

The Acta Diurna

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As the summer draws to a close, and a new school year is on the horizon, we, as students, friends, and members of this community have a fresh start. This experience is especially poignant to me, as a second year Altamont student going into my senior year. I have had an opportunity that few, if any, of my classmates share. Coming into a completely foreign environment at the beginning of my junior year taught me much about myself and others. For one, I am terrible at telling jokes to break the ice! All joking aside, I learned what it is like being the “new girl.” Previously, I had attended the same school system since kindergarten and had never experienced being a new student. Here are some things I wish I had known before my first day: the second-floor water fountains have the coldest water; don’t try to carry the entire contents of your locker in your backpack; if you don’t know where a

Welcome from the Editor

By Emily Hardwick



class is, ask; and finally, enjoy this new, vibrant community that you are now a part of! It amazes me still how quickly I became assimilated into my new class, how quickly I learned my way around the school, how quickly I built meaningful relationships with the faculty and how quickly Altamont became my school. If it’s not already, I am confident Altamont will become your school as well.

A key person in Altamont becoming my school was Mrs. Whiteside. Unfortunately, at the end of this year, we will say farewell to our beloved headmaster who has devoted many years of faithful service to our school. Mrs. Whiteside, thank you for making last year so meaningful for me. Whether it is your first year or your last, I encourage all students to enjoy the opportunities all around you, whether they be new classes, new teachers, or new friends. This year, take advantage of opportunities to get involved! Try joining a club, playing a sport, attending Honors Reading Seminars, learning about the global initiative, or writing for the paper. Altamont has a place for you!

-Emily

In This Issue:

Editor's Letter, Page 1
Mrs. Whiteside, Page 2
New Faculty, Page 3
Honor Focus, Page 4
SGA, Page 5
Global Initiative, Page 6
Student Service Project, Page 7
Laptops, Page 8
Summer Adventures, Page 9
Comic, Page 11

Mrs. Whiteside's Legacy

By Abby Lee

You started as a Latin teacher in 1978. What made you want to become a teacher? Did you have any intentions of pursuing Latin or becoming headmaster?

I've always been interested in education and teaching and was excited to have the opportunity here at Altamont. I majored in Latin in college, after which I earned a graduate degree at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in classical archaeology. After working in Chapel Hill for several years, my husband and I moved to Birmingham in 1975. What I wanted to be was a Latin teacher. I had no aspirations or plans to ever move out of the classroom and into an administrative role.

What would you consider the most challenging aspect of being the head of the entire school?

There was so much I had to learn, from developing budgets for the school to working with the Board of Trustees and faculty to identify strategic plan initiatives. My role shifted from classroom teaching and responsibility for my own students to responsibility for the entire student body. Although I had experience as a dean and assistant Head of School, I had to shift my focus when I was named Head of School in November 2007.

I feel confident saying that all students here feel comfortable going to see teachers for help. We also have several events that welcome new students like the Headmaster's Assembly and the Newcomers' Party. Has there been any distinct change of atmosphere after Mr. Hames passed away since you took control? Was there anything you really focused on when it came to new students?

I think we have gotten much better at welcoming new students and helping them understand what it means to be an Altamont Knight. We have increased the focus during orientation towards both new students and parents, since they're coming from a number of different schools and school systems, moving in from different parts of ours and foreign countries. We have made a concerted effort to do a better job every year at orientation. There have been distinct improvements. One example is that we ask current families and parents to contact new parents, to answer questions and to check in with them to see how they're doing.

Of all the Altamont traditions, which is your favorite?

They're all so wonderful. One thing I especially enjoy is the Poetry Festival. I am not aware of any other school that offers such an event. The fact that it is so meaningful to students to be selected as a finalist says a lot about our students and about the school.

That really does make us distinct as a school. Fall project week distinguishes us as well. When was that initiated? Did you have any input in that? Overall, which trip has been your favorite?

Fall Project Week started in the late 90s as an outgrowth from what was originally a college trip every fall. In addition, throughout the year middle school classes went on trips. We made the decision to consolidate all of experiential learning experiences into one week and to include every student in the school. The consolidation resulted in less disruption during the year. The week provides opportunities for 5-9th grade classes to really develop their sense of what it meant to be in those classes with their teachers and other students. There has always been a great emphasis on service during that week.

The Altamont School

Continued from Page 2, Mrs. Whiteside

I've led trips to many places in Western Europe including Greece, Italy, Germany, and England. I've also been on the college trip but now my role is to be command central.

During your tenure, you've taught students who now have their own children enrolled. You also have alums on staff! How does it feel to hire previous Altamont graduates whom you may have taught?

I think we have had a good mix of alums as faculty members as well as those who did not come to Altamont. This balance results in alums who know the traditions of the school and the challenges of balancing all that the Altamont experience offers and all these other wonderful teachers who went to school elsewhere and who share the ideas and experiences from their own educational experiences.

Ever since I was in 7th grade, we've had renovations on the library and then the Hames Gallery, and now it's the new gym. Everyone is super excited. Would you comment briefly about the gym renovation and addition for the new students and for everyone coming back?

Over the last five or six years, we have been improving the facilities for arts, academics, and now athletics. No significant work had occurred in the competition gym for over 40 years. Our faculty and our community value the lessons learned as a team and as a participant in athletics offer for students. Part of what we are now emphasizing is wellness as a way of life, rather than just the athletic skills one may learn. A major portion of this project has been incorporating the wellness practice into the physical changes. We will have the gym open for the beginning of school, and your class will be the first to do the Headmaster's Assembly in there. It's especially meaningful to have the gym named after Coach Patton who was the coach and athletic director here in the late 90s and who has positively influenced decades of students. What he stands for is honored in the gym. It's important to remember the generosity of others makes all of this possible.

Our first game will be a volleyball match and it's pretty exciting.

So, with your departure less than a year away, do you plan on doing anything drastic or just kind of relax?

Well there's a general rule an outgoing Head of School doesn't do anything drastic on the way in or the way out. One thing I'm looking forward to is visiting different alum groups around the country. Madame Classe is going to be with me on most of those trips. Between the two of us we have over 80 years at Altamont, and either she or I taught a huge percentage of these alums.

Finally—and I can say this on behalf of most, Altamont has really bettered me in education, balance, and preparation for the real world.

It's part of the Altamont mission that all of us--your teachers, you students, everybody—are trying to fulfill our mission. That's what good schools do. Our alums come back to visit and to let us know that Altamont was great preparation not only for learning how to balance responsibilities and to manage time but also for learning how to study. We hear these stories and others about the ways in which our students are fulfilling our mission being compassionate individuals.

Having 5-12th grade here is important. The younger students have role models to follow, even if its they're just standing on the sidelines of a game cheering and high fiveing the players when they come off. They both learn and become a part of the community, and community is so important at Altamont.

Meet the New Faculty

By Caroline Lee

Get to know some of the new teachers at Altamont! The following are some questions and answers from three new teachers this year: Ryan James (Computer Science), Casey Gillespie (Art), and Caitlin Rogers (Librarian).

Mr. James-Computer Science

What are you most looking forward to at Altamont?

I'm really looking forward to working with the amazing student body that I've heard so many great things about.

What should students know before taking your class?

The Altamont School

Continued from Page 3, Faculty

Students should expect to be creative and learn a lot through all of our projects.

What item is at the top of your bucket list?

Right now, probably running the Hard rock 100 Endurance Run.

Are you more of a dog or cat person?

Definitely dog. My family owns 2 dogs: a miniature Rat Terrier who is 12 years old, and a mixed lab who is 2 years old.

Mrs. Gillespie-Art

Where did you go to school?

I grew up and graduated high school in Andalusia, Alabama. I received my Bachelor of Arts degree from Troy University, then earned my Masters in Arts Education degree from UAB.

Why did you want to become a teacher?

I knew as a small child that, deep in my heart, I wanted to be a teacher one day. Being a teacher gives me the opportunity to share my passion for art with others. I love teaching different techniques and watching how students create art from them. I love interconnecting my classes with other courses, such as history, math, and language. Teaching is endlessly rewarding for me, because I most enjoy watching my students grow as artists and as people.

What are some of your favorite things about Birmingham?

Two of my favorite things about Birmingham are the diversity and culture. There are so many festivals, art shows, concerts, and events going on throughout the year that it is hard to keep up with it all! I love how there are so many opportunities to experience art. Whether it is buying art in a shop in Avondale or seeing an impromptu performance at Railroad Park, there is always something creative and energetic going on here. We live in a very exciting city!

Mrs. Rogers-Librarian

What is the most important book you have read recently?

The most important book I have read in while is definitely Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi. I truly believe it has the potential to become required reading in schools one day because of the raw power of the stories told in the novel. Plus, the author is from Huntsville, AL!

What was your favorite class in high school?

I had two favorite classes in high school: history and band! I could listen to my teachers talk for hours about historical places and events, and I have always loved music with a passion.

What are you most looking forward to at Altamont?

I am most looking forward to interacting and working with the students on all things related to the school's wonderful library. I understand that the library is already a "community hub" of sorts, so I will welcome talking with all students and learning as much about the school and what they need as I can.

What is at the top of your bucket list?

At the top of my bucket list right now is traveling! My husband and I are currently planning a trip to San Diego next summer for the Comi-Con International Convention. I'm a huge Wonder Woman fan, so seeing the current WW at Comi-Con is up there on my list!

Honor Focus

By Maya Guru

"I will not lie. I will not cheat. I will not steal." While these are straightforward guidelines, many times people will find themselves making a decision to compromise their honor for the sake of good results. If you ever find yourself in one of these situations, remember this quotation by Sophocles: "Rather fail with honor than succeed with fraud." It is easy to say that one must always choose the hard right over the easy wrong,

The Altamont School

Continued from Page 4, Honor

but it often is harder to act on that principle. We must remember honor is one of the most crucial elements to uphold, especially given that it is one of the most highly regarded characteristics of a student in the Altamont community. For this upcoming school year, it is important for each and every student to uphold our code of honor.

Meet Your SGA

By Amrita Lakhanpal

President: David Zell

Vice President: Will Denniston

Secretary: Amrita Lakhanpal

Treasurer: James Dixon

Read the interviews below to find out a little bit more about them!

Tell us a little about yourself...

David: My name is David Zell, and I am a senior. I am on the Debate team, a member of High School Democrats, and am a Boy Scout

Will: My name is Will Denniston, and I am a junior. I run track and cross country, and my favorite hobby is playing piano.

Amrita: My name is Amrita Lakhanpal, and I am a junior. I run cross country, indoor and outdoor track, and I also play tennis. My favorite hobby is definitely dance!

James: My name is James Dixon, and I am in 11th grade. I run cross country and track, play soccer, and sometimes swim. My favorite hobby is playing guitar.

Why did you want to serve as an SGA Officer?

David: Coming to Altamont not knowing anyone was tough! I came in the 6th grade, and on the first day, older students made me feel at home. I'm excited to welcome new students, doing for them what the seniors then did for me. I ran for president to help the school in every way I can by ensuring that Altamont feels like a family as much as it does a school.

Will: I served as Secretary my Sophomore year and had a great experience in Student Government. Going into my Junior year, I wanted to take on more responsibilities and have a larger role in the SGA.

Amrita: I wanted to serve as Secretary because I was very interested in helping plan school activities. I also wished to serve as a liaison between the student body and the faculty.

James: I wanted to serve as Treasurer because I have always wanted to hold a position on SGA. In middle school at Highlands, I was the 7th Grade class president, and in eighth grade, I was SGA president. Treasurer also puts me in a position where I can gain more experience handling finances.

As an SGA Officer, what are your responsibilities throughout the school year? In addition to these, what else do you hope to accomplish?

David: I'll be responsible for managing and running the SGA. I'm working with our executives to rewrite the constitution and plan a great year. I hope to oversee the ratification of that constitution, make improvements to the Marketplace, and boost school spirit!

Will: As Vice President, my duties are being the President's second in command, coordinating clubs, and planning May Day. I hope to keep the Marketplace up and running, and helping with communication throughout the school.

The Altamont School

Continued from Page 5, SGA

Amrita: As Secretary, my responsibilities include managing the Big Brother/Big Sisters Program, scheduling shifts for the Marketplace, working out the Election Schedule, and taking A LOT of notes at all SGA meetings.

James: The Treasurer must manage the Marketplace finances, plan Welcome Week Games, set up Homecoming Friday Activities, and organize the Book Buyback. In addition to these responsibilities, I want to help the grade level officers budget and plan fun dances.

What is one area at Altamont that you believe needs improving, and how do you think the SGA can help in that area?

David: School spirit, for sure. I'd love to see more support for the accomplishments of our awesome students, both academic and extracurricular. I'd like to implement an awards day for our academic teams, and try to boost turnout for our athletic matches. I think many of us are guilty of skipping the JV and Girls Varsity games, while attending the Boys Varsity matches later on. It's definitely a goal of mine to use to the SGA to give all our outstanding competitors the respect they deserve.

Will: Altamont has always had a problem with communication. I hope that the SGA can improve that by being a true middleman in-between the faculty/administration and the student body.

Amrita: I believe the Big Brother/Big Sister program at Altamont needs improvement. I hope to plan more activities for Big and Little siblings throughout the year, rather than just at the beginning, to help truly develop and strengthen the relationship between the Big and Little Brother/Sister. I believe that both the younger and older siblings can both benefit tremendously from this relationship.

James: I think Altamont needs to work on improving school spirit. I hope that as one of the lettermen and an SGA officer, I can help get more people at games and pumped up about Altamont.

What is your favorite tradition at Altamont, and how do you think you can preserve or even expand on it?

David: Fall project week is an amazing, unique, Altamont experience. There's nothing I'd change about it!

Will: I love May Day! Luckily, as Vice President, I get to plan it.

Amrita: My favorite Altamont tradition is definitely Fall Project Week! I love getting the chance to spend a week with my friends outside school, visiting new places and learning so many new things! There really is nothing I would change about it.

James: My favorite tradition at Altamont is running through the halls with our track or cross-country trophy after we've won. SGA can help protect this tradition and additional traditions by creating a record of all official and unofficial traditions.

Global Initiative: Human Rights

By Mr. Tsivourakis

I'm a fan of origin stories.

I love knowing the path that one can trace from an inception to a current form. I'm by no means an expert, and don't have a catalogue stored as anecdotal time filler to show off, er-pass the time! But to be reminded of the continuum reorients our thinking. We are no longer fixed points. We are sums and products of previous interactions, and—ever malleable—we are the variables in an undefined future. From such a perspective, there is always hope!

The Altamont School

Continued from Page 6, Global

And so, it is with the notion of human rights. Our Global themes for 2017-2018 are **health and human rights**. Because they are often inextricably linked, and because Mr. Gibson is spearheading broader *health* topics, I'll try to focus our gaze on *human rights*. Given our place in history, our natural starting point is the 1948 **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. And, given the sociopolitical climate of our nation and others, I can't imagine a more apropos focus.

Emerging alongside communities rebuilding in the calm after two World Wars, the **Declaration** reflects a deliberate effort to distill human experience and identify those fundamental rights that transcend culture, religion, region, sex, and any other status. In it, we see the noble efforts of diverse thinkers reflecting on the past and seeking to forge a pluralistic and equitable future. The document is not legally binding, but it has informed international political instruments, global economics, and regional human rights issues. With the '48 **Declaration** as our starting point, we'll spend the year exploring various aspects human rights. We'll enjoy guests who will share the origin story and challenges, explore the dynamics of effective problem solving, and relate a real-time issue that is present on many fronts. We'll get hands-on with some activities that challenge our own thinking. If we're lucky, we'll put you in positions to advocate for others. And this says nothing of what happens in your classes or of unforeseen opportunities on the horizon!

A final thought. Human rights have been appropriated by people at all points of a highly charged political sphere. The idea—too vast to be compartmentalized as such—has become fodder for adversarial debates and has been weaponized, by all sides, to disparage political and cultural opponents. If our global focus for 17-18 is a success, it will be because we engage in healthy, reasoned dialogue—a dialogue in which we humbly listen to each other and stretch ourselves. We don't have any designs on remedying the problems of millennia; we want to constructively engage them. I think we'll find we're more similar than we think.

Student Service Spotlight

By Caroline Lee

Rising 7th grader, Arthur Ander's *Little Library* was recently added to Meadowlawn Park in Cahaba Heights

In Mr. T's sixth grade English class, students are assigned a service project paper that coincides with the novel *After the Dancing Days*. Arthur Anders (class of 2023) took his service project a step further – on Monday, August 14th, Arthur's project actually went into the ground! Arthur's project is a little library—a small, stand-alone structure, open to the public to share and trade books.

Arthur explains that his project is more than just a service project. "The little library can be anywhere—think a park, public space, or lawn. It is a sort of a library on the go, allowing people to borrow or swap a book out. It encourages reading and fights illiteracy. It is something that improves the community. It is something for people to enjoy and use for free. It improves the environment and creates a more family friendly area. The whole essence of a lending library is community. It is about working together to keep it alive and filled with books," says Arthur. "When I started out, I intended to make the library happen, whether it made it to a park or just my front yard. I really wanted to share my love of reading and add something to the community. I was ecstatic when Vestavia Hills Parks & Recreation agreed to let my lending library live in Meadowlawn Park. I want others to enjoy it and to help improve Meadowlawn Park."

Arthur says his inspiration for the project came from his own passion of reading. "I have always been a reader as long as I can remember. I love reading. It allows for one to get sucked up into the pages of another world or life. I hope to promote reading, and to add something to Meadowlawn Park. My lending library shares something I love with others, so they can discover it and maybe love it, too. I hope that in the future, more people create these lending libraries. I hope that this cycle will continue. I think that this project could inspire

The Altamont School

Continued from Page 7, Service

more lending libraries to be constructed and have the movement grow bigger than it was before. I think that many people will be inspired by this movement and join it. I am a reader, and I had seen many lending libraries prior to this project. Then I had an English project, remembered the library and decided to build a little free library. If it was not for Mr. T, I would have not had the opportunity to build it.”

Arthur's library was unveiled on Monday, August 14th. Stop by and check it out!



Above: Arthur is pictured with his library.

Laptop Program

By Henry Chang

Altamont has implemented numerous forms of computing technology over the past few years. For the 2018-2019 school year, Altamont will begin the 1-to-1 Laptop program for 5th and 6th grades. While providing students with a laptop to use while at school isn't anything new, this new program will allow the students to take their laptops home to work on assignments. Faculty spearheading the project are Mr. Dominguez, Mr. Dunn, Mrs. Hemingway, and Sra. Leonard.

According to Mr. Dominguez, to prepare for the installation of the new program, numerous preparations had to be done. Mr. Dunn upgraded the network infrastructure to include new wireless and increased bandwidth, which allows more devices to seamlessly access educational content. Additionally, teachers have visited schools, such as St. Paul's in Mobile, to further understand how to utilize the technology in the classroom. The teachers will continue receiving training as the program incorporates higher grades. Due to the partnership with Microsoft, multiple tools such as OneNote and the Office Suite will be implemented in the classroom. About the Microsoft suite, he also notes, "This service makes it easier for students to find their work, understand their assignments, and reduces the time for teachers to provide feedback critical to the learning process." However, Dominguez reassures, "Technology is not becoming the

The Altamont School

Continued from Page 8, Laptop

focus, but rather is being blended in with the excellent teaching practices our faculty already implement; essentially, technology is a tool for amplifying the learning that is already taking place.”

Aside from preparing the students for success in companies, the program will also teach the students how to utilize technology safely and to become good digital citizens. To help the students transition into the new program, Sra. Leonard and Mrs. Hemingway have received training for a variety of subjects with the program. There will also be an “unboxing” session when students receive their individual laptops and address proper usage. Parents will also receive resources to help monitor the implementation of the program and to ensure their children are using the laptops efficiently and effectively. This will help students learn responsibility with technology.

One major question is how the technology will directly impact the classroom. According to Sra. Leonard, the program will allow students to access numerous educational resources and provide hands on learning materials. This will ensure that every student can participate in the class activity, shifting it from a teacher centered classroom to a student-centered classroom. The programs provided by Microsoft will also allow the students to share their notes and ask question in real time. Another major component is the inking function of the laptops. The ink function replicates the writing mechanics of a real pen and paper. Sra. Leonard wants to make sure each student can access ink to prevent mindless typing on the keyboard and instead make sure the students physically engage with the material on which they are taking notes.

Regardless, the 1-1 Program will be a valuable learning resource for us all.

Summer Adventures

By Otulissa Zho

There are so many cultures out there, waiting to be discovered, understood and appreciated. Some ask: why is it important to learn about them? Some of us, through traveling abroad this summer, have discovered the answers for ourselves! Here, they will share their memories from their trips.

Australia

Lillie Parks, Senior

What were some memorable moments during your stay?

One memorable event was when I went scuba diving for the first time on the Great Barrier Reef. It was quite exciting, even though I was incredibly terrified and thought I would hyperventilate. However, I enjoyed seeing clownfish, angelfish (like Nemo and Gill), a barracuda, and a black tipped shark. Another memorable moment was holding a koala. I petted a kangaroo as well, which, like most things in Australia, was terrifying but awesome!

What interesting differences did you notice between the American culture and that of a foreign country?

As most people may notice, Australians have an awesome accent. I encountered the aboriginal culture while strolling around Cairns. The aborigines did tribal dances and played the didgeridoo- both novel things for me to see and hear!

What did you admire the most about the people you met there?

I admired their flawless accent and how free spirited they were.

Do you have any advice to future travelers?

My advice: don't die! Australia has the 2 most poisonous snakes, crocodiles, dingoes, and kangaroos. Do not be fooled by their pretty appearances and be careful around the animals!

England and Scotland

Kate Ennis, Senior

What were some memorable moments during your stay?

My most memorable moment in England was when my family and I were driving to a neighboring village- Chipping- and passing all the beautiful fields with all the flowers and sheep and cows. It was gorgeous! My favorite memory of Scotland was on the last day, when my father and I decided to go on a hike up a random

The Altamont School

Continued from Page 9, Adventures

mountain near the house we were renting. We ended up climbing about 1500 feet! It was an amazing trek and we saw many bunnies running around the heather.

What interesting differences did you notice between the American culture and that of a foreign country?

My family usually rents a house in a small village and stays there instead of staying in hotels in big cities. One thing I've noticed especially in the UK is how the locals are so welcoming at their local restaurants and taverns. They are always very friendly and interested in where we came from and what we were doing while there.

What did you admire the most about the people you met there?

I've noticed that in England most houses have a well-tended garden that is thoughtfully arranged with pretty flowers. I really admire their attention for details in that respect.

Do you have any advice to future travelers?

Bring a rain jacket everywhere you go in Scotland because you never know when the weather will change! It could be sunny one minute and raining cats and dogs the next.

Finland, Estonia and Sweden

Elise Solazzo, Senior

What did you think of the country before you visited? Did your opinions change after your trip?

Before I visited, I thought Finland would be a lot more populous. The second biggest city in Finland is a "suburb" of Helsinki, and the third biggest is smaller than Birmingham by population! I also thought of Finland as a peaceful country without any guns, following the stereotypes of more liberal nations; but I learned that all Finnish men are required to serve in the military and that Finland has the highest number of guns per capita in Europe due to how common hunting is.

What were some memorable moments during your stay?

I honestly had such a great time, it's hard to pick a few!

I absolutely loved my Finnish class. The Finnish language is so completely different from any of the languages I've heard before; it has its own niche language family and has a series of grammar rules that are complicated but fun.

Kaisla's family and I took a day trip to Estonia one Saturday, which is crazy enough by itself. I think of a day trip being to another state, not another country! The old town of Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, is absolutely beautiful in a disjointed way. The streets are all cobblestone and almost completely vacant because cars are so uncommon in the old town. I stood in a monastery built in 1246 CE, and ended up picking shards of 500-year-old castle out of my hair from trying to take a picture in a crumbling archway.

The ferry ride from Helsinki to Sweden lasts about 12 hours, which meant I had to sleep on the boat. It was... interesting. Kaisla has cousins from Södermalm, a district in Stockholm, and it was so nice to be able to meet and talk with them.

(Ed note: Kaisla was a former Altamont Foreign exchange student who lived with Elise and her family)

What interesting differences did you notice between the American culture and that of a foreign country?

Americans fly Old Glory wherever they can- on trucks, phone cases, t-shirts, etc. Finns only fly their flag on special holidays. I was lucky enough to be in Finland for Juhannus, the celebration of Summer held in late June, and raising the Finnish flag at exactly 6:00 PM is one of the most beloved traditions in the country. The best musician in the family plays the Finnish national anthem while the flag is being raised, and the entire extended family comes together for a dinner and party around a bonfire that lasts all "night; the sun didn't set on Juhannus.

What did you admire the most about the people you met there?

Finns have such a strong sense of community and family. It seemed like we couldn't go anywhere without someone in Kaisla's family recognizing a friend, and everyone seemed so helpful to each other.

The Altamont School

Continued from Page 10, Adventures

Japan, China, and Vietnam

Mrs. Coleman, Faculty

What did you think of the country before you visited? Did your opinions change after your trip? If so, how?

I had no preconceived notions. I found each country to be exquisite in its own way.

What were some memorable moments during your stay?

I first encountered beautiful Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines in Japan. In China, I saw more of these as well as a Daoist Temple and a Cao Dai Temple. The Great Wall was amazing, and the ethnic Hmong villages in Vietnam were spectacularly beautiful.

What interesting differences did you notice between the American culture and that of a foreign country?

I really enjoyed the Asian food, learning to eat with chopsticks, and the emphasis the Asians place on family and filial piety. I also loved that everywhere I went in China there were outside gyms with people working out together in the open air.

What did you admire the most about the people you met there?

Their universal friendliness, their exquisite and delicious cuisine, and their stunning art!

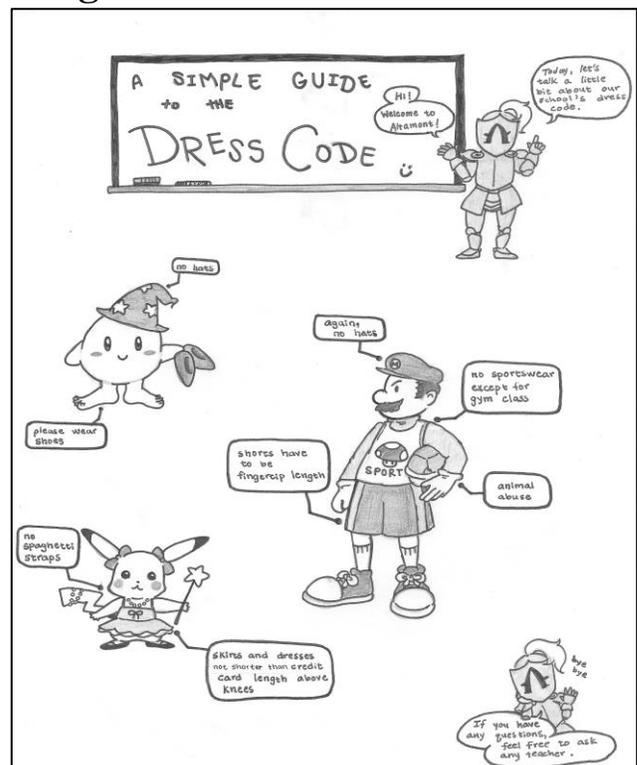
Any advice to future travelers?

Embrace new customs; do not expect everyone to speak English and to act the same as Americans! Encourage yourself to look at things from the locals' perspectives.

Closing Thoughts



Left: Welcome Back to Altamont
Right: A Simple Guide to the Dress Code
Both illustrations by Fione Chang



If you are interested in writing for the *Acta Diruna* please contact Emily Hardwick, ehardwick@altamontschool.org.