Fourteen middle school students and their teacher sit together around a table, responding to a novel they’ve all read. Today there are three groups discussing three different novels: *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*, *Lord of the Flies*, and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*—books chosen because they help prepare for the upcoming class trip to Arizona, whose focus is Native Americans and ancient American culture.

“I know what I think; I want to hear what you think.”

“I like that you went all out.”

by John Long, Head of School
Ordinarily students engage in a seminar discussion driven by their own interpretive questions. One student will pose a question to the group and the others answer and respond, clarify or challenge, agree or disagree. They speak to each other. The teacher is not the center of the discussion; does not ask all the questions; and is not the funnel through which all comments flow. The teacher gives just enough guidance to keep the discussion ‘on the rails.’ Students conduct a real conversation about the book. The objective is to deepen each participant’s understanding of the text—or as we sometimes say, “I know what I think; I want to hear what you think.”

Today’s seminar is a bit different, though. As I entered the room, one student was doing a rapid-fire, dramatic reading: the descriptions were colorful and the action built to a surprising climax. When she finished, her classmates broke into spontaneous applause and adulation. I thought she was reading a passage from the book, but she was not; the writing was her own, alternative ending to the novel. For today, as a culminating project to celebrate the completion of their books, each student was asked to prepare a creative response to their reading. There were essays and drawings and paintings. One student drew a picture of a cell phone text conversation between two characters, replete with LOL’s and OMG’s. The accuracy of her representation was such that we know the phone had only 20% charge at the time of the illustrated screenshot.

Responding to the work that they saw and heard, the students had lots of positive comments for their author and artist classmates. To a student whose interpretive essay stated, “people are being judged harshly by their appearance rather than by who they are,” a classmate said, “I like what you wrote because it connects the book to the real world of today.” Another student painted a landscape of a village beside a river, depicting the novel’s setting — work that she had obviously spent quite some time on. A classmate said, “I really like that you went all out,” — and she clearly meant it.

This single class session from one day in the life of the middle school provides an archetypal example of how Post Oak develops the characteristics and skills measured by the Mission Skills Assessment (MSA). Clearly creativity and curiosity were at work as students chose, conceptualized and executed their projects. More than one student commented that their final product did not represent their initial approach to the project. This is how you build resilience — learning that success can emerge from failed efforts. And time management was clearly in play. The assignment was given a week ago, and everyone was ready to present their work at the appointed hour. And though each individual completed a separate project, the seminar format is at its heart a collaborative effort and a celebration of the social and emotional skills required to build teamwork. I cannot emphasize strongly enough how important it is that the ethos of the community is supportive and encouraging, an emotional climate that makes it safe to say what you really believe, and to risk representing your creative inventions to your peers: “I like that you went all out.” 🙌

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Microeconomy in the Middle School

by 8th Grade

In the beginning of the year, we read about Maria Montessori’s vision for a middle school. In it, she stated that some sort of a microeconomy will greatly benefit the students. In our middle school, we believe that real-world experiences are essential at this point in our lives. In just a few more years, we will be entering the realm of adulthood, a place where we can no longer lean on someone to take care of us. In order to prepare for this new world, we have started our own small business.

We are currently selling peach preserves for $5, and will be making new jams every two weeks. We are also growing a herb garden in the Young Children’s Community playground. We will be selling these herbs in October. For more information about our products, visit www.poms.tl.

Come to Bearkats’ games! We will be selling food prepared by our baking group, as well as jams, and Post Oak wristbands (wristbands are $2, $3 online, and are also available for purchase at anytime in the Post Oak Middle School) and a lot more!

Our flag football game dates are:

October 8, October 13, and October 22. All flag football games start at 4:30 p.m. at Feld Park (6406 Avenue, Bellaire, TX 77401), located across the street from The Post Oak School.

Our volleyball game dates are:

October 6, October 14, October 20, October 22. All games will start at 5:00 p.m. in The Post Oak School’s gym, with the exception of the game on October 22 which will start at 6:00 p.m.
The POST OAK high school

ODYSSEY TRIP 2015:
MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST
In the high school, we use Naviance Family Connection in the College Counseling office. Naviance is a web-based technology program that is used by our students, families, and faculty members to help manage the college admissions process. Family Connection is the website that students and families use to access and share information with their college counselor as they develop their post-secondary plans. Using Family Connection, students can research careers and colleges, create résumés, take personality assessments and surveys, create goals and to-do’s and eventually, submit requests for transcripts and recommendations directly to their teachers and college counselor. 10th through 12th grade students are already using Naviance. All 9th grade student accounts are currently being created and parents will have access to their Naviance account by Thanksgiving break. We will introduce the platform to all students in a group setting, but we welcome individual family meetings upon request. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any point with questions (AmandaSmith@PostOakSchool.org).

To read more about the Naviance Family Connection program and research the various features offered, you may visit: www.naviance.com

Dates to keep in mind:

October 14th @8:00 a.m.: P/SAT for all 9th-11th grade students. What is the P/SAT and why is it important? The P/SAT is a nationwide, multiple-choice test taken by about 3.4 million high school students every year—mostly sophomores and juniors. At Post Oak, we test all 9th-11th graders. A great primer for the SAT and even the ACT, the P/SAT is shorter than the SAT and ACT. The P/SAT/NMSQT does not count towards college admissions; however, it is the qualifying test for National Merit Scholarships (11th grade only). That means that the highest scoring students may win scholarship money. To read more about the P/SAT, you may visit: www.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt

October 22nd @11:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m., HARN College Fair at POHS. The Houston Area Recruiter’s Network is a community of professional college and university representatives from a variety of non-profit, accredited, two (2) and four (4) year academic institutions who serve Houston area high school students and their families with integrity. HARN is committed to collaborating with high school and college counselors to provide educational access and resources tailored for each student and their needs for future endeavors. This website is intended as a resource for college counselors and students who would like more information about the various universities represented in the HARN network. For more information, please visit: https://houstonarearecruitenetwork.wordpress.com/
COOL STUFF
This week our IHSS class is working to gather information on artifacts found at HMNS to create interactive research projects. Students will be presenting their work to docents at the HMNS to show how different technologies and new apps can be used when interacting with visitors to allow a more engaging experience at the Museum.

Have you lived in Houston for 10+ years?

By Dr. Jamie Lee, Integrated History and Social Science teacher

Students of Integrated History and Social Sciences and English Language Arts will be partnering with the University of Houston’s Center for Public History and Houston’s History Magazine by conducting oral histories during the month of October. These projects will be part of the permanent archives at U of H.

We are looking for Post Oak families or friends who have lived in Houston for at least ten years and have played an active role in the business or social community. We specifically request individuals or business owners in the Museum District, but invite anyone in Houston to reply.

If you know someone, or are willing yourself to be interviewed for this project, please email Dr. Jamie Lee, jamielc@postoakschool.org.

HIGH SCHOOL ADMISSION OPEN HOUSE

Tuesday, October 6, 2015
Tuesday, November 17, 2015
Thursday, December 3, 2015
Tuesday, January 12, 2016
Wednesday, February 10, 2016
Tuesday, April 5, 2016
Thursday, June 9, 2016

The POST OAK HIGH SCHOOL
in the Museum District
Beakrats Cross-Country: Ready, Set, RUN!

by Coach Trevino & Coach Tucker

Wow! What an absolutely amazing start to our 2015 Cross-country season at the Chavez High School Lobo Meet on Saturday, September 12, 2015.

The Post Oak runners all finished fabulously! The course was a tough one. It started and ended with a mud hill and had mud puddles all along the way offering very little traction.

Our runners persevered coming in muddy, proud and placing very well.

Our second meet was held on 9/19 at Second Baptist in Katy. Our 8th grade girls’ team placed 4th overall and our 6th grade boys’ team placed 3rd overall! All runners’ worked extra hard to make it through another tough course on a really hot day!

“The five S’s of sports training are: Stamina, Speed, Strength, Skill and Spirit; but the greatest of these is Spirit.”
- Ken Doherty – two time decathlon champion

Our results are impressive for the first two XC meets with all first time XC runners. We will continue working on our stamina, speed, strength and skill to prepare for our next three meets.

October 3 @ St. Thomas-Willow Waterhole
5300 Gasmer Drive, Houston, TX 77035
11:30 a.m. Middle School girls
12:00 p.m. Middle School boys

October 7 @ the Dolphin Dash
4201 TC Jester Blvd, Houston, TX 77018
4:30 p.m. DIVISION I boys
4:45 p.m. DIVISION I girls

October 10 @ Faith West Academy
2225 Porter Road, Katy, TX 77493
Boy’s races:
10:30 a.m. 3,200 Meters boys 6th (& under) Middle School
10:30 a.m. 3,200 Meters boys 7th Middle School
10:30 a.m. 3,200 Meters boys 8th Middle School

Girl’s races:
10:00 a.m. 3,200 Meters girls 6th (& under) Middle School
10:00 a.m. 3,200 Meters girls 7th Middle School
10:00 a.m. 3,200 Meters girls 8th Middle School

If you have a chance, come cheer on our runners. Congratulations to all!
POP A Dinner

Many friends, good food, and a warm welcome to the new school year were all on the schedule for the annual Post Oak Parent Association Dinner. Over 200 Post Oak community members: parents, trustees, faculty, and staff filled the grand ballroom of the Junior League. The event was chaired by Post Oak parents Allison Hamilton and Regina Mellinger who both spoke about their experiences at Post Oak. They were followed by High School seniors: [Redacted] and [Redacted] — an impressive trio who showed all in attendance how terrific our Post Oak High School seniors really are. Thanks to everyone who attended and to all donors who contributed additional funds to support faculty at the event.
Our thanks to the following donors for their support of faculty and staff participation at the POPA Dinner event:

SHONALI AND RAKESH AGRAWAL
MARJANEH AZAD
LOUISE AND HENRY BERGERON
MARY BIRK
EMILY BROWNING AND ADAM MAY
HEATHER AND MAXWELL BULK
YONCA AND ISMAIL CEYHAN
LAURA AND MARTIN CITARDI
DEE AND SHAKI COMMISSARIAT
LESLEY AND MYLES CULHANE
VAREEN AND DAVE CUNNINGHAM
TINA PETERSEN AND JOHN DUBOISE
EMILY AND ROBERT EMMETT
SAIDA FAGALA
LORI ANN AND MICHAEL FOERTSCH
ABBE AND ADAM FORMAN
ERIN AND BRYAN FOSTER
ALLISON AND DAVID HAMILTON
KELLY AND ERICH JANZEN
REENA AND MEDHAVI JOGI
SAMANTHA AND RONALD KEGGE
MARCEL AND MATTHEW LAKE
KATHY AND JOHN LONG
SARA AND GABRIEL LOPERENA
HEIDE MAIRS
STACEY AND MARK MARTIN
RHIAN AND LANE MCKINNEY
REGINA AND BERT MELLINGER

PAMELA GRIFFIN-MINNICH AND GENE MINNICH
RENEE AND MILTON MORRIS
WENDY AND MEIR O’HANNA
CATHERINE AND ROBERT ORR
KATHLEEN PADDEN AND RICHARD EVANS
PRAGNYA PATEL AND KUSHIK PAREKH
ANH NGUYEN AND VICTOR PHAN
ALICIA KOWALCHUK AND BENJAMIN SALDAÑA
DANIELA AND MANOLO SANCHEZ
MORGAN AND DAVID SHIN
EYV PAPPAS AND NIKOLAS SPILIOTIS
ROCHELE TAFOLLA AND RICHARD HESS
CATHERINE THAN AND HOANG QUAN VU
NIKAYLA AND AARON THOMAS
JUDY LE AND DON TOM
VALERIE AND JAY VOLPI
WHITNEY AND MARC WALSH
TYSON AND MISTY WEIHS
COURTNEY WULFE
LAUREN AND GARRISON ZIFF
Rocio DIAZ AND FRANCISCO ZORRILLA
JENNIFER AND FERNANDO ZUMBADO

2015–2016
Important Dates

Oct. 12  Columbus Day
          school closed

Nov. 25–27  Thanksgiving Break
            school closed

Dec. 11  Early dismissal for all
        students

Dec. 18  Early dismissal for all
        students

Dec. 21–Jan. 4  Winter Break
               school closed

Jan. 18  Martin Luther
        King, Jr. Day
               school closed

Feb. 15  Presidents’ Day
         school closed

Mar. 14–18  Spring Break
            (only students with
            expanded-year contracts
            attend)

Mar. 25  Good Friday
        school closed

April 22  Early dismissal for all
        students

May 26  High School
        Commencement
        (2016 graduating class)

May 27  Last day of school
        (to be confirmed)
What do Post Oak faculty do when they are not teaching students? We were excited to learn that one of our high school math teachers, Jeremy Grisbee, just released his first album with his band, Grisbee.

From his bio: Grisbee is a folk-rock band from Houston, TX that formed in 2012 when singer-songwriter Jeremy Grisbee moved to town from Springfield, MO. After playing a few solo shows in the city, Jeremy encountered a handful of talented musicians who were interested in seeing what they could bring to a batch of songs he'd written. These songs would eventually become Grisbee’s debut album, Sail Another Day (2015).

Jeremy started writing music as a freshman in high school and continues to find inspiration from other artists such as: Blake Mills, Wilco, Ryan Adams, Dr. Dog. Learn more about him and his new album on his website:

Math teacher and CAS coordinator by day, folk rock artist by night. Congratulations, Jeremy! 🎶
1. A Primary student practices linear counting using Teen Beads.

2. Carefully planning strategy in the ASEP chess club.

3. Learning rhythm in music class.

4. Sewing in ASEP.

5. Presenting the art of watercolor in the Primary classroom.

6. A Bearkat practices in preparation for the upcoming game.

7. Learning color theory, form and function.

8. Kale is a healthy and delicious favorite in YCC.

9. A primary student helps cut cheese to serve his fellow students.

10. Students contemplate their library book selection together.
**CALENDAR**

**SEPTEMBER 27- OCTOBER 3**

- 9/28-10/2: Middle School Arizona Trip
- Tues 9/29: Intro to Redirecting Children's Behavior 1/6 6:30 p.m.
- Thu 10/1: Lower EL to Upper EL Transition Meeting 7:00–8:00 p.m.

**OCTOBER 4- OCTOBER 12**

- Tues 10/6: High School Admissions Open House 7:00 p.m.
- Wed 10/7: POPA Coffee/Work Day and Mystery Box wrapping 8:45 a.m.–noon
- Fri 10/9: Conference Day: reserved for students new to class. Class not in session; only students with expanded year contracts attend
- Mon 10/12: Columbus Day Teacher in-service School closed for all students

**NOTICE BOARD**

**PATHWAYS to INDEPENDENCE**

**YOUR PARENTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED**

We are pleased to offer **Parent Education Nights** at Post Oak High School

These one hour discussions are designed to:

- Answer parenting questions
- Find ideas and solutions
- Discover how parents influence optimal development

**JOIN US!**

Wednesday, October 7th
Wednesday, November 4th
Wednesday, December 2nd
Wednesday, February 3rd
Wednesday, March 2nd
Wednesday, April 6th

All discussions will be held from 7:00-8:00 p.m. at the Post Oak High School 1102 Autrey St.

**POPA COFFEE AND WORK DAY**

8:45 A.M.–NOON

Join Post Oak parents at the Bissonnet campus on Wednesday, October 7 for a delightful morning of coffee and mystery box wrapping. We hope to see you there.

**ABOUT THE POST**

The Post appears every other Friday of the regular school year. You can receive a printed copy from your oldest child, or a PDF version online.

Submit letters, articles, or photos in electronic form by 5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday before publication to Communications Coordinator Rachel Dupuis (racheldupuis@postoakschool.org). If publication is on a Thursday due to school closure on Friday, then the deadline is 5:00 p.m. on the preceding Monday.

THE POST OAK SCHOOL was founded in 1963 and accredited by both the International Baccalaureate® Programme (IBO) and the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS).

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