects two more sailors.

# NAIS Was Here

## And Liked Us. A Lot.

When John Chubb, President of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), visited SEM this winter he was put in the hands of two seniors for his tour. Molly Armstrong and Nianci (Niko) Lu did better than well. Just a few days later, Mr. Chubb wrote about his visit in his President's Corner blog on the NAIS website, singling out SEM and his guides for praise—out of the hundreds of independent schools he's visited since he started his listening tour last summer.

"I toured the school, guided by one local and one international student. I was struck by their obvious kinship and by the affection among students of all types, in classrooms, the cafeteria, the gymnasium, everywhere," Mr. Chubb said. In a later interview he said that our residential program too is at the forefront of independent school innovation. SEM is turning the traditional rural or suburban boarding school "model on its head"—bringing students to the city and creating residences that capitalize on all that an urban environment offers. A link to Mr. Chubb's full blog post is on our website. - *Erin St. John Kelly*

## Red Key Tour

By Molly Armstrong '14

On the morning of Friday, December 13<sup>th</sup> our tour with Mr. Chubb began. Although we had both given countless tours before, this one was different, in that the stakes were higher, or at least it felt that way.

We were asked to give Mr. Chubb a 10-15 minute tour, highlighting only the most important areas of SEM. This seemed like an impossible feat, as the complete SEM experience cannot fully be appreciated in such a short amount of time. Besides, the multiple flights of stairs, themselves, can take several minutes to climb, especially if cardio is not your forte...

Niko and I decided to start our tour by showing Mr. Chubb the library. We feel that room in particular displays both the rich history and tradition of SEM, with its roaring fireplace and portraits of past headmistresses and headmasters, as well as the constant innovation, as exemplified by the many students diligently working on their laptops.

After the library we showed him other aspects of the school, such as the Harkness tables, which promote discussion and facilitate the flow of debate; the constant use of technology in every classroom; the athletic facilities; the dual purpose science lab/classrooms; and the gorgeous art room. We wanted to make sure he felt our unwavering sense of school spirit and pride that we have for SEM.

Toward the end of our tour Mr. Chubb asked both of us why we had chosen to attend SEM. What made SEM so special?

I was drawn to this school because of its close-knit and supportive community of both students and faculty. SEM does not aim to simply churn out graduates, rather, each student leaves SEM a dreamer, a leader, and a good citizen.

I have attended other private schools in the area, but I have yet to find one such as SEM where students are able to thrive their own right.

Niko answered his question by first discussing the differences between the Chinese and American education systems. She explained that schools in China place their focus strictly on academics, specifically in areas of math and science. In contrast, schools in the U.S. emphasize the comprehensive development of a student. Niko chose SEM because of the boundless opportunities that are available to its students.

"I like challenging myself and learning about new cultures and wanted to develop my independence," Niko said.

"I believe it helps me to get ready for college both academically and for daily life." Access to sports was also important to her. "In China students do not have the opportunity to participate in sports, as rarely do schools have teams so the only exercise they get is PE class," she said.

A SEM girl can choose to pursue whichever path she desires and does not feel pigeonholed in a single discipline.

*Molly is President of the Student Government Association and a member of the Mock Trial and Model UN teams. She will attend Queen's University in the fall. Nianci (Niko) is a residence prefect, golf team captain, and a member of the varsity squash team. She will attend Boston University in the fall.*

*"I was also struck by how well-prepared these girls will be for the diverse world they will soon lead."*

## Wilkinson Poet: Charlotte Mears '72

It was a full house in the chapel on April 17th as Ansie Baird '55 introduced Charlotte Mears as this year's Elizabeth McNulty Wilkinson '25 poetry chair.

**I**t is only the second time since the event was endowed 29 years ago that a SEM graduate has been the guest poet.

Mrs. Baird invited Ms. Mears to come from her home in Madison, Mississippi, to be this year's Wilkinson poet on behalf of SEM's English department.

"Charlotte's poems are concerned with the fallibilities of the human condition," she said, and shortly thereafter the visiting poet took the podium for the first time since Class Day, 1972, and spoke with a catch in her throat.

"SEM nurtured me and challenged me," she said, and thanked Head of School Jody Douglass and the board for, "maintaining and enriching SEM's highest standards."

Ms. Mears told the assembled that her first poem was written while she was a freshman at SEM, in April 1969, upon the



death of her brother. She also said it took her 10 years to feel like it was finished.

"There's research that goes along with making a good poem. You have to make sure they're a little bit accurate."

She described her own poems as playful with an undertone of serious which seems much like the poet herself. Her most recent book of poems is *Sweet Air*, published by Sweet Air Press.

Ms. Mears' poems are full of woodpeckers, drilling beetles, starlings, barking dogs, green lobster, a rotted seal and a heavenly whale (AKA the Goodyear blimp).

Ms. Mears' final words at the podium were a little Southern. "By the way y'all, you're going to love this place years after you're gone."

At the reception afterward she was swamped by students and guests, friends, and former teachers.



## Robert Gioia, 2014 Prince Family Guest Lecturer

Robert Gioia, President of the John R. Oishei Foundation, gave the annual lecture on April 9<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Gioia was introduced by Prince granddaughter Ryan Bronstein '15. Ryan's mother, Jennifer Prince Bronstein '78 also attended.

The topic of the lecture was Buffalo's exciting waterfront development but he also gave a brief history of John Oishei. Oishei had an accident in the rain which inspired him to invent the windshield wiper, which then led to the founding of windshield wiper manufacturer Trico, and ultimately his Foundation. The accident was an experience that changed everything for Mr. Oishei, and for the future of Buffalo. Mr. Gioia said to the assembled SEM students, "When you have a defining moment, all we ask is that you give back to those in need."





# Mock Trial

By Julia Douglas '15

For the second year in a row, and fighting through unforeseen events, the SEM Mock Trial team advanced all the way to the quarter finals.

Coached by SEM teacher Molly Greene '98 and attorney Martha Donovan were juniors Madison Frank, Ceci Bair, and Morgan Aiken, who were attorneys for the prosecution. Kaitlin Hughes '16, Molly Armstrong '14, Maiah Overdorf '15 were witnesses testifying for the prosecution. Our defense attorneys were Julia Douglas '15, Madeline Caywood '15, and Danielle Little '16 (not pictured) and the witnesses testifying on behalf of the defense were Kat Hague '14, Clare von Simson '17, and Natalie Voos '14. Other members of the team were Lara Sherris '17 and Morgan Brown '16.

We were a young team—many of our experienced lawyers and witnesses graduated last year. This year every team member was necessary to our advancing. And, we were tested. An unforeseen event made it impossible for many of our members to compete and alternates had to take on multiple roles at the last minute—witnesses became lawyers and witnesses for the other side. To proceed, *every* member needed to learn *every* aspect of conducting a trial including how to object, direct and cross examine a witness effectively, how to impeach a witness, and proper court room behavior.

Mock Trial gives students the opportunity to experience the courtroom in a hands-on environment by simulating what it would be like to be in a real trial. Each year the school teams are presented with either a criminal or civil case. In a criminal case, either the state or the federal government is prosecuting the case against an individual or individuals known as the defendant(s). A civil case is

brought by an individual(s) against another individual(s) or an entity, like a corporation or an organization. The person bringing the lawsuit is referred to as the Plaintiff, and the person being sued is known as the Defendant. After tryouts, each member of the team is assigned a role as either a lawyer or a witness; three lawyers and three witnesses are needed for each side.

The New York State Bar Association's Law, Youth and Citizenship Program always tries to create a case that is relevant to current events – this

year the topic was hydrofracking. We learned a lot about a current event we were familiar with, but paradoxically knew very little about.

I have been a part of Mock Trial for three years and when I found out we had advanced to the quarter finals, I felt a wave of excitement and a sense of accomplishment flow through me.

*Being able  
to spend every  
Wednesday night eating  
dinner together  
in the library while  
we practiced bonded  
the team in a way  
not many other  
sports teams get.*



This year's case was unique because although it was a criminal prosecution, an outstanding civil case would be impacted by the outcome of the criminal matter. We also had to master specific scientific concepts in addition to the facts of the case.

The facts of both the criminal and civil case arise out of the same basic fact pattern (the story). In this case, Mickie McDonald, a small farmer residing in the village of Molivar in Northern Pennsylvania, believes that his livestock are dying and his family is getting ill because the water supply for his farm is being contaminated by diesel fuel which is illegally being used in the hydrofracking process of the Penn HydraGas company. Both Penn HydraGas and its CEO, Mitchell Tomley are being prosecuted for alleged violations.

Practices were held December through March, every Wednesday from 5:30-8:00 p.m. after many members of the team had already been at a two hour sports practice.

Everything I learned while participating in Mock Trial will prove essential in the future while I further pursue my

academic goals; however, the most important memories that I will take with me after my journey with Mock Trial cannot be found in any book. Each year at the first practice after the first competition, we would laugh and recount the mistakes we made. I learned that no matter what, you should never take life too seriously, and not be afraid to try, because even losing has an upside. Even at the worst times, when we lost a trial, the whole team came together as friends, not just teammates, and supported one another.

*I learned that no matter what, you should never take life too seriously, and not be afraid to try, because even losing has an upside.*

During the Mock Trial season, everyone on the team becomes a family. Spending every Wednesday night eating dinner together in the library while we practiced bonded the team in a way not many other sports teams have. We always got our work done, and had so much fun doing it.

Molly Armstrong '14, who has been on the team since her sophomore year, sums up the experience best. "Mock Trial has not only piqued my interest in the law and legal studies while improving my

public speaking skills, but it has also left me with a feeling of team accomplishment. Memories of spending time with that team that will always be with me."

# A Junior Retreat Of Epic Proportions

By Hannah Porter '15

In 1996, my name was the seventh most popular girl's name. I have always disliked that fact. I don't like having a common name. My secret wish is that it be something unique, something exotic, like Vivian. Now six of my fellow juniors and Mrs. Wienckowski know, people I wouldn't ordinarily have told something so personal. And that was just the ice-breaker on the morning of January 8, 2014 – the morning of the junior retreat.

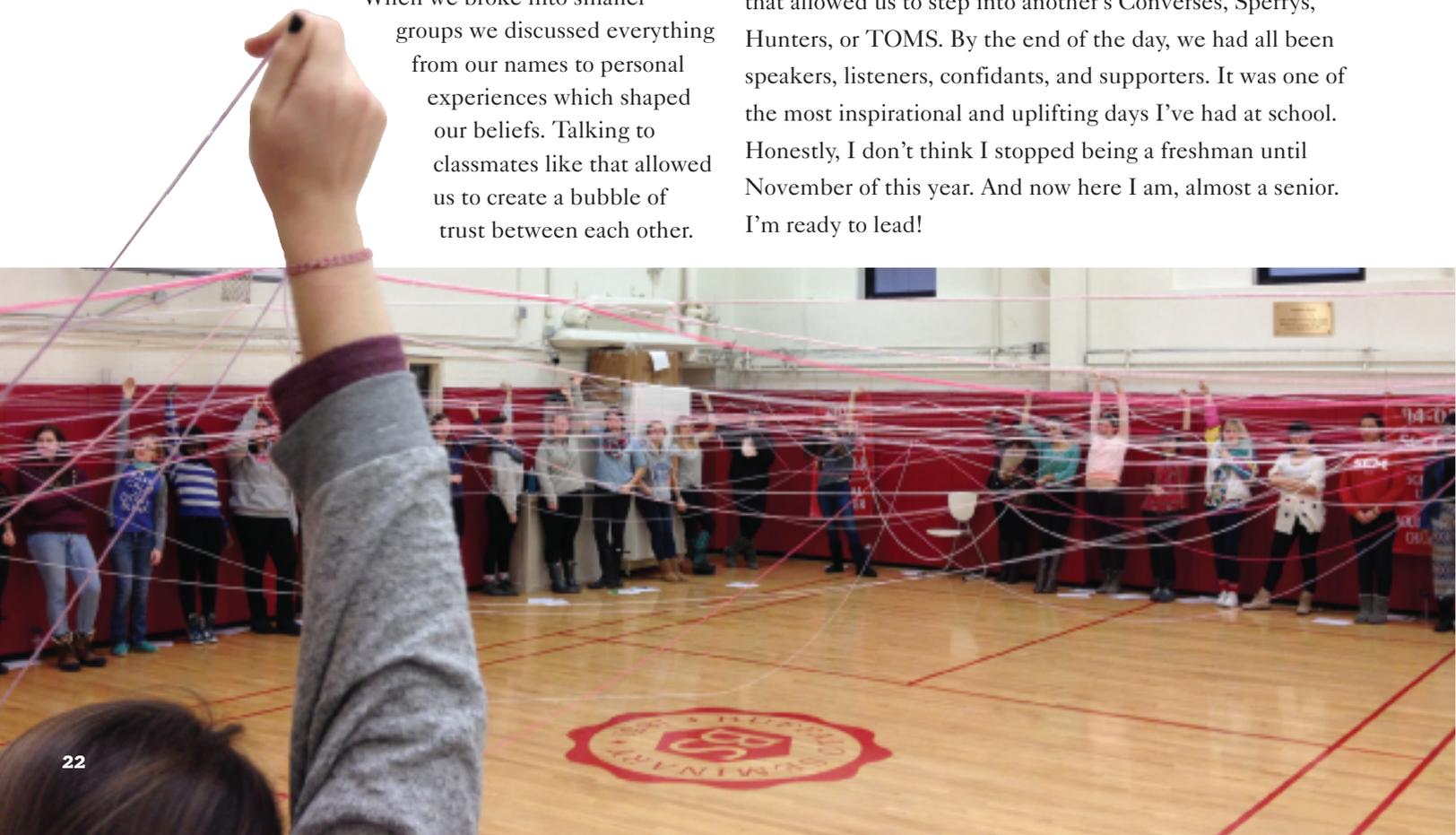
**W**hen I came to school for the junior retreat, I didn't know what to expect. Junior retreat? What exactly does that entail? I'd asked around and nobody knew what to tell me. I know now that what did happen that Wednesday was very refreshing.

Juniors are an unprecedented class of 67 students, and only a few were missing that day. We started as a larger web of connection – literally – we stood in a circle in the gym throwing a yarn ball around and making a web. We expressed our hopes and expectations for the day ahead. On the other side of the yarn, I started warming up to my classmates.

When we broke into smaller groups we discussed everything from our names to personal experiences which shaped our beliefs. Talking to classmates like that allowed us to create a bubble of trust between each other.

After we handed out our favorite song lyrics, and explained why they inspired us, a particularly intriguing discussion occurred. In our intimate group, we discussed our support systems outside of school, the adults, and the mentors whom we trust, or our personal “board of directors.” We shared very personal experiences – risks we'd taken, regrets, things we hold close to our hearts. I felt an overwhelming sense of trust throughout the day.

As my peers told personal stories, my eyes opened to the diversity that is SEM. My classmates and I shared experiences that allowed us to step into another's Converses, Sperrys, Hunters, or TOMS. By the end of the day, we had all been speakers, listeners, confidants, and supporters. It was one of the most inspirational and uplifting days I've had at school. Honestly, I don't think I stopped being a freshman until November of this year. And now here I am, almost a senior. I'm ready to lead!



# #Playsfordays



The best way to truly understand what our little theater department went through is to hear the actors who worked on it. This is an account by senior Maribel Leddy and freshmen Aerin Wagner and Bleu Ruby Daniels-Taylor. Maribel has participated in seven productions at SEM, Aerin, two, and this was Bleu's first time on our stage.

- Theater teacher Susan Drozd

## PREAMBLE

The journey to #PlaysForDays begins in the makeup room in Theater Styles class. In this class, nine students - Madison Frank, Ke Yu '14, WeiYi Li, Shirley Zhang, Nichole Montalvo, Katie Thomas '14, Hiba Al Naji '14, Natalie Voos '14, Ms. Drozd and I tackled numerous plays written by people who are still alive and kicking, including a few from Suzan-Lori Parks' *365 Days, 365 Plays*.

The first time we read Suzan-Lori Parks' work, we read the plays that landed on our various birthdays. Four of these plays ended up in the final product that the cast and crew of #Playsfordays performed.

Ms. Drozd had been so inspired by our class presentations, that Suzan-Lori Parks was coming to Buffalo for the BABEL series, and the challenge presented by doing anything from

*365 Days, 365 Plays*, that she picked 52 of the plays for the spring show.

As a SEM theater veteran, I knew that there would be an element of memorization, usually a monologue, and something else. This audition consisted of a scene with a partner, a scene alone, and a surprise scene handed to us during the audition. And, because this show was an ensemble piece, auditions took place with a group of people so that we could mix and match ourselves to yield interesting results.

And then it was time for rehearsals. Twenty actors and crew would attend rehearsals in the weeks leading up to our final performances.

- Maribel Leddy'14

## REHEARSAL

*After rehearsing scenes and performing for Ms. Drozd, actors would go elsewhere to keep practicing, to make it perfect. The cast members of the "The Executioner's Daughter" section had so much fun rehearsing that they made it into a musical, later performed just for cast and crew.*

*After weeks of long yet fun filled rehearsals, we finally got to tech weekend, when we set all of the light and sound cues into the show. Performing underneath the spectacular lights changes the way you act. Setting all of the cues called for long hours rehearsing the show which was also bonding time with your fellow cast and crew. Although this*

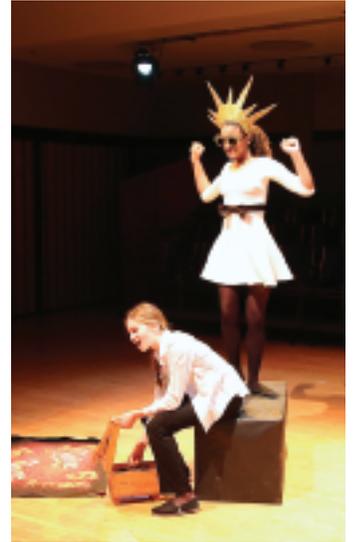
*might be cheesie – with so much time spent together the cast and crew of #Playsfordays became a family.*

*Being part of this theatrical production helped us outside of the play – we became better audience members because we learned how much impact audience reaction has on a performance.*

*On preview night the entire cast and crew came together backstage with props and quick changes and the show went smoothly. As opening night rolled around, we were all ready to perform and give our audience a good show.*

**-Aerin Wagner '17**

## THE SHOW



## THE WRAP

*After long nights of rehearsals and laughter, I began to understand how difficult it is if you don't love your cast and crew members. Even if you do not necessarily want to, you have to. Perish the thought of being in a show with people you hate.*

*Even after the last show it felt as though the production ended too soon. Every light and sound cue, each action of every play, each punch line of each joke was branded into our minds. We would always remember them, but we would not use them again, not with the same people. Perhaps I feel this sorrowful because it was my first production, but maybe I will feel this way during my next.*

*The Just Buffalo BABEL lecture featuring the playwright Suzan-Lori Parks, was like a short reunion after the play. Listening and watching Parks lecture was astounding. I fell in love with her play but initially, I did not have any sort of attachment to the playwright. When Parks spoke we all*

**Perish the thought of being in a show with people you hate.**

*realized that she was the only person that could have written #Playsfordays. In Parks' lecture she introduced different things that a person needs to do in life, one of them stood out to me more than the others: Entertain your far-out ideas. This rule was one that Parks blatantly follows, as writing a play every day is certainly far-out.*

*When waiting to see Parks' play, "Topdog/Underdog," I was giddy and excited. I made my way to the front of the line. I had so many things to say to Parks but not enough words, nor enough time. As I spoke to her I was thinking about how human she is, how composed and sweet she is. Parks seemed normal, not that normal is a bad thing...it was just surprising. I realize that anyone can do anything, you do not have to act or think a certain way. Of the many things that Parks gave me, unintentionally helping me come to that conclusion was the most important.*

**-Bleu Ruby Daniels-Taylor'17**



*“As an international student,  
I felt confident about being  
abroad because I have already  
experienced a similar  
process here at SEM.”*

**- Jung Yoon '14**

## At Home in Oviedo

By Sharon Ammerman Sharon Ammerman is the ESL Specialist and the senior class advisor.

**N**ine SEM girls spent their spring break in Oviedo, Spain, with the girls they had hosted in Buffalo this past December. Surrounded by the Cantabrian Mountains and a quick drive from the sea, Oviedo is officially the cleanest city in Spain, and boasts architecture dating from the 8th century, the heyday of the famed Asturian kings.

We knew we were “home” when we saw a friendly group of Spanish mothers, fathers, and exchange sisters, not to mention our own former Spanish teacher Dr. Patrick Moore and his lovely wife Begonia.

The SEM girls were naturals in Spain, with the ability to comprehend rapid-fire classroom lectures at San Ignacio high school. They filled their days with cultural excursions, local shopping, and weekend getaways with their host families. The pull of shopping was rivaled only by food—from the forty-plus

unique cheeses of the Asturian dairy industry, to chocolate and churros at the renowned Valor, to intimidating but tasty new seafood prepared by their host families.

“We’re having fun and the rain’s not stopping us!” quipped Ryan Bronstein '15, although the sun did peek out for a few days, just to remind us that we were, after all, in Spain.

As we drove away from Oviedo on yet another rainy day, a rare winter wonderland suddenly appeared when our bus emerged from a tunnel—perhaps a sign that the city was not ready for us to leave. One hopeful student (who asks not to be named) shared her resourceful plan of parent manipulation to make sure she can return to Oviedo this summer, including a part-time job, subtle hints, and well-timed tears. All participants hope to return “home” to Oviedo very soon!

# Spring in Paris and Le Havre

By Kirsten Gresko

This is chemistry teacher Kirsten Gresko's first year at SEM.



On March 17, 2014, six sophomores, one lone senior and I embarked for France. We embraced Parisian culture for the first four days of the trip which was followed by a two-week stay for the girls with a host student from Institution St. Joseph in Le Havre, a harbor city in Normandy.

Sightseeing in Paris meant we visited numerous museums including the Musée D'Orsay, and the Louvre. No trip to Paris is complete without touring the Eiffel Tower, which we ascended at dusk, to overlook the city, which is also known as *La Ville Lumière* (The City of Light). A great time was had eating crepes along Les Champs Elysée, en route to L'Arc de Triomphe. The Panthéon and the Catacombes were explored, too.

Students were on their feet from sunrise to sunset, making the most of their experience. Much picture taking occurred at other architectural sites, which included the Gothic styled Notre Dame Cathedral, and the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at the crest of Montmartre.

*"I think my favorite part of the exchange was getting to speak the language and waking up everyday actually saying 'Bonjour!'"*

- Anabel Cornacchio '16

Attitudes were great, friends were made, and knowledge was sought. Before heading up north, a taste of spring air was enjoyed aboard the Bateaux Mouches along the Seine, and in the gardens outside the palace of Versailles.

On the night of March 21, the students, exhausted yet excited, met their French families in Le Havre. Pam Rivas '14 and Clara Bostyn, Sophia Adamucci '16 and Bertille Lassarat, Madison Chamberlain '16 and Anne Baril, Anabel Cornacchio '16 and Lena Galais Leduc, Anna Fretz '16 and Victoire Lemaistre, Abigail Hopkins '16 and Mathilde Finiel, and Kaitlin Hughes '16 and Louise Mauger were reunited.

When SEM students were not accompanying their host student to school, local excursions were made to the D-Day beaches, Mont St. Michel, the cliffs of Étretat, and the ancient city of Rouen. The stories of their experiences were positive and reflections were made about the differences between French and American culture.



## Girl Power. All Summer Long.



**JUNE 30-AUGUST 8**  
**GIRLS ENTERING 5-8TH GRADES**  
Looking for an all-girls day camp that inspires creativity and confidence? Summer at SEM is the place to be! To learn more, call (716) 885-6780. Find us at [facebook.com/SummeratSem](https://www.facebook.com/SummeratSem)

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*An independent day and boarding school for college-bound girls*  
**BuffaloSeminary.org**

# Report from Buffalo Seminary Alumnae Association

By President Gabrielle P. DeRose '74

June marks the end of an extended three-year term as president. It's been an exceptional experience, yet I am excited that new blood will lead the charge come September.

When I first became president, I had several goals regarding by-laws, processes, succession, and events. I am extremely proud of this board and its accomplishments and wanted to share some of their achievements with you.

## **By-laws:**

After numerous attempts in the mid-2000s followed by unexpected delays and interruptions, our by-laws were updated and completed this year. This was no small feat! Kudos and much appreciation to the entire by-laws committee and its determined chair, Cindy Pope '78.

## **Scholarship**

A cornerstone of our board is the Alumnae Association scholarship, first established by the Graduates Association in 1924. Thanks to Tara Ellis '88, the scholarship process and guidelines were revised to comply with recent federal regulations, and criteria were standardized and weighted to ensure an equitable approach to candidate selection.

## **Board composition**

Another goal was to recruit younger representatives. Our current make-up includes three from the class of 2002 and one member each from 2003, 2004 and 2006. They have energized and brought a fresh perspective to our group and been valuable, active contributors and/or chairs to our various committees. Looking to the future, their collective enthusiasm, energy, and leadership ensure a solid succession plan.

## **Holiday Bazaar**

Revamped by my predecessors, the Holiday Bazaar continues to amaze. Each year this board outdoes itself, and the past three years have been outstanding. Chaired and/or co-chaired by Robin Hace '02 and Gigi Helliwell '76, they took the bazaar to new heights increasing our profits, attendance, and professionalism. And the baskets? Spectacular!

## **Alumnae Reception**

In 2012, we introduced this event to honor past BSAA directors and Graduates Association officers in recognition and celebration of their many contributions to SEM and our organization. It has since become an annual event and continues to grow.

## **Communications**

Finally, although in its infancy, we are revamping communications to reach a broader, more global audience. Stay tuned.

When my term expires in June, it will end on a high note for all the reasons cited above and because my last official duty as president will be to address reunion attendees, which will include my 40th (!) reuniting classmates.

My sincere thanks to my fellow officers and directors for a fabulous ride!

## More opportunities...for a new perspective

SEM can make a huge difference in a teenage girl's life. Our outstanding academic curriculum, athletics, and clubs coupled with our 5- or 7-day residential program foster independence, confidence for success in college and career. Scholarships and financial aid available for qualified students.

# SEM

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# The Hopkins Fund

A legacy of leadership giving created by a SEM trailblazer

Mary-Louise Hopkins '42, who passed away in March, established The Hopkins Fund to honor the memory of two generations of women who came before her: Alice Williams Hopkins class of 1890, Louise Alice Hopkins '11, and Mary Hutchison Hopkins '18.

These impressive women—her grandmother, aunt and mother—cherished the SEM experience and thrived because of it. Mary-Louise felt that SEM meant a great deal to all of them and said, “the friendships they made at SEM lasted for lifetimes.”

Mary-Louise was a proud alumna of Buffalo Seminary and Wellesley College. While at SEM she was editor-in-chief of *The Seminaria* and voted “most likely to succeed.” Following her graduation from college with a zoology degree, she opted to take paths rarely taken by women of her era. She studied law at UB, travelled the world, and among other professions was a computer programmer for Xerox when that industry was still young.

Mary-Louise understood the value of a SEM education and wanted to ensure the school's future, while honoring the past, and so she created the Hopkins Fund in 1964, and in honor of

her 50th reunion in 1992, she made a second donation.

To support SEM is to affirm one's belief in the worthiness of educating young women superbly. Never before has there been a greater need for women to lead and achieve. The

SEM experience is much more than an education; it is a transformation.

Bequests and funds make a positive commitment to the future of SEM—to generations of young women to come—a bequest to SEM is an excellent remembrance.

SEM is fortunate to be able to celebrate

women like Mary-Louise, who have been philanthropic leaders at the school. Named funds reflect the long-term needs of the school in conjunction with personal giving interests. We encourage all SEM alumnae to raise their sights and make leadership gifts and/or bequests to their alma mater and the education of women. Please contact Jane Constantine at [jconstantine@buffaloseminary.org](mailto:jconstantine@buffaloseminary.org).



## *Annual Fund*

We are almost there (90%).

Help us over the top!

Donate online or use the enclosed remittance envelope.

Thank you.

(716) 885-6780 x 209





**IT'S YOUR REUNION**

**REUNION**

by Barbara Fischer McQueency '74

Surprise yourself.  
 Walk through THE doors.  
 Expect the unexpected.  
 Bond with those you never knew.  
 Connect with lifelong friends.  
 Revisit your hometown and old haunts.  
 Laugh at your old self.  
 Have a classmate shock you.  
 There are so many to see and so much to relive.  
 Some you may not recognize.  
 Some you will never forget.  
 Honor the memories of those we miss.  
 Come this year.  
 Don't wait!  
 Historic friends visiting historic places = priceless.  
 These are indeed the "good old days."

*Please consider a gift of \$50 in honor of your reunion.*

# In Memoriam

**Inga Jean  
Woodwell Ball '40**

**Richard L. "Rick" Berger**  
 husband of Former Trustee  
 Nancy Berger, host parent  
 of Pauline Molgaard '06,  
 Prim Taechachoonhakit '07,  
 and Ariel Hu '10

**Virginia Ostendorf  
Bristol '46**  
 cousin of Ann Kelleran '51

**Ronald G. Bronstein**  
 husband of  
 Former Trustee Jennifer  
 Prince Bronstein '78, father  
 of Kilby Bronstein '10 and  
 Ryan Bronstein '15,  
 brother-in-law of  
 Allison Prince '75

**Roy Dickinson**  
 stepfather of Seminary  
 Teachers Douglas Hopkins  
 and Kyle Hopkins,  
 stepgrandfather of Eliza  
 Hopkins '13 and  
 Abigail Hopkins '16

**Joanne "Judy"  
Wilhelm Doerschuk '42**

**Charles J. "Jack" Hahn**  
 Former Trustee, father of  
 Holly Hahn-Baker '77

**Jay W. Heckman**  
 father of Nancy Heckman  
 Blasberg '67 and  
 Pamela Heckman '70

**Julie Viele Hines '39**  
 sister-in-law of  
 Nancy Emerson Viele '43,  
 aunt of Catherine Viele '69,  
 Lucy Viele '71, and  
 Amy Viele '73

**Mary-Lou Hopkins '42**

**Olive Horn**  
 mother of Seminary School  
 Nurse, Nancy Vargo

**James R. How**  
 father of Jennifer How '76

**Frederick N.C.  
Jerauld III**  
 brother of Barbara Jerauld  
 Coffin '53 and Suzanne  
 Jerauld Weathers '58

**Chauncey C. Kennedy, Jr.**  
 husband of Patricia "Pam"  
 McCarthy Kennedy '49

**Elisabeth A. Lapey**  
 mother of  
 Anne Lapey Rogers '54 and  
 Clare Lapey Holtan '62

**Faith Leslie**  
 mother of  
 Kathleen Quinn-Leslie '84

**Barnard J. Montanari**  
 father of Judy Montanari '83

**Patricia Kaming  
Moore '49**

**Ann Schruett**  
 grandmother of  
 Alexa Rosen '15

**Roslye S. Schweitzer**  
 mother of  
 Constance Schweitzer '67

**John L. "Lud" Truscott**  
 brother of Former  
 Trustee Mary "Bibber"  
 Truscott Jebb '47,  
 uncle of Katie Jebb '76

**Rosemary Twist**  
 grandmother of  
 Hilairy Hartnett, PhD. '86

**Frances L. Voelker**  
 mother of  
 Linda Voelker  
 Winograd '54

**Charley "Dickie" Walter**  
 son of Margaret "Peggy"  
 Cowan Walter '45, brother of  
 Carla Walter Gojlewicz '73,  
 nephew of Barbara Cowan  
 Hyde '43, and cousin of  
 Grace Hennigan '09

# Keep in Touch

Do we have your current phone number and email address?

Please send your updated contact information to  
Development@BuffaloSeminary.org

Like us at  /BuffaloSeminaryAlumnae  
and play Harry Schooley's quizzes.

Follow SEM on  /BuffaloSeminary for school news.  
*We love to stay in touch with our alums!*

## REUNION 2014: JUNE 6 & 7

Alumnae arrived from far and wide to reunite and celebrate their time spent here as students. **This year we honored those who attended SEM in the classes that graduated in years ending in 4 and 9.** A festive weekend was planned to provide opportunities to socialize, learn more about what SEM is like today, and enjoy some local tours.

*Summer Snippets* will have pictures and a wrap-up.

## Reunion 2015 It's never too early to start making plans!



Reunion 2015, honoring those who attended SEM in the classes that graduated in years ending in 5 and 0, is June 5 and 6, 2015.

Check the website for reunion information, or contact Carolyn Clark [cclark@buffaloseminary.org](mailto:cclark@buffaloseminary.org) if you have questions.

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# 10% Leadership Club

This section was inadvertently omitted from the 2012-13 Annual Report.

Leadership Club donors are those who generously increased their gifts to SEM by 10% over last year's contribution. Last year, 300+ Leadership donations were made. We thank the following individuals for their loyal support:

Kais Abdeen  
Lisa Abeyounis '82  
Beth Adameczyk  
Susan Gibbons Alford '59  
Holly Boeckel Allen '73  
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 Karen Baker Levin '85  
 Anne Levison  
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 Karen Serman  
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 Janet Katz Wisbaum '58  
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 Augustus and Deborah Young  
 Carla Young  
 Suzanne Church Zeller '51  
 Ronna Tanenbaum  
 Zimmer '63

# More opportunities... for all girls at SEM



*Open House*

Sunday, September 28

*Entrance Exams*

Saturday, November 22 and Saturday, December 20

*Remember these dates – and share them with your friends!*

**SEM**

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**I N S I D E :**  
Mark Twain at SEM



*“Our new curriculum encourages each and every girl to think of herself as a citizen and a scholar.”*

- BENJAMIN PRIEST, PhD