



## Graduation 2015

By Will Graham, Head of School

No college preparatory boarding school in the country gives students more responsibility or expects more from a senior class. Finding balance in these techno-centric times is often illusive; however, these seniors showed us how to juggle the challenging academic load, lead the daily jobs, and select a college. When the going got tough, they slowed down; they extended a hand, made the effort, and openly expressed a sincere appreciation and love for each other and a genuine respect for the school.

Along the way they found the time to start a women's basketball team, a men's volleyball team, and a women's softball team; restore a tractor; sing camp songs; start a chorus; play chapel tunes; build a bridge; display art and metals projects in a museum, write a thesis and stories; act in a play; build fences; cook pancakes and desserts; plant acorns; install solar panels; tend to horses; and share chapel reflections. They ran, hiked, and camped, and left the library in disarray. They showed us

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Miles Crawford, '15, receives diploma from Head of School Will Graham.



Emma Dreyfuss, '15, who spoke at graduation, shown here after the senior luncheon in April when the alumni association gave each senior a Midland blanket.

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## Ten Years Later

By Emma Dreyfuss, '15

Writing a graduation speech for your own graduation comes with the assumption that you have reached some emotional closure about leaving high school, which is something I can't say I've experienced.

I've been refusing to accept my graduation since last year's ceremony. As I watched Madison Mayhew stand up to receive the first diploma of the Class of 2014, I felt a desperate urge to stop time. I didn't want Madison to ever hold the diploma in her hand because I felt that the second that the handover was completed, I would actually have to be a senior. Then I'd actually have to leave. The penultimate term at Midland provided a time of mourning for me; a perpetual cloud of nostalgia loomed over me as I thought, "This is almost the last \_\_\_\_ that I'll ever\_\_\_\_," and "I can't believe we're actually leaving!" For this term, I've been too possessed by the typical pre-summer "Oh, God, get me out of here" sentiment to process my imminent departure from the place that I've called home for four years.

Luckily for me, inspiration for this speech came in the form of the 1970's mega-reunion. Midland was flooded with alumni, all reconnecting with old friends and seeing the place that had been their home for four years.

Because of the sudden influx of old friends, my father, who graduated in 1981, decided to invite his old classmate, Tom Cleary, to dinner with us. I sat across the table from this

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### Ten Years Later

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stranger. A few seats separated us, creating the perfect spying distance, so I could observe my father and his friend relive their high school glory days without them noticing me. My father and Tom chatted about Midland and talked about what they had been up to recently, and, while they did so, I was struck by the oddest sensation. This would be me in forty years. Who would be my Tom? Was he very close to my father, or would my children grow up having no idea who my best friends in high school were either?

After dinner, I tried to pacify my nerves by grilling my father about his ex-classmate.

“Were you guys very close at Midland? Or was he, ya know, just one of those guys that you knew?”

“Oh yeah. He was part of my main gang.”

The knots in my stomach tightened. So my friends will likely be the unknown dinner guest too.

I tried again to force my dad into providing me solace. Maybe my kids wouldn't know my friends, but at least I would.

“So, how often do you guys, like, talk? Do you guys ever call or email and stuff?”

“Oh, I hear from him every ten years or so.”

(Long pause)

TEN YEARS??? I'm at an age where I can hardly fathom ten years! Ten years ago I was seven! Ten years ago I still wanted to be a professional cat breeder! Ten years ago I wore gaucho pants and sweatshirts exclusively! It seems impossible to know someone if you only speak once every decade.

Needless to say, this dinner did not quell my frenzied emotions about graduating. I was suddenly certain that in forty years, I would have a mega-reunion of my own and return to a Midland that I no longer knew and speak to people I was no longer friends with. For the next 24 hours, I dreaded graduation and the bridges it would surely burn.

The following night, however, one of the 1970's reunioners, Randy Shapiro, '70, made an announcement at assembly. He moved to the center of the circle we had formed near the barbeque on the field and said something like this: “Midland is a wonderful place, and in forty years, you all will come back and be so grateful for your time here and be so grateful for all of the people you'll reconnect with. The 1970's Midlanders have been planning this event for months over Facebook, and we really want to thank you all for hosting us.”

This alum provided me with an answer to my long-perplexing question without even knowing it. First, he mentioned

Facebook. With our Facebook feeds constantly displaying every major event (and every minor event) in all our friends' lives, we couldn't lose touch with each other—even if we tried. Second, he helped me realize that the thing that would keep me close to the life I've known at Midland would be Midland itself. No matter what happens to us, Midland will always be here.

This year, we will leave. In four years, all of the students we know will leave. And, I predict that within ten years, all of the faculty we know will leave as well. But Midland will be here.

In ten years, we'll come back as twenty-eight year olds. We'll have graduated college, where we'll have made a whole new set of friends. We'll be preoccupied with our jobs and our significant others and the satisfaction of being young, but not too young.

In twenty years, we'll come back married. Some of us will have kids to watch and will need to make sure they don't find the axes.

In thirty years, we'll almost be fifty, and we can all complain about paying for our children's college educations, which will just keep getting more and more expensive.

Then, at our own forty-year “mega-reunion,” we can talk about our tenure and what exciting things our children are doing with their lives now. Forty years will have passed, and our lives will have evolved and changed. But Midland will be here.

Now, I'm not suggesting that the school won't change. I've seen the campus plan. I know that the Midland I come back to won't be the Midland I leave. I know that I'll step into the hay barn and realize I'm walking into a theater instead. I know that I'll look up on Varsity Hill between Glass House and Play House and no longer see Phil Hasseljian's rickety, inhospitable abode. The school will look different when I come back.

But Midland will be the same. There will still be head prefects standing on Stillman porch and ringing the “ding-a-ling.” There will still be teachers sitting alongside students at dinners. There will still be students chatting and singing while showering alongside each other. Midland will stay the same because the people will stay the same. Midland is a special place, and everyone who goes here knows it. The people who are drawn to the school are people who respect individuality and hard work. They connect with the Midland philosophy, and it is their commitment to Midland as it is that will keep the school's core essence intact for the rest of its existence. Midland will remain, and it will be the constant that we all return to. No matter how much we all change, we will always have Midland to bring us back together.

When my dad saw Tom after ten years, they didn't greet each other as strangers. I couldn't understand how they were still friends, but they were. Now, I realize that returning to this

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## For You, A Pewter Acorn

By Jim Dreyfuss, '81, parent of Emma Dreyfuss, '15

The following is an edited excerpt from Jim's original speech.

We all remember dropping off our kids for the first time at Midland. I remember watching Emma walk bravely through Middle Yard, alone, scared, but courage defined. I was a bit dismayed at Round Up Weekend when she informed me she'd be attending public school after the winter break. Then at Christmas, Emma kindly patted me on the shoulder and said "Thanks for sharing the family tradition, Dad. I'll finish out the year, but I'll be attending Hamilton High next year." It wasn't until we were driving down Figueroa Mountain Road, heading home for summer break, that she informed me she was going to miss all her friends and couldn't wait to come back in the fall. Good thing because I'd already laid down the hefty deposit for the next school year! She told me then that complaining about Midland was just the fashionable thing to do in her class. I suppose she enjoyed a bit of parental tormenting too.

Honestly, though, being a parent of a Midland student has given me an opportunity to reconnect with this place and to look at it from a new perspective. I can see how it has impacted my life. And I know it has impacted yours. Seeds are planted here that sprout, grow, bloom, and lie dormant to regenerate later:

- Friendships, connection, interdependence
- Simple living, distinguishing between needs and wants
- Self-reliance, kindness, tolerance, initiative
- Community, responsibility, work
- Striving, failing, succeeding sometimes but finding out that failure is just part of the process
- Self-knowledge, self-acceptance, the acceptance of others, and being accepted by others

In Emma's last chapel, she identified a few timeless lessons and qualities that describe you, and she thanked you, her classmates, for living these lessons with her these past four



The pewter acorn given to each member of the class of 2015 by Jim Dreyfuss, '81.

years. What a launching pad from which to dive into the next phase of your lives. You are ready. You know what hard work is. You know perseverance, teamwork, and self-reliance. You know there will be setbacks and that you will overcome them. You know patience, tolerance, and kindness.

OK. Words of advice. I've narrowed it down to five:

1. Treat yourself well. You can't be your best to others if you're not true to yourself. Don't be self-critical. Get lots of sleep, eat well, and exercise.
2. Pick your friends wisely (note criteria above). For the right people, be the kind of friend you want to have. You can't please everyone.
3. Life is not a sprint. Take your time. Don't feel rushed. Breathe. Enjoy the journey. Be thankful and present. It is OK not to know. Set goals.
4. Choose to be happy. Notice the simple things that make you feel good. Don't sweat the small stuff.
5. Call your parents once a week (Lona!), and come home for the holidays. Or every Sunday for dinner. We love you and want to be a part of your lives.

I've given you all a small token. It is not a magic talisman; it's just a pewter acorn, but it is meant to symbolize what you've learned here. I hope it serves as a reminder and a welcome mat. You are a part of this place now. Your names are on the chapel board. It will be yours forever.

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place serves as a form of time travel. When people come back, they return to the place as they knew it, and, because Midland graduates are connected to the place in a way that no other high school graduates are, they can find in Midland a version of their past selves.

So, when we leave Midland, we will always be able to find ourselves here again. We don't need to worry about leaving. We don't need to worry about drifting farther and farther away until we eventually become estranged. We don't need to worry about seeing each other in ten years and having no idea who we are. We have something that no other 2015 graduates have. We have Midland.

## Using Literature to Explain Midland

By Miles Crawford, '15

The following is an excerpt from Miles' original speech.

This year, Jill Redl has guided us in her British literature class on an exploration of how humans make meaning of their world. We began in the fall by analyzing *Beowulf*, the epic, 3,182-line poem written in Old English. As I set out to place meaning on my Midland career, I thought perhaps this longstanding pillar of English literature could offer me some direction. After all, if Anglo-Saxon mythology could explain the chaos of the medieval eighth century, perhaps it could also help me explain the chaos of high school.



Jill Redl teaching *Beowulf*.

In *Beowulf*, the author uses mythological creatures to represent the quarrels, scourges, and plagues of society. For instance, a fire-breathing dragon wreaks havoc across the land near the end of the poem. *Beowulf* defeats the dragon but is mortally wounded in the process—and thus the

meaning of *Beowulf*'s life is to be an honorable martyr and a protector of the weak. Or to use the old Anglo terminology, the message of the poem is that a life will be meaningful if one upholds values of *comitatus*.

As great as it would be to call my classmates knights and use dragons to represent the adversity that we have overcome, I'm not so sure that the way people found meaning in the eighth century will help me in addressing you today. And, I shouldn't condone the violent nature of the Anglo-Saxons. After all, dismemberment probably won't prove to be a valid form of

conflict resolution in college.

Most recently in Jill's class, we read *Waiting For Godot*, an absurdist play written by Irish playwright Samuel Beckett, which was one of our favorite books of the year. Would this be the stuff I could use to explain our senior year? Well, *Godot* offers no tangible plot or even any real cohesion in the diction; it is an utterly absurd play stripped down to the bare elements of nonsense. Why would Jill, our revered English teacher, have us read something that is a bunch of gobbledygook? As it turns out, absurdity does a good job at describing many aspects of the human condition.

For our last paper, Jill asked us to write our own absurdist essay—an essay that would contradict all of the conventions that we had previously held so dear. We created some truly bizarre compositions, but all of them had an uncanny allure and pockets of words that seemed ghostly profound. Although the thought dawned on me to write an absurdist graduation speech, I am fortunate that my more earnest feelings took hold of me.

I have gradually become more comfortable with the idea that almost nothing about our lives fits in a box, and this Midland experience is certainly no exception. While the day-to-day occurrences here may sometimes seem absurd, this place does have an intangible yet undeniable significance. What has prevented me from falling into a perpetual cycle of existential crises is a faith in what happens here. I will never be able to put everything that Midland has done for me into a concise package. But with the tools that I have gained here, and thanks to the guidance I have received, I am at least able to stand here and articulate my reverence for the elusive nature of truth.

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how to lay down a cell phone, have fun, wear costumes, and laugh. The new half day field day may be a "new-old" Midland tradition that is here to stay.

There is simply no place like Midland, and the school, like life, is not designed to be easy. We don't sugarcoat it. Sustained daily effort is demanding; jobs are often messy, and outcomes rarely perfect. But the seniors continued to show up, do the job that was expected, and finish strong. Over time, we will come to see that the class of 2015 did indeed leave Midland better than it found it. These students raised the bar of expectations for the student body, and they passed along their positive energy and strong example.

It is popular these days to quote Ralph Waldo Emerson, who once said, "The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be." It is clear to me that the class you were destined to become in 2015 is the class you decided to be. On behalf of all of those assembled, I want to say, "Thank you."

I trust each of you departs today with your own Midland experience in your back pocket, knowing you need not be afraid of the unknown challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. You are necessary; what you do matters; you are not alone, and today you are, of course, right where you want to be.

## Seniors “Breathe The Air And Leave Plenty”

By Lupita Valle, '15

This stanza from Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* resonates well with my class:

*I resist anything better than my own diversity,  
And breathe the air and leave plenty after me,  
And am not stuck up, and am in my place.*

When you look at the seniors in front of you, what do you see? Well, other than a bunch of good looking youngsters? I imagine that you see seventeen young adults, faces glowing, with bright futures ahead of them. Well, you are wrong, but not entirely. There is a lot more to us than the stereotypical seniors awaiting their end of high school. We all do have bright futures ahead of us, and we anticipate the end of our Midland careers, but what you see and what my classmates and I see when we look at each other is something entirely different.

When we look at each other, we see freaks. I know that there is this stigma about how a freak is a bad thing, but at Midland, freaks are welcome. For years, this school has been run with freaks, and, yes, this includes the faculty and even the head of school. To the outside world, freaks are people who fully express themselves to the point where everybody judges them for how genuinely open they are in their ways of living, ways of dressing, ways of eating, and, especially, ways of communicating. Midland fosters this sort of honest, self-expressing freaks. Especially in my class.

Us freaks, in all our quirky nature, are the future. For four years, I've walked along the campus' dusty surface and imagined where I will be in ten years. Where will my classmates and peers be? There are film writers, architects, politicians, film engineers, astrophysicists, botanists, ranch managers, EMTs, doctors, chemical engineers, and many more sitting in front of you. But, what does this have to do with Walt Whitman?

Our class holds this diversity that Whitman speaks about in his poem. As freaks, we are each as unique as the next.

*I resist anything better than my own diversity,  
And breathe the air and leave plenty after me,*

*And am not stuck up, and am in my place.*

More importantly, in our future, we will attempt to remain unique, challenging ourselves to be as different as we were seconds before, evolving with time. Individually, we might encounter immense obstacles, but at least we are well equipped to address the adversity against us.

*And breathe the air and leave plenty after me,  
And am not stuck up, and am in my place.*

Midland's philosophy, community, and environment has

assisted every single student standing before you to “breathe the air and leave plenty” after us. Midland has assisted each of us in finding the most efficient and unwasteful solutions to our problems. Through the principle of taking what we need to fix a problem, Midland has helped us find our place in the world. When I say taking what we need to fix a problem, I don't mean fixing a lightbulb or building shower fires. I mean using our resources, like teachers or mentors or the knowledge we've received from them, to fix the mental dilemma that runs through each adolescent's mind: what the hell are we going to do with our lives? Without Midland, we wouldn't be sitting here, I wouldn't be

speaking, and all of you wouldn't recognize how fantastic our class is.

*And am not stuck up, and am in my place.*

All of my classmates hold their own sense of place wherever they go. We don't get stuck in time. We don't get lost in our own paths. Wherever we are, we are right where we need to be.

One more Whitman quote: “I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journeywork of the stars.”

We (now I'm addressing my class) are as simple as the leaves of grass. Or wild rye in our case. But the paths we've constructed for ourselves are as complex as the universe's celestial composition. If we get lost, we'll find our way. Thank you, guys, for allowing me to cherish my simplest and most difficult times with you.



*Emma Dreyfuss, '15, and Lupita Valle, '15. Lupita, who spoke at graduation, is shown here with Emma as they built rockets for a physics project.*

# Thank You

By Jack Grimes, '16

Mark Twain once said that giving a commencement speech was a lot like eating a whole live frog every day first thing in the morning. He said once you do that, you know the hardest part of the day is over.

At a commencement speech, it is generally thought a tradition to pass on sage advice about the future: how to be successful, the secret to happiness, and what really matters in life, right? But where would I learn this? The answer lies in front of you, the audience. You parents, sitting proudly in the seats, see in front of me some of the finest men and women I have ever known. It has been them who have taught me this knowledge, and in turn, I give it back to them. When I first arrived here, this class welcomed me in friendship. They spoke to me easily, let me into their cabins (at least, the guys did), and they shared with me their wisdom. So as I stand here today and bid you farewell, I wish to tell you what I have learned.

FROM JINGYA: I have learned to be punctual and to be honest. More importantly though, I have learned to be a friend to everyone.

FROM ROOT: I have learned to take care of my body, to exercise regularly, to be easygoing, and, of course, to look impeccably stylish.

FROM JOHNNY: (*Pause: Oh Boy*) I have learned to say and do what I think is right, and not to be afraid of the consequences. I have learned to be different and know that that's okay.

FROM LEI: I have learned unconditional kindness, the importance of sharing whatever I have, to make strong friends and to have fun with everything. I learned to take life with a confident stride and a grin.

FROM FANRUI: I have learned not to take things for granted. You are the kindest, most cheerful person I have ever met. The world needs more Fanruis. You taught me the value of being thankful.

FROM JORDAN: I have learned the value of being unique. I have learned to be strong-willed, true to myself, and not to back down no matter the situation.

FROM SYLVIA: I have learned to find humor in any situation. I have learned, too, the power of a snappy retort (however cynical) and how to appreciate sarcasm.

FROM ISA: I have learned that everything will be all right in the end. If it's not all right, it's not the end. Your resilience through many tough situations has bolstered my own resilience.

FROM NAYANA: I have learned to do whatever is right for me and not to let others get me down. I learned to enjoy nature and to be dependable.

FROM TALEI: I have learned to express myself and to take things with a grain of salt. I have learned that sometimes you have to be loud to be heard and sometimes you don't.

FROM SEAN: I have learned discipline, thoughtfulness, to think before I speak, and to be mindful in everything I do. Most of all, I learned never to forget my home.

FROM EZI: I have learned to smile often, laugh loudly, and be proud of who I am. You taught me to speak when something needs saying and to enjoy wherever I happen to be because it will always change.

CRAWFORD COOLEY: not many people know this but his name is actually a synonym for Extremely Hard Worker. I have learned that hard work is the most important aspect of any task. I have learned never to leave a project half done, to keep a big heart and an open mind. I have metaphorically and literally learned how to keep my tractor in good repair and to keep those wheels rolling. You have instilled in me the sense of professionalism and politeness that will help me for the rest of my life.

FROM LUPITA: I have learned care. You care for the horses and for your dog, Tonantzin, and you care for your class. Also, I learned to help people where you can and do what you're best at.

FROM EMMA THORPE: I have learned to listen to my own opinion even while I evaluate others'. I have learned independence and personal strength.

FROM MILES: I have learned to be handy. I have learned to be a Jack-of-all-trades and the importance of self-reliance. I have learned also that short shorts can look good on a guy and that perfect hair is an essential.

AND, FROM EMMA DREYFUSS: I have learned to maintain a rigorous academic schedule and to try my hardest at whatever I face. The most important of all, however, is to carry yourself with grace throughout all situations.

This senior class is phenomenal. Truly. And now you leave, off into the mysterious and wonderful world that is college. And what can I say for you that you haven't taught me? What insight can I give that you have not mastered? I say only this: I have complete faith that you will do what you love and do it well. Thank you ever so much for teaching me, for being my friends, and for making my time here, whether intentionally or unintentionally, comfortable.

No, not comfortable. Exceptional.

## 2015 Midland Awards

### E.W. LITTLE AWARD

*for outstanding athletic ability in boys' athletics*

**Sean Cummings**

### CLASS OF 1962 AWARD

*for outstanding athletic contribution to girls' athletics*

**Talei McCloud Cody**

### CLASS OF 1936 SPORTSMANSHIP CUP

**Jack Melican**

### GATES HORSEMANSHIP TROPHY

**Crawford Cooley**

### SANFORD BALLOU AWARD

*for an outstanding camper*

**Talei McCloud Cody**

### KENNETH A. BROWN AWARD

*for the student chosen by the faculty as an outstanding scholar*

**Fanrui Sha**

### BOB WHITTEN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

*awarded to a member of the junior class who has demonstrated a passion for history, superior sportsmanship, and an ongoing dedication to the Midland community*

**Deyanira Ibarra**

### KATHARINE RICH AWARD

*for excellence in the visual arts*

**Miles Crawford**

### CERAMICS AWARD

*for commitment to excellence in the ceramic arts*

**Fanrui Sha & Emma Dreyfuss**

### FACULTY MEDAL

*for achievement in science and mathematics*

**Fanrui Sha**

### FACULTY MEDAL

*for achievement in history and English*

**Emma Dreyfuss**

### RICH DREYFUSS BOOK PRIZE

*awarded to a member of the junior class for academic achievement and contributions to the general excellence of life at Midland*

**Madison Weatherford**

### HEADMASTER'S BOOK PRIZE

**Miles Crawford**

### H.H. DAVIS BOOK PRIZE

*for highest scholarship in the 9th grade*

**David D'Attila & Maggie Tang**

### A.B. DUNN BOOK PRIZE

*for highest scholarship in the 10th grade*

**Duncan McCarthy & Annaliese Silveyra**

### CARL E. MUNGER BOOK PRIZE

*for highest scholarship in the 11th grade*

**Graceson Aufderheide & Hannah Drew**

### ERIC M. SWAIN BOOK PRIZE

*for highest scholarship in the 12th grade*

**Sean Cummings**

### HAYMAN MEMORIAL LANGUAGE PRIZE

**Jack Grimes**

**Cruz Avendaño Dreyfuss**

**Deyanira Ibarra**

### W.H.P. HAYMAN TROPHY

*for outstanding academic & athletic achievement.*

**Sean Cummings**

### DRAMA AWARD

**Cruz Avendaño Dreyfuss**

### FONDA MUSIC AWARD

**Talei McCloud Cody**

### ROGER IRVING CITIZENSHIP AWARD

**Crawford Cooley**

### BENEDICT RICH TROPHY

*for outstanding positive leadership*

**Emma Dreyfuss**

### DAN KUNKLE AWARD

*for the student chosen by the faculty who displays the greatest sense of integrity, of compassion, and of ethical awareness*

**Cruz Avendaño Dreyfuss**

### TED CHAMBERLIN TROPHY

*for responsibility*

**Miles Crawford**

### PAUL SQUIBB SERVICE PRIZE

*awarded to the member of the 12th grade who has most consistently of his own accord used materials at hand, by himself by getting others to help him, to complete projects which have benefited the school.*

**Crawford Cooley**

*There were particular highlights to this year's Alumni/ae Parent Weekend in April. Ben Munger was awarded the John Dreyfuss, '52, Distinguished Alumnus Award, Crawford Cooley unveiled the repainted, renamed tractor, and the Classes of 1970-1979 held a mega-reunion, which was attended by 150+ former students and their families and by former faculty members David Anderson, '61, Bob Faux, Jim Munger, Ann Schuyler Brenner, Camie and Sherman Herrick, '62, Carlos Ortiz, Allen and Diana Russell, and Jane and Eric Swain, '63, former head of school. The following articles and comments evolved from the weekend's events.*

## A Wilderness Advocate

By Ben Munger, '79

*The following text is an excerpt from the speech Ben delivered on April 26, when he was awarded the John Dreyfuss, '52, Distinguished Alumnus Award.*

Physically and ecologically, Midland is in between two extremes—the Sedgewick Preserve (where cattle are not welcome) and the Chamberlin Ranch (where grass is not welcome unless eaten by cattle). We had to find ourselves in the middle somewhere with land management. We found a place that has been referred to as “the radical center”—a term created by Bill McDonald, one of the founders of the Malpia Borderlands Group.

The radical center is really about working, partnerships, trust, and action, and it is not a physical place or an attempt to save ranching culture. The radical center brings Aldo Leopold's conservation ethic back into focus and challenges us to treat soil and water with the same ethic we extend to humans. But our culture has a big problem with the land ethic, because it somehow is at odds, in our minds, with our desire for profit from the land and the economics of capitalism. The radical center is as simple as our ability to say thank you to soil, animals, and plants in our graces before dinner in Stillman Hall. We do happen to be close to the animals and plants we eat and the soil that supports them, and it is acknowledged every week at sit-down meals.

If the radical center is a process, then it places people directly in the middle of that process. Jim Corbett, a founding member of the Malpai Borderlands Group said, “For us humans to be at home in the wildlands, we must accept and share life as a gift that is unearned and unowned. When we cease to work at taming the Creation and learn to accept life as a gift, a way opens up for us to become active participants in an ancient exodus out of idolatry and bondage—a pilgrimage that continues to be conceived and born in the Wilderness.” In this sense, communion, the radical center, is always here and now rather than an end state. Leopold said,



Ben Munger, 79, David Anderson, '61, Allen Russell, and Sherman Herrick, '62

“The important thing is not to achieve harmony, but to strive.”

And strive we have: Lise Goddard with oak restoration and solar energy; Marguerite and Will Graham with their tireless work and support of the farm and ranch; BG Kresse, Gloria Murillo, and Emily Harwell with their willingness to cook with more prep time, experimentation with frozen tomatoes, peppers, and meat, and the willingness to plan menus around what we can produce; Nick Alexander and Pam Doiron for being generous allies in the process of making conservation and farming and ranching work. Laurie's work defending riparian zones along the Alamo Pintado was always steadfast and resolute, and she is resilient by definition. Katie Isaacson Hames is from the same tribe—striving to combine ranching and conservation for years at her family's ranch near Lompoc, knowing that it is not an easy path to walk, but that it is the right one. And Greg Donovan, our partner on the Farm, who, in my mind, always seeks the truth in what Leopold referred to when he said, “a thing is right when it tends to preserve the stability, integrity, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.” This is not something you can learn in school, but you can become certain of it with a lifetime of work. We are a strong community of teachers, staff, and students that strive to do the hard work of achieving harmony, coexistence, resilience, and stewardship—a place for people in nature, not outside of it.

Wendell Berry said, “Making a home in nature is the forever unfinished life-work of our species.” I am an advocate of Wilderness. It is the place I want to be, and I know that we humans have a place there if we want. Or is it a need?

## Returning to a Student, a Teacher and an Idea: The 70's Mega-Reunion

By *The Gang of Four: James Fahey, John Hintzen, Dick Stubbs, John Stiff*

As an alumnus/a, one quickly learns that it is impossible to go back to Midland as a student. You move out; the underclassmen move up; and a new set of students moves in. If you've done your job right, the new seniors are every bit as capable as you were; you are no longer needed.

That can be a very sad realization. There's a kind of emptiness that you feel on your first return to Midland. The school moves familiarly around you, but you are watching from outside and are not a part of the ebb and flow. If it's been less than a year, most of the people are familiar, but there's something different about the way they greet you. You feel like a guest in your own home.

Soon, even the familiar students and faculty are gone, and all that remains from the time you were a student are the buildings and the dust.

For the classes that graduated in the 1980s and before, we had no internet, let alone social media, to keep us together. The world was a wider space. We progressed to colleges, jobs, and families that were spread far apart physically and socially. We lost touch. Often, the school lost touch with us, too, because, until very recently, the school did not have the resources to make an organized, proactive effort to stay connected.

Last October (2014), four alums decided to organize a "Mega-Reunion" for all the classes and faculty of the 1970s. Our logic was simple: It's the people that matter, and inviting all the classes and the faculty that had experienced Midland together creates greater incentive to participate. We might not be able to go back home, but at least we could have a family reunion.

Every Saturday for six months, the four of us met by video conference. We selected a location (a park with bbq pits, toilets, seating, and shade for 150 people) and found a Santa Maria style bbq caterer. In December, we sent out a "mark your calendars" email; in January, we mailed printed invitations; and in February and March, with the help of twelve additional volunteers, we made phone calls to people



*Dick Stubbs, John Stiff, John Hintzen and James Fahey, all from the Class of 1975.*

who hadn't committed. Someone gave us the nickname: "The Gang of Four."

Ultimately, we located over 30 of the "missing" students, all but three of the surviving faculty came to the Mega-Reunion, and roughly 100 students from the '70s attended the weekend.

We discovered that more than buildings and dust remains from our experience at Midland, because we still have our relationships—with both faculty and fellow students. Students and teachers alike had had highly varied careers. Most of us had families. And on that Friday in late April, without returning to the campus, we returned to a key element of "Midland": the people. Midland's education gets you into and through college; the relationships built in the dish-house, on wood crew, and in study hall last a lifetime.

As for the four of us, the reunion this year marked another ending. For the six months that we spent organizing the reunion, it was like being back at Midland. Everyone contributed. We shared ideas, divided up tasks, got mad at each other, laughed a lot, and just got it all done. Two weeks after the reunion, early on Saturday afternoon, John Stiff sent a text to the rest of us: "Miss talking to you all." Yes, without the weekly calls, Saturdays felt a little empty. But we know the relationships are still there. And that's a very happy realization.

## Playful Rivals Share Gloves

By Sofie Lebow, '16

We traded gloves. That's how the softball game began. Initially, I thought the game would turn into an ordinary practice. We might have onlookers consisting only of over-excited parents and students who were required to sit and watch. It didn't seem like anyone would take the game seriously. Including me. I was desperate not to play. Frankly, I don't like any form of exercise that requires running, balls, or coordination.

The official start time of the game had already passed, and no alumni had asked to compete. The likelihood of anyone other than my teammates staining their pants with grass seemed unlikely. After we warmed up, we started to divide the team up for a game.

Just then, a group of alumni, who most certainly would have been considered the weird kids who enjoyed picking up lizards, saw us from the Rez Road. They jogged up to us and enthusiastically asked, "Are we allowed to play?"

They did not have gloves. But they were so determined to play that they even dared to go barehanded. The girls were first up at bat, so none of us needed our gloves. I offered mine to an alumnus I had never met. He squished his hand into my small glove. All my teammates handed their gloves away too. The game began.

José Juan Ibarra, '87, pitched and Talei McCloud Cody, '15, batted first. She used her power swing with the intention of shocking the alumni and perhaps proving her strength. She got a base hit and arrived safely on first base. Now the alumni

started to get nervous. They re-positioned themselves and grew competitive Midland eyes. The eyes were supportive, but also a little bit mocking and competitive. Shortly after we made a few runs and one or two outs, it was my turn to bat. Behind me I heard the oddly nicknamed Joe Mama start to yell to distract me. "Hey, batta, batta. Sah-wing, batta batta!" I tried to hit the first pitch but missed. All I can say is I am happy José Juan did not throw anymore strikes because I got to walk.

Three outs. Time to switch.

The alumnus with my glove found me and handed it back.

I went into the outfield. José Juan was up first. He hit a home run, but he was the only one who did. The alumnus made a few runs, but no one was actually counting. "That is three outs!" a student shouted, and all the spectators clapped for us. But they also clapped for the alumni. The turnout for the game was different than I had imagined. Over 30 people watched the game, not including the 18 or so alumni who played.

After each inning, we tossed the shared gloves and we connected just a bit more. We all experienced the exchange of trust, acceptance, and a shared moment in time. We were all Midlanders, and even though they were older and no longer students, the alums felt like my classmates. They had chopped wood and stoked shower fires with their hands almost 40 years ago, and we do it now. They had their quirks and we had ours, and it was accepted. We might have competed against each other that day, but, actually, we were one team.



Talei McCloud Cody, '15, at bat during the Parent Alumni/ae Weekend softball game.

## Connections

By Kerry Munger Livingston

I have been connected with Midland for over 50 years, and in its soul Midland is the same place it was those many years ago. It carries the original purpose and traditions—responsibility, hard work, environmental stewardship—while keeping up with these challenging times. Every member of the community has to work together. The kids learn from their relationships with faculty and fellow students; they learn from the land and the animals; they learn from being outside all the time; they learn to be comfortable in the night's darkness.



Kerry Munger Livingston at Parent Alumni/ae Weekend with her daughter, Nora Livingston, 07.

## Celebrating 50 with 50

September, 2014, marked the 50th anniversary of the 1964 Wilderness Act, which established the parameters for creating and managing designated wilderness areas with “an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.”

Midland set a goal for the 2014-2015 school year to have at least fifty different trips, events, or activities which represented and/or honored wilderness and wilderness ethics. By the end of the year, we reached our goal (and probably went beyond it) with four movies, five talks, well over seven outings by students on half-holiday afternoons, at least 10 different day trips or events or classes, at least four trips (that we know of) involving Midland alums (the class of '68 had at least two camping trips), and 20 camping trips for students (listed opposite).

\*A hardluck trip is an overnight camping adventure that leaves campus after dinner and returns before breakfast, thereby eliminating the need to plan for meals and pack food.

### CAMPING TRIPS IN 2014-2015

- ☿ 9th grade hardluck\* trip to Grassy Knoll
- ☿ Backpacking in Sequoia National Park
- ☿ Geology trip to the Eastern Sierra
- ☿ Student trip leader training
- ☿ Sophomore class hardluck
- ☿ 101+ students' hardluck trip to the Teeth
- ☿ Junior boys' hardluck trip to the Teeth (student-led)
- ☿ Outdoor leadership trip to Joshua Tree
- ☿ Geology trip down the Manzana River
- ☿ Primitive living skills trip
- ☿ 9th-graders up the Manzana River
- ☿ 9th-graders down the Manzana River
- ☿ Outdoor leadership up the Manzana River
- ☿ José Juan Ibarra's camping trip in Big Sur
- ☿ 9th-grade boys' hardluck trip
- ☿ Sophomore class beach campout
- ☿ Dungeons & Dragons trip
- ☿ Wilderness First Aid scenario trip
- ☿ Water in the West class camping trip
- ☿ Senior trip to Plaskett Creek



*Tim Tibbits, '67, recently wrote: "I would like to hear from students what they think about the "needs not wants" philosophy. I would be interested if they have unique insights into this very serious and complex idea. Do they merely repeat tired clichés? Do they wonder if the two can be the same in many instances? Do they sense that as our lives unfold, that we place new understanding on these basic values? Mostly, do they talk about it beyond the Headmaster's statement? Do they dialog over it without coming to a conclusion?"*

*Students in the Writing And A Sense of Place class tackled these questions.*

## A Current Perspective on Needs Not Wants

By Sofie Lebow, '16

I come from an affluent neighborhood which might as well hang a welcome banner with the words "Wants not Needs." This is not to say everyone in Montecito follows that motto. My parents, after all, decided Midland was the right place for me. However, I began my first day of freshman year unfamiliar with the Midland philosophy—one could see this by looking at my outfit.

The only knowledge I had of "needs not wants" was from reading the school's packing list. The list explained I should only bring what I need, but it still did not keep me from bringing more clothing, shoes, and perfume than I would actually use. As a freshman at Midland, I did not care that much about the school message. In fact, most underclassmen did not. We would use the saying as a joke and to mock teachers: "You're buying junk food?!" a student would exclaim and then go on to say, "Do you really need it? Mr. Graham would be disappointed." The statement "needs not wants" was just there, and, to us, the complexity of the statement did not exist. We thought of it simply as a cliché and ploy to attract parents of prospective students.

As the challenge of academics grew for me, so did the level of work and responsibility. By the end of my sophomore year, I had had enough of balancing algebra homework with morning work periods and shower building. I decided to leave Midland and try Santa Barbara High School.

Life was easier. I had a housecleaner to clean my room and dishes, warm water all the time (without any work), and a heated room to do my homework in. But after just a week of this lifestyle, I was ready to return to Midland. Although while at Midland I didn't discuss the complexity of needs not wants (in fact, I mocked it), the

philosophy became engraved in me. My experience had taught me how to find contentment in responsibility, hard work, nature, serving others, and living with simple needs. While I was at Midland, I had not realized the importance of the responsibility I had; but when I was surrounded by people who did not understand how it felt to chop wood and create a warm shower, I would just roll my eyes. I wanted them to understand what I did, and I was getting irritated by girls obsessed with the latest fashion and Instagram!

After three years of living as a Midlander, I now realize that "needs not wants" is such a complex discussion. There is not a great balance in the world of needs and wants. Most people in our society have become obsessed with material items instead of seeing beauty within simplicity. I am not saying people should live solely by what they need, but a balance is needed. To survive, we don't actually need anything besides food, water, and shelter, but wants can advance society. If we only lived by needs and not wants, education would not exist nor would technology.

I am thankful that Midland has pulled me out of a materialistic shell and has allowed me to see another way of life. I have changed because of Midland. My freshman year, I would never have imagined believing in the "needs not wants" philosophy because then it was, to me, just a tired cliché. Recently, I asked a freshman how he felt about the "needs not wants" philosophy, and he said, in a joking manner, "Oh, that thing. All I know is, if I really want something, I get it!" There was no doubt in my mind that over time this freshman would change and understand needs not wants. So I just chuckled and remembered back to my freshman year when I was that naive.

## More Needs Not Wants Reflections

*The following are excerpts from the authors' original drafts.*

*By Graham Mills, '16*

As a freshman, I didn't understand how steeped I was in the philosophy until I went home over break. I was appalled by how cluttered our house was, by how many "things" we had. We didn't need them! My cabin was sparse, even by Midland standards, and so I felt amazement at the place whence I'd come and how different it was. I found that my needs and my wants had switched positions. Before, I needed a computer and the internet and more; now these weren't even really a want. In fact, I ignored them for the most part. And my wants—like wanting to be outside and away from the city—had become my needs.

Living at Midland allows us to accept its values, whether consciously or not, through immersion. The freshman often repeat the "needs not wants" mantra ironically or sarcastically, but the seniors say it sincerely. After only a few years at Midland, we begin to understand and accept the philosophy. Whether we take time to reflect or not, Midland causes us to soak in the reasoning behind "needs not wants." I suppose people may choose to ignore this philosophy later on in life, but most don't. Because, if nothing else, it provides a stark contrast with the rest of America. In a world so focused on buying "things" and "having," it's important to take a pause and wonder what we actually need. Midland gives us that pause.

*By Nef Arbuckle, '17*

I think that once students get to Midland, their needs become their wants. I may need to chop wood, but because I usually like chopping wood, the task has become one of the things I want to do if I have free time.

*By Cruz Avendaño Dreyfuss, '16*

Midlanders have an unspoken respect for the idea. I've never brought it up in conversation, nor have I heard it brought up as a serious topic. But it's there, and it's a bigger part of our lives than we even know. It works behind the scenes and helps us choose what we think we need and what we think we can do without. If I need a computer and you need dish soap, who's to say which one of us is in the right? Who's to say there is a right? Needs and wants can be the same thing. I think if needs become wants and they become the only wants, a person is rather close to enlightenment. The other way around can lead to destruction.

I respect the idea. I like the idea. I'm glad you asked.



*Live Oak tree on the Rez Road.*

*In the Writing and a Sense of Place class, students were given the following assignment: Write a about the recent hail storm using only one-syllable words. The following pieces not only met the technical requirements, they also captured the sentiments of some students on one of the few days Midland received any precipitation.*

## Hail Storm Lures Minds From Math

By Nef Arbuckle, '17

As the hail falls, the kids run. They make skips and jumps and twirls through the air as the small bits sting their skin. They laugh as their shirts and coats turn wet. The drips seep into their skin as the cold soaks them to the bone. They dance as they run from the room. The only thing that holds them back is the wrath of Phil and his talk of laps. In spite of this, they still dance. They don't run away, like their minds in class, they just dance. The joy of rain in this cruel drought flows through them as they spread their arms and smile at the sky. They love the tears that the clouds have to offer. Soon the dance stops. Their feet leave the ground. They fly. They soar. With the rest of their selves, they meld into the air, the wind, the sky, and the ice.

There is a voice, a boom of a voice, loud and clear through the wind in the ears of the kids. They fall. They fall back to the earth with a loud thump and all stand up. In a blink of an eye, they are all back in their seats, pens in hand. Though they are now in the room and Phil is up at the board, their minds stay with the sky. And the earth. And the hail.

## Praise Hail

By Graham Mills, '16

We perch in our class. We gaze at the board where Jill writes. We think and learn while we sit. It rains on the glass, and the sound is light in our ears. We need the rain here. It is too dry. The grass is brown and sharp. But now it rains so loud it hurts my ears. It is a hard rain, a hard rain that we need more than all things. We stare at the ground past the wall, past the class, where it rains. The ground turns dark and flicks with sharp strikes. Now the dust is gone, now the dirt, now the ground. The rain stays. We want to leave, to dance, to run in the rain. We want to be free... there... past the glass. But no, we sit in the room, and the roof moans.

We hear a strike, sharp and clear on the roof. Once more, on the glass this time. Then it starts in full. It scrapes the walls, it hits the roof, the trees turn down with the hail. The grass falls flat in the mud. We hope now that we can leave. How strange it is! How fun and great and NEW! But still we sit in class.

We learn and think. It is hard for Jill, I feel, to teach this class, this day. We squirm and yearn to leave soon and pray that the hail will stay. More and more falls, and the ground shifts our eyes to it, to the look and feel of it. Milk white. The stones of ice bounce as they strike the trees, as they strike the glass, as they strike the wall. We know it would hurt, to go out in that. We don't care. It would be worth it, just to have some time in that storm so new to us. The pull of hail is fierce, yet we stay in class. One of us asks, "Can we leave? Just for a bit?" No. As class goes on, the hail slows. The strike goes soft. The strike we love, we yearn for, stops. And class lets out.



*Emma Dreyfuss, '15, and Nayana Hummingbird, '15, dance in the hail storm.*



## Experiential Week Reveals Students' Growth

Cruz Avendaño Dreyfuss, '16

For the past twelve years, typical classes halted on the final week of Midland's fourth term. "Experiential Week" scatters the school across California, sometimes even outside of it, to learn what a classroom and teacher can't communicate.

This year, due to group size limitations, freshmen split into two groups and hiked up and down the Manzana. Derek Harwell, '88, and former Midland staff member Adele Schopf hiked to Horseshoe Bend and spent their days exploring the area and writing in their field journals. Kyle Taylor and Eve Southworth hiked in the opposite direction and had the same activities. This trip tightened friendships and created new ones. Braeden Swidenbank, '18, discovered that "People are different in the wilderness." Seeing these new sides brought him closer to his classmates and trip leaders. Claire Lichtwardt, '18, said the trip was "more than camping." Claire shared a great time with her class, with a particularly fond memory of their many creek-crossings.

Sophomores stayed on Midland campus and set up an AC coupler, which will activate if power goes out and divert Midland's solar power to the water pumps instead of back into the power lines. This level of disaster preparedness brings Midland's self-reliance even further. Afterwards, sophomores diagrammed their shower systems and planned out methods of preheating water with solar power to cut down on wood usage. Derby Derbyshire, '17, happily recalled building a small wind turbine with his classmates and teachers. Although the group received minor instruction from a guest speaker, Cristian Casillas, Derby says they were "almost entirely independent. It was cool to see we could build something that works." Lona Dreyfuss, '17, beams when she talks about lining up three Stillman tables and eating with the entire sophomore class for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. It's worth noting that the sophomores still rave about the food Gloria Murillo prepared during the week. Feeding only 25 or so people lets Gloria make some more complex meals, her most popular being strawberry crepes. Asking any sophomore about their meal experience will elicit "ohhhs" and "It was so good!"

The junior class, accompanied by Don and Jill Redl, José Juan Ibarra, Mr. Ian Cummings, and Alison Nikotopolous, visited California Polytechnic University, car-camped in the Central Valley, worked building houses with Self-Help Enterprises, and visited the National Chavez Center. The week started with watching *Cesar Chavez* for a reference point to the Central

Valley. The next day at Cal Poly, the juniors split up into three tour groups: General, Engineering, and Agriculture.

Hannah Drew, '16, felt that the engineering tour focused too heavily on post-graduate opportunities but appreciated the chance to take a college tour. And Graham Mills, '16, still cannot stop talking about the baby cows he saw on the agriculture tour. The class then settled down next to the Kings River at Lindy's Landing campground in Reedley, CA. The water was low, but spirits were high, and once they unpacked, the class played in the shallows until dinnertime. The next day, everybody drove to Goshen, CA, to work with Self-Help Enterprises. Juniors and chaperones alike dug out driveways, directed internal electrical wires, painted houses, and sorted water conservation materials for later distribution to houses for the next three days. On their way back to Midland, the class stopped at the National Chavez Center and learned more about Cesar Chavez and his impact on California. Madison Weatherford, '16, greatly enjoyed learning about Cesar Chavez and hopes that Chavez will be further integrated into Midland's curriculum. James Moszkowitz, '16, enjoyed simply spending time with his class. A new junior, James initially felt a little disconnected, but this issue was greatly alleviated by the class bonding on the trip. Michael Wilson, '16, loves hard work. He felt that "the workplace embodied Midland," and that building houses was a great experience for the entire class.

Instead of a group activity, seniors plan their own experiential week around gathering information for their senior thesis. Emma Dreyfuss, '15, is writing her thesis on emotion in film, so she visited UCLA and Chapman University film seminars, sat in on a graduate-level film shoot, and even got to watch a film shoot of the television show "Scandal." Aside from film, Emma learned vital planning skills, saying: "Planning requires a lot of following through... You have to learn how to talk on the phone to an adult about what you want to get from them."

Crawford Cooley, '15, worked on a farm dedicated to regenerative agricultural practices. Crawford knew the farm's owner through his family, so he had no trouble securing the job. Crawford would rise before the sun and "open" the farm: he would let the chickens out of their coop, feed the pigs and steers, and get the rest of the farm ready for a day of work. The animals are constantly rotated through their

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# Wheelbarrows

## Reflections from Experiential Week

By Graham Mills, '16

The hot sun burned our necks and tanned our arms. We perspired beneath the immense heat. Thump. Another shovel full of sand dropped into the wheelbarrow. And another. And another. We toiled for hours, our arms and shoulders ropy and slick. Dig. Lift. Dump. Repeat. Above our heads, the glistening pile of sand rose into the air. It slid when we dug into it. It scratched us so finely that we didn't notice. Until later. It clung to our sweaty arms like glue. It stung in the salt of our perspiration.

We worked for three hours straight, then took a break. Chatting, we patted our shirts to rid ourselves of the dust and grit. We drank, we laughed, and we rested. But those whose houses we worked on, they never stopped. They worked for hours, and they saw us take our break after only a few. They worked with their shirts stained dark by the

dirt and sweat. They worked while we lounged. What must it be like, to do that? We had privilege, we could stop and start when we chose. Not them.

When we got back to work, I took a turn moving the wheelbarrows. Thump went the sand as it loaded up. Then over and over, I rolled the wheelbarrows. My arms burned from the sun and from the sand. But on we worked. Thump, roll, drop. "Over there," they said as they leveled it. And the sand went over there. Then, it was over. How it went by so fast, I don't know. But then it was time for lunch.

Ah, blessed lunch! We relaxed in the shade of an awning. Sandwiches were laid out. We ate. We drank. We rested. Lunch seemed interminable in the heat of the day. Some played soccer. I simply closed my eyes and lay down on the

soft, well maintained grass.

Nobody wanted to go back to work. Our energy had left with the food. What we all wanted was a collective nap. But no, to work. Thump. Roll. Drop. The breeze cooled our tarnished skin. For a brief moment, I stood in the breeze. My hair ruffled, and I reached a serenity only brought on by exhaustion. The sun was setting, and we had perhaps a half-hour of work left. The heat faded. I closed my eyes and breathed deeply, forgetting all the discomfort of the day. I opened my eyes again and looked around. Everything took on a sharper appearance, like it was back in focus. I was still fatigued, but I had a new energy. I chuckled a little to myself for no particular reason other than plain joy. This was good. I had done a good deed today. I picked up the wheelbarrow with renewed vigor. Thump. Roll. Drop.

### Experiential Week Reveals Students' Growth

*Continued from page 15*

grazing fields in accordance with regenerative practices, so Crawford moved lots of electric fence. Crawford spoke about his experience as if it was all in a day's work. It may be normal work for him, but working on a farm is difficult, to say the least, and speaking nonchalantly about it is a testament to Crawford's work ethic and ability.

Emma Thorpe, '15, flew to Idaho to study sleeping. She woke up ironically early to visit with Sleep Technicians and examine various data to determine whether or not a patient had a sleep disorder. Emma also sat in on patient/doctor sleep discussions and observed two sleep studies. During the sleep studies, the patients were hooked up to machines which would monitor their movements and brainwaves. Watching people sleep isn't a riveting activity, so although Emma enjoyed the learning

process, sitting and looking at lines on a screen wasn't for her. Experiential week is full of these sorts of things, and students openly voice their appreciation for learning what they enjoy and what they don't.

As I interviewed students about their week, I noticed a trend in responses. Sophomores had more to say than freshmen, juniors more than sophomores, and seniors most of all. This seems like an obvious trend based solely on age, and to an extent I think it is, but it's also more. The more time one spends at Midland, the more he or she thinks about what living here means. Talking to the seniors showed me just how much Midland students appreciate their school, and I hope this year's freshmen will be interviewed about their week once more as seniors.

## The End of the 40-Minute Day

By Graham Mills, '16

This year, council announced the end of the long established 40-minute day. Gone. It is no more. It has passed on and joined the choir invisible. It feels suiting, then, that this tradition be given a eulogy. To all those who have rung the slightly off-schedule bells, to all the teachers who have forgotten how much time they had left, and, most of all, to all the hungry students who suffered through it's ill-timed existence: here's to you.

The 40-minute day was, at best, manageable. Those who had well-timed free periods could grab a snack between classes or go to their rooms to unload and reload their backpacks and even get a little homework done. Those teachers who were always a bit off schedule might forget to assign homework. All in all, the 40-minute day gave us 35 minutes less of class time. Like I said: manageable. Some of us were never actually sure *why* the 40-minute day was implemented; we just assumed that some team had a game and they needed to leave just that much earlier, or we had a home game and a normal day didn't give *quite* enough time to prepare.

But for honesty's sake, we deserve both sides of the story.

The 40-minute day was, at worst, torture. Let us imagine, for the sake of argument, that you had either no free period or you had one at the beginning or end of the day. This would mean you had six straight classes with no break in between. And no lunch until *four and a half hours later*. You would cram *all* of your binders and books into your backpack, except even with all your pushing and shoving, it still wouldn't fit. So you would carry the extra binder. By that fifth period, it felt like demons had captured your stomach and relished the opportunity to torture it. And by the end of your last period, what little organization you might have had in your backpack had devolved into a jumble of crumpled papers and broken binders.

Fortunately for all, the 40-minute day has gone. Our council representatives saw an opportunity to improve student life. They suggested a new-fangled 35-minute day. The primary practical benefits are that we don't have to carry all our binders and books with us all day long *AND* we get a blessed 20-minute snack break.

Thank you, council! So long, 40-minute day. May it rest in peace.

## Hiking The Front Range Trail

By Nef Arbuckle, '17

A comfortable silence rested between us as Grace Kelley, '17, and I walked up the hill, breathing heavily. When we reached the top, we stopped and looked at the view. As we talked about the endlessness of the landscape before us, we stepped off the trail and went to the top of the hill where a small tree house sits. We found it split in pieces and spread across the hilltop. We stepped over the cracked boards and moved toward the tree that once held our small fortress. The tree that had once provided shade for four of us was reduced to a jagged trunk reaching towards the sky. We both figured that lightning had hit the tree the night before because it had been pouring all night and there were black charcoal scorches stretching down the length of the trunk.

I looked around from where I stood,

taking in the view. The neon green grass covered the hills and practically glowed in contrast to the dark, pneumatic clouds that blanketed the sky. The scalded tree stood front and center, still proud even though its branches had been reduced to rubble.

I sat down on a log that overlooked the valley before me, and soon Grace was there too. My breath caught as I took in the endless beauty ahead of me. I thought of how fortunate I was to be here, at Midland, and about everything that it took to get here.

Still looking ahead of me, I said, "This place is cool." The phrase was barely a fraction of my feeling towards Midland, but Grace knew what I meant.

She smiled, responding, "Yeah, I like it too."

With that we stood up and started to walk again. We didn't really talk the rest of the way, but the silence was comfortable. I watched the mud on the ground as it squished out from underneath my boots as I walked. I was mesmerized by this for quite a while as we made our way down the narrow path.

As we walked, I thought about the day and about my time at Midland altogether. This freedom is what I loved most about Midland. It seems ironic because we have such a set schedule, but we have so much freedom. I love the fact that if we have an extra 45 minutes, we can go on a hike, and at lunch, if we want, we can go on a picnic. I love that if I need someone, I have a friend in every room. All in all, though, I love that there is a place created to contain all of this and so much more.

## Jill Redl: A Midland Legend

By Graham Mills, '16

I march into my first class with Jill, expecting the worst. Over the years I have heard a myriad of tales about the fabled Jill Redl that vary from “a difficult teacher” to “by far the hardest class I have ever experienced.” Either way, I’m sure that she will be a formidable opponent, and I’m ready for anything. We sit down facing the board. Jill welcomes the terrified juniors with a warm, broad, almost giggling smile that reaches her eyes. She is so ready to start, so ready to teach yet another class of students, a different class of students, that we can’t help but smile back.

Mr. Graham says that she has always had the teacher gene in her. Ever since she was a child she wanted to be a teacher. Jill confirmed this, explaining that she used to play “teacher” as a kid. She enjoyed teaching her little sister everything from English grammar to math and science.

She met Don, her husband and the calculus and economics teacher, in high school. She then went on to follow her curiosity for language by earning a B.A. in French at Gonzaga University. From there, she continued on to the University of Virginia and earned her M.A. in English. She got a job at Rutgers Preparatory School teaching high school English for the first time. It would not be the last. After that, she and Don took a one-year respite and traveled throughout India, and it was there that they found out about Midland.

They actually applied via e-mail and phone. They arrived at Midland, according to Laurie, looking “very clean” and out of place. But Jill loved it. She thought of the old, rather decrepit Art Guild as a “little house on the prairie.” Laurie said that she brought an intensity that many new faculty lack. She has maintained this throughout her teaching career here. She even describes herself as a very intense person, which has partially contributed to the force she brings to her teaching. This has

caused her to be a role model for many of the students here, male and female alike.

\* \* \*

I wait nervously in class. It’s been a few weeks and Jill returns our first essays. There is a certain tension in the air, the type you could cut with a dull butter knife. She smiles slightly as she gives me my heritage essay, our first essay of the year. Writing about my heritage was something I felt pretty confident about *and* these were first drafts, so I expect she’ll



Jill Redl and members of the Class of 2015

cut us a little slack. I flip over the pages, searching eagerly for my grade. C-. My heart drops through my chair. I would normally get at least a B on something like this. Surely I’m going to flunk this class. But as I look through my ill-conceived work, I see that everything has a comment on it. “Work a little more on developing this theme,” or “This is almost there, go a little farther.”

That’s exactly what Jill does; she goes a little farther. On everything. Jill holds herself and her students to a higher standard than any teacher I know. Because of this, she has gotten the unfair stigma of being too difficult. This is not true. Her merit comes from her self-described intensity, and that intensity is driven by kindness and pride in her students. She expects excellence, and she helps them achieve it.

*Continued on page 19*

## Jill Redl: A Midland Legend

*Continued from page 18*

Jill loves to teach *The Great Gatsby* and *Hamlet*. Why? Because Jill loves most to watch the pride and joy her students feel as they decipher a particularly hard passage or chapter. She loves to watch them work at such a high caliber alone, without help.

Along with being one of the strictest teachers I know, she is also one of the kindest. She will help kids through any obstacle they come across, but they alone must overcome it. This is, according to Mr. Graham, her policy of “help and support.” Or, as Laurie puts it, Jill exhibits “tough love.” She’ll run with kids if they’re flagging during cross-country practice, and she’ll even walk with them if they need to, but she won’t let them stop. She will stay there for as long as it takes, encouraging them to the finish.

When she was assigned to coach cross-country, she brought a new aspect to the sport: research. It was new, but Laurie told me that she readily accepted it. She brought her background to the sport; researched what to run and when, how long to go for and for how hard. As a result, cross-country was a huge success.

And now Jill and Don have accepted a job teaching in Bogotá, Columbia. She will continue her passion for teaching English there, teaching the upperclassmen along with seven or eight other faculty. Don will continue to teach math at the same level as he does here. Alas, she will not be coaching anything, but this gives her more time to perfect her style and finesse. They will live close to the school, but not on-



*Once again, Emma Munger, '08, provides us with wonderful renditions of Midlanders with her pen and ink drawings. She offered this drawing as a farewell to Don and Jill Redl.*

campus as at Midland. It’s going to be very different.

But “different” works well with them. Midland is “different.” And they have always wanted to work—and learn—internationally. They have never stopped learning, and I don’t think they ever will. They leave—once more into a new place—to learn. While they continue to teach, they continue to push their boundaries, and they continue to learn. In a sense, they are graduating from Midland. Their journey goes forever on. We wish them well.

\* \* \*

I walk into the Art Guild for another class. I shut the door and set down my books. A poem, *Theme for English B*, lies on the desk, intimidating in its length. For a split second, I’m apprehensive. But a roaring comforting fire blazes in the back of the room; I look up, her warm smile greets me, and we start off the day.



*Lily Brand, '12, Phoebe Stokes, '12, Jill Redl, and Selena Wrightson, 13.*

## Don Redl's Next Adventure: Bogotá

By Cruz Avendaño Dreyfuss, '16

It's 70 degrees out and 5:30 in the morning. I nervously jog in place next to the LA Civic Center. My running shoes, beat up from accumulated days worth of trail runs, pull whispers from the grass. The wind ruffles my baggy, gray athletic shorts. My Midland cross-country jersey bounces with each step as my bib number, 20537, glances up at me from time to time. Just when I think my heart has breached my throat, I hear a confidently relaxed voice call my name.

You can always tell when Don's smiling. Even if you can't see his reassuring grin, you hear it. His warm voice carries across any terrain, and, even when it carries that twinge of "I caught you going something wrong," Don's smile is contagious.

Don Redl has been calmly smiling around Midland School for the past eleven years. When he and his wife, Jill, went searching for high school teaching jobs, they initially wanted to teach outside of the United States, and they wanted to avoid boarding schools entirely. Then they found Midland. They blew off their initial wants because, as Jill puts it, "Midland has soul." Don and Jill were instantly intrigued by the mission statement's focus on self-reliance and simple living, and, although they now had to share their lives with a bunch of high-schoolers, they wanted the challenge.

Flash forward eleven years, and I'm facing my own challenge. Don and I get in a line of runners that wraps around the Civic Center and feeds into shuttles at the end of the block. Green, blue, and pink neons assault my eyes as flashier runners mill about, their shoes and compression sleeves glinting under the artificial yellow lights. I look at my Midland green-and-white jersey, boring shorts, black and dull orange shoes, and bare arms, and I wonder if I'm really ready to run 26.2 miles nonstop. Talking to Don, I can tell his confidence has not

wavered. It never has. If Don thinks you can do something, you can do it. He has run enough to teach "mind over matter," and he does.

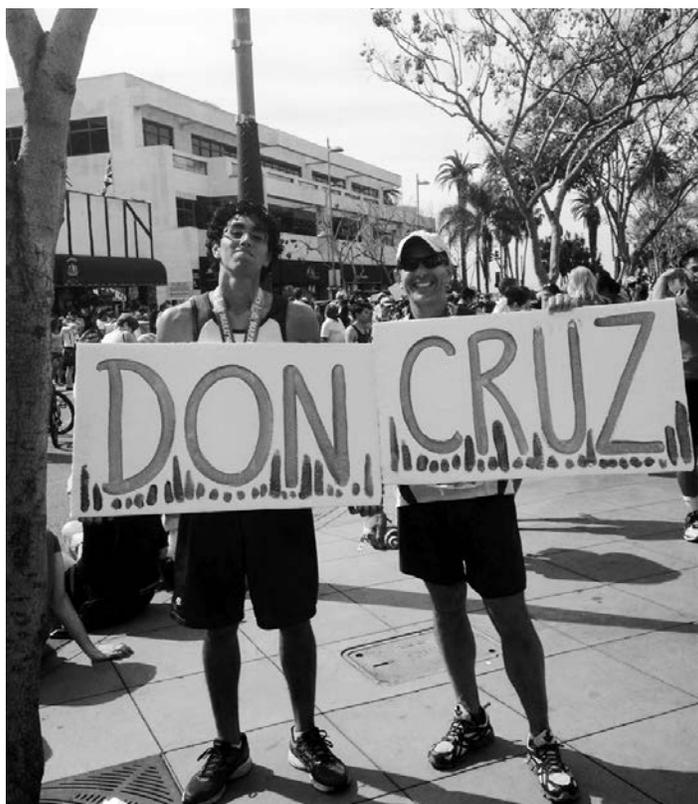
As a high school junior and senior, Don ran cross-country without much guidance outside of practice. He and his peers believed the more they ran, the faster they would be. Don ran so much that he injured his knees, and, until he came to Midland, running more than three miles brought a resurgence

of stress. But he still liked to run. When Don first came to Midland, he would wake up at 4:00 AM with José Juan Ibarra, the cross-country coach at the time, run about three miles towards town, and then get picked up by Phil Hasseljian, who would drive them the rest of the seven miles to the YMCA. This worked great for training, but one day, Phil's alarm didn't go off, and Don and José Juan ran all ten miles. Don's knee was fine. He was ready to run.

In 2006, Don began coaching the Midland cross-country team of seven boys and two girls. Nine years later, that team of nine runners has grown to 43—over half the student body. Don gives runners manageable mileages so that they don't run too much and injure themselves. But he never denies a student additional

distance; his constant positive reinforcement encourages running on what would be off-days. This year the Midland cross-country team won first place in the Condor League and ran at the Mount SAC Preliminaries.

Over his eleven years, Don improved more than just Midland's running program. He has taught Geometry, Statistics, Precalculus, Calculus, Honors Calculus I, Advanced Calculus, Android App Programming, Microeconomics, Advanced Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Advanced Macroeconomics, and Financial Economics and Investing.



Cruz Avendaño Dreyfuss, '16, holds a sign for Don Redl, and Don holds a sign for Cruz.

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## Don Redl

*Continued from page 20*

“Before he arrived, few of our graduates wanted to major in economics in college,” says Lynda Cummings, Midland’s college counselor. Don created Midland’s economics program from scratch, and his classes are among the most popular electives. When asked about his teaching style, students gush over his ability to break down complex ideas into manageable chunks and his constant availability. If one of his students needs help, Don will work until he or she understands. This level of satisfaction creates lasting memories; Diego Marcogliese, ‘13, recalls some of his fondest Midland moments studying for his AP Economics exam and chowing on pizza at Don’s house alongside Charlie Lehman, ‘13, and Zach Dib, ‘13.

Don put his organizational skills to work when he took student council under his wing in 2012. He wanted to change the focus of the council from being a purely disciplinary body to being a group of students who had an impact. Now, thanks to Don’s guidance and ideas, student council manages the student life budget, about \$4,500 a year, and has a strong influence in everyday Midland life. Just this year council eliminated the hunger-inducing 40-minute classes (a schedule used on Wednesdays when sports teams need to travel) by changing the schedule so that students have a 20-minute snack break in the middle of the day. Council also made the first significant revision of the lap system to date by changing the standard number of laps given for certain offenses and by allowing study laps to end when specific homework assignments are complete. Don wanted to make the student council exemplify Midland’s ideal of self-reliance, and his changes will guide council’s future role in the community. Don has high expectations, whether in council, teaching, or coaching, and his students want to fulfill them.

On the shuttle, Don sits with me as I gawk at the other runners and think that, were we not all wearing running shoes and shorts, it would seem like a perfectly normal bus ride. Thinking this, I look at Don and realize that while everyone at Midland associates him with running, outsiders might not guess that one year for his birthday, Jill dropped him off at one end of the Grand Canyon and picked him up at the other end after he had run the full length. As we approach Dodger Stadium, Don tells me about how he ran his first marathon with world-famous ultramarathoner Dean Karnazes, and then, after having an easy enough time, signed up for a 50-mile race two months later. This distance is enough to raise eyebrows, but what stuns Midlanders and outsiders alike is Don’s participation in the Western States 100 in the Sierra Nevada mountains. As we approach Dodger Stadium, Don tells me about miles upon miles of dark forest with only the moon, his footsteps, and once, a bear, for company; he tells me how it

feels to find an aid station after six miles of cold night running. He tells all these stories of incredible endurance with his trademark relaxed smile and affable attitude. I look at Don and think how freshman year, I avoided cross-country, and now as a junior, I want to run every single one of his stories.

Don’s latest story, however, will require a plane.

At the end of this school year, Don and Jill will move to Bogotá, Colombia where Don will teach AP Calculus AB, AP Calculus BC and Math 11 Pre-AP. They will add Spanish to their repertoire of languages but will teach their classes in English. Although the community is happy they will finally be able to teach internationally, we are sorry to see them go. Bogotá just so happens to have a huge running community, and Don says he plans on joining a local group. While some might be discouraged by the 7,525 foot elevation gain, Don beams with excitement when he talks about it, saying, “Think about how much faster I’ll be when I visit California!”

At the starting line of the LA Marathon, I wonder if I’ll be able to fulfill my coach’s expectations. The warm air crackles with anticipation, and I can’t seem to reassure myself that all my training will pay off. I look over at Don, and he smiles his confidently reassuring smile. I’m not so worried anymore. If Don believes I can do it, I can do it. I’ll run my race to the Santa Monica Pier, and Don will run his to wherever he decides to go. From Princeton to Midland to Bogotá to who knows where? Perhaps Don and Jill will finally get their chance to live in China for a while, maybe they’ll discover the lost city of Atlantis, or maybe they really are CIA agents, and Colombia is just a cover story. As our race begins, I shake these thoughts from my head. Don looks at me. We smile. We start running.



*Don Redl teaching in class*

## Donna Williams Transitions from School Nurse to Veterans' Caretaker

By Sofie Lebow, '16

Before I enrolled at Midland School, I met Donna Joy Williams at Project Healthy Neighbors, a community service project that provided health services to the homeless in Santa Barbara. She had brought members of Common Ground, Midland's service club, to help out. I stood behind a table with Midland students I just met, and we handed out shoes to homeless men and women.

Coincidentally, I was interested in attending Midland School, so, while making sure the men and women were getting the correct size shoes, I pried information from the students about what it was like to live at Midland. When it was time for the Midland students to leave, Donna introduced herself to me. I remember her warm, welcoming handshake and her contagious smile. Meeting her that day helped me decide to attend Midland. I realized if I went to Midland I would have Donna at my side, someone with open arms and a gentle touch who, like me, had a passion and a need to help people.

Recently, when I asked both staff and students to describe Donna, most people used words like open-hearted, empathetic, selfless, compassionate, and dependable. Although Donna worked as the health director at Midland for six and a half years, she was more than just a registered nurse who distributed medicine and dealt with the flu season. She was, as Laurie Munger puts it, "a mother of many." She has an aura of calmness and ease about her, and her soft voice soothes frayed nerves. She always lays her hand gently on people's arms or shoulders and looks directly into their eyes. We all know she genuinely cares about the wellbeing of each student. Smiling, Mr. Graham says, "She is the selfless, available kind... an adult who acts as a guardrail." I speak for most every Midland student when I say that I agree. We all relied on and trusted her. And she was always around to brighten our mood through her great sense of humor and contagious laugh.

Getting sick at Midland is unpleasant because we don't have our moms to make warm soup and our cabin floors make us shiver. Luckily, Donna made sickness at Midland bearable. In times of despair from a runny nose, a sore throat, and a fever, Donna would appear like an angel. We could always rely on her to check in on us and quietly ask, "Honey, how are you doing?" Often Donna would creak open a student's cabin door and deliver food or even colorful popsicles.

Aside from juggling caretaking and acting as a silent guardian



*Janet Willie, left, and Donna Williams overlapped briefly in the position of school nurse as Janet transitioned into the job in January.*

at home games, Donna found time and energy to contribute to many other aspects of the community. She often lent a hand in the garden and in the kitchen. She also helped create the Common Ground service club, which grows every year as more and more students join and undertake bigger projects. By the time Donna left, Common Ground was a strong enough organization that we knew it would thrive even without her. Donna's genuine compassion has influenced Midlanders and set a tone for the whole school. Mr. Graham even said, "Her contribution to Midland School is long lasting, and as long as she is remembered people here will act with kindness."

After many years at Midland, Donna's husband Ken retired to Cambria, and Donna had to split her time between Midland and home. Every Monday morning she got up early to drive almost two hours to Midland, and she returned home late Friday evening. It was hard to balance her own needs at home with the needs of Midland students, so when the Veteran's Administration, close to her home, offered her a job as a nurse

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## Janet Willie, New Health Director, Joins Midyear

By Nef Arbuckle, '17

I did not want to move. Curled up in bed, I clutched a pillow tightly to my stomach. Light suddenly flooded my room, the door opened, and Janet Willie stepped in. I groaned and hid my face as she told me she was taking me to the doctor. I told her there was no point, I just had the stomach bug, it would go away in a few days.

I was wrong.

Janet eventually got me up out of bed, and, after a stop at the doctor's office, she drove me to the hospital. After nine hours of endless exams and tests, the doctors concluded that I had appendicitis. The only person I wanted to see was my mother, who was hundreds of miles away. Janet understood. She stayed with me for every minute of every hour. She spoke to the doctors as if she had known me for years rather than a just few months. She sat next to me the entire time. She cracked jokes and played all my favorite songs on her phone. She did all she could to make me smile or take my mind off of the pain.

When you hear stories like mine, it's easy to understand how Janet Willie, Midland's new health director, became such a popular member of the Midland community in such a short period of time. Janet happened to be visiting Will and Marguerite Graham at Midland in late November, 2014, and five weeks later she was settled in and working as the school's nurse.

Janet has been a friend of the Grahams for over twenty years. When they first met, Janet was a certified massage therapist; she has since become a licensed nurse practitioner. She attended Cottey College in Missouri where she earned an A.A. with a focus in sciences and then graduated from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks where she earned a B.S. in natural resource management. Janet previously worked in Bethel, Maine at Gould Academy, the school Mr. Graham worked at before he came to Midland. After she made the quick decision to leave Bethel and take the Midland job, she

headed west with a carload of belongings, a puppy named Lily, and a cat named Earl on December 24th, leaving little time to say goodbye to friends and family. Back in Bethel, Janet still has a home and all of her friends. However, right now she is at Midland giving out the medications each day, bandaging the hurt, and feeding the ill.

Janet's first months at Midland were all work and no play. Janet had kids sick at every turn, kids getting injured at every stoplight, and then, at the end of the road, she still had breakfast, lunch, and dinner medications to give out. The pressure did not break her though. Janet held a smile the whole time and managed to stay sane through the entirety of it.

As kids traipsed in and out of her office throughout the days, then weeks, then months, the office slowly became a reflection of Janet's happy thoughts and welcoming personality. As soon as the clouds started to lift from the winter and students were keeping themselves from getting hurt and sick, Janet seized her opportunity and painted the health office. The office has been through color hardships having faced a rather Dr. Seuss-y faze of lime green, but so far Janet has made the office her own. The room still has that sweet smell of paint, and the furnishings are still being questioned, but Janet has a vision and will keep going full force with a smile on her face until her vision is achieved.

*Another new member of the Midland health staff this year was **Dr. Chris Elstner**, who replaced Dr. Elliot Schulman. Dr. Elstner is a pediatric doctor who has been working in the Santa Barbara area for the last 35 years. He was excited to work with Midland students this year, but he was also chosen to work as a member of a Doctors Without Borders team and set off for that adventure this spring for about nine to 12 months.*

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### Donna Williams

*Continued from page 22*

case manager, she could not refuse the opportunity. In her new job, Donna supports homeless veterans who have been housed through the government; she visits her patients at least once a month to make sure they are healthy and that their homes are safe. Again, she finds herself acting as a guardrail.

As an empathetic person, Donna finds it challenging to know that the veterans she works with have encountered so

many horrific things. But their life stories only encourage her more to connect with each veteran on an individual basis. She treats them as she would anyone else—she looks at them with her caring eyes and puts a gentle hand on their shoulders. We certainly miss her, but we know she is spreading her joy to those more in need.

## First Softball Team Ends Season with Pizza Party for Dunn

By Sofie Lebow, '16

Midland school completed its first season of women's slow-pitch softball. Ever. Tom Rogowski, funny and forgiving, coached the team of 17 girls. Tom had a large task coaching the girls because most of the team had never played before. He had to start from scratch by explaining the rules of slow-pitch softball, teaching us how to hold a bat, and showing us how to correctly catch and throw a ball. Although a majority of the team came to the first practice having never touched a bat, we did have some team members who had previous experience. Our team captains, Talei McCloud Cody, '18, Lona Dreyfuss, '17, and Jazmine Kelleher, '17, had the most experience.

We did exceptionally well for a team with almost no experience. We did not win every

game, but the season was filled with growth. We had some players at first, including me, who could not hit the ball, but by the end of the season we hit doubles and slid into home.

Dunn and Midland were the only schools in the Condor League that could field a girls' softball team. This gave us the opportunity to play against other Midland students who participated on the farm crew, on the boys' volleyball team, and in the fitness class. We also played with the alums during Parent Alumni/ae weekend.



Midland and Dunn girls together in the Midland garden.

Our team enjoyed having only one official competitor because it provided us an opportunity to get to know some Dunn students. After one game, the Dunn team invited Midland to a barbecue dinner. Then, we ended the season by hosting a pizza dinner in our garden for Dunn. By this time, we knew the majority of the Dunn girls' names and were happy that we had been

able to watch each other's team grow. Though, of course, we still maintained a competitive spirit.

## Fitness Training A New "Sport"

By Cruz Avendaño Dreyfuss, '16

This year, Midland School's Kyle Taylor, who teaches honors and regular biology, anatomy, and 9th-grade seminar, added a new after-school activity to the spring selection.

When she first arrived at Midland in 2010, Kyle, a certified strength and conditioning specialist, worked with students who had been injured in their competitive sports. Just this year, Kyle decided to take her skill set and apply it to a non-competitive sport, strength and conditioning. Kyle found that students would get injured because they lacked full-body conditioning, so she aims to strengthen Midland's athletes, as well as

help students reach personal fitness goals.

Students flocked to strength and conditioning, filling up all sixteen available spots on the first day of sign-up.

Lauren Dasmalchi, '16, fondly remembers Kyle's varied workouts, such as hiking, yoga, Zumba, and, on Midland's "Eighties Day," a surprisingly difficult Jane Fonda workout video. Kyle varies her schedule as much as possible, fitting in workouts, sports, games, and special activities. One of the students' favourite special activities took place on one of the hottest days of the year when Kyle surprised the class by having smoothie-making instead of muscle-aching. Once a week, Kyle forgoes

a workout and replaces it with games like ultimate frisbee, softball, variations on "tag", and relay races.

Kyle feels satisfied with the first year of the sport, and she is already talking about improvements she wants to make. Midland does not have enough weight equipment to meet the needs of 16 people simultaneously, so Kyle, in the true Midland fashion, is thinking about making medicine balls or other kinds of weights. Kyle also mentioned working to get some weight equipment out onto the field, and moving the sport's time slot to the winter.

## Resuscitated Boys' Volleyball Team Beats Dunn

By Graham Mills, '16

For the first time in twelve years, Midland had a boys' volleyball team in the spring instead of a lacrosse team. Because only two of us had actually played before, we had a bit of a ramshackle team. But what we missed in experience, we made up for in vigor. This was the loudest, funnest, and most supportive team I had ever been on.

Our coach, Sir Ian Cummings, had never coached the sport before. In fact, he hadn't played it either. But that is beside the point. Like he told us on the first practice, he read up on it the night before. Because Sean Cummings, '15, had the most experience and because he was our team captain, he co-coached sometimes. Their attitudes towards the game lead to a funny, but still rigorous, team. For example, Sir Cummings insisted that we skip joyously during warm-ups. Once, when we were scrimmaging, we decided that one team's name was AAAAAHHHHHHHHH! Now, that was a loud practice.

We improved tremendously over the season. At first, it seemed we could barely get a ball into the air. By the end of



*Captain Sean Cummings, '15, spikes the ball while teammates Jack Melican, '16, James Moskowitz, '16, and Graham Mills, '16, look on. Midland won at Dunn, 3 sets to 1.*

the season, we could bump, set, and spike well. Of course, we still made some mistakes. Some of our number tended to try to get the ball through the net instead of over it. Cummings' idea of using a libero (someone who only plays in the back row) proved invaluable, and the position suited Skyler Burton perfectly.

Under our semi-formal leadership, this team went far. The highlight of the season came when we beat Dunn. Thanks to Cummings and Sean, we had a fantastic transition from inexperienced recruits who would hit the ceiling instead of the floor, to calm, cool, and collected athletes. Thank you Cummings and Sean. Thank you everyone who played. Thanks for keeping those

bumps up, keeping your serves controlled, and keeping your hits over the net.

Though inexperienced, we won some games this season. Our first game against Besant Hill was a win. The total win/loss is 3-7. We have had a great season overall. Once again, thanks. Good game guys.

### 2014-2015 STUDENT/FACULTY COUNCIL

COUNCIL CHAIR Don Redl

FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES Phil Hasseljian, Johnny Ninon, José Juan Ibarra

HEAD PREFECTS Emma Dreyfuss and Miles Crawford

FALL

SPRING

SENIOR CLASS PRESIDENT Lupita Valle  
 JUNIOR AT LARGE Cruz Avendaño Dreyfuss  
 JUNIOR CLASS PRESIDENT Deyanira Ibarra  
 SOPHOMORE CLASS PRESIDENT Lona Dreyfuss  
 FRESHMAN CLASS PRESIDENT Andrew White

SENIOR CLASS PRESIDENT Emma Thorpe  
 JUNIOR AT LARGE Sawyeh Salehpour  
 JUNIOR CLASS PRESIDENT Lauren Dasmalchi  
 SOPHOMORE CLASS PRESIDENT Jazzy Kelleher  
 FRESHMAN CLASS PRESIDENT Maggie Tang

Special thanks to Judge Peter Smith, '51, for his generous support of council funds.

**Class of 1940**

While his family vacationed at the Alisal Ranch in Solvang, **Dick Kelsey** visited Midland for lunch with Will Graham, students, and faculty eager to learn first-hand about Midland in the days of Paul and Louise Squibb. If the rains ever arrive, games such as “paper trail” are sure to be resurrected.

**Class of 1950**

**Sheafe Ewing** enjoyed an afternoon with alumni/ae and friends who attended the San Francisco reception in February. Sheafe keeps connected to all things Midland by visiting campus and through regular reports from his grandson, **Tate Ewing, ‘16**.

**Class of 1957**

**George DeCottes** remembers, “We used to play a local reform school in basketball...I asked this one fellow once what he was in for. He said, ‘car theft,’ but he said he would ‘be out in 6 months!’ He asked how long I would be in. I said 4 years. He snapped back, ‘WHAT DID YOU DO?!’” **Tom Shoup** participated in a trial test of a new chemotherapy medication marketed by Bristol-Myers Squibb for those who suffer from lung cancer. The medicine has been highly effective, and, in March 2015, the FDA approved the drug. Tom enjoys reminiscing about Midland and remembers fondly the bucolic environment which surrounded him and his classmates.

**Class of 1960**

**Joseph Esherick, Ph.D.** writes, “I often think back to all Midland gave me to start me on an academic career.” Joe holds the Hwei-chih and Julia Hsiu Chair in Chinese Studies at UCSD where he teaches modern Chinese history specializing in the intersection of social developments and political movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Joe taught at the University of Oregon before coming to UCSD in 1990. He also serves on the editorial boards of the *China Quarterly*, *Modern China*, *Asia Major*, and *China Review International*. **Louis Reichardt** and his wife, Katherine, prepared for their 40th wedding anniversary by spending a year walking every street in San Francisco, totaling approximately 1,900 miles, which is seven Mount Everests in elevation gain. Louis, who climbed both K2 and Everest, is quoted in the Harvard alumni/ae magazine, “There is no better way to get to know a city and its people than walking its streets...The experience was one of the richest of our lives.”

**Class of 1962**

In February, **Harry Cross** returned from India, where he was working on an analysis of policy for recent reforms and health outcomes. Harry lived in India for three years in the 1990s and writes that he was taken aback by the growth of the country in the past ten years. **Sherman Herrick**, a former faculty member, and his wife, **Camie**, joined alumni/ae, friends and other former faculty members who celebrated the 1970s Mega-Reunion in April.

**Class of 1965**

**Peter G. Bonebakker** recently celebrated the birth of his second grandchild. Peter retired from Phillips 66 in September, 2014, and is currently living in Benicia, CA, where he keeps busy with consulting and volunteer work.

**Class of 1966**

**Andy Priest** and **Kris Whitten** enjoyed a recent visit in Dallas. Kris is working on gathering the class for its 50-year reunion in 2016. For more information please contact him at: fristian@pacbell.net.

**Class of 1968**

Gratitude to **David Selman, Doyle Hollister, David Congdon, Ruric Nye, Rick DeGolia, Dan Shapiro, Susan and David Starkman, Elizabeth and Jim Quick, Susanna and Matthew Parkhouse, Richard Smiley, and William Prince, ‘69**, who gathered at Midland for graduation and hosted a celebration for faculty and friends in honor of Joanne and **BG Kresse** as they begin their retirement. Rick DeGolia was elected Vice Mayor of Atherton, CA last November. In addition to Rick’s public service, he has worked as a business lawyer and a software executive. Rick would like to host classmates and friends in Palo Alto. Stay tuned for more information, or contact Rick to help coordinate an event. David Starkman wrote earlier this year, “I just received the February 2015 issue of the Midland Mirror, and started by reading the article “B.G. is Leaving. Everyone Panic!” by **Emma Dreyfuss, ‘15**. This wonderful article inspired me to share some memories... Our class built those benches near the soccer field. The values of learning the difference between one’s wants and needs, the self-sufficiency we learned and practiced while we were there, has infused itself into my own sense of well-being and happiness every day. I’ve never worried about how we were going to manage in life, because I’ve always known that we could get along with very little if we had to. So, to you Midland students reading this, the message from this Midland Alum is to appreciate where you are here and now (you might read Alan Watt’s book, titled *The Book: On the Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are*—an important one to me back in 1968) as it is a very special place, and it will provide a foundation for a happy life ahead—no matter what you do.”

**Class of 1969**

**Dan Kellogg** visited Midland in winter and received a tour of campus by Will Graham and cousin Peter Schuyler.

**Class of 1970**

Although he was not able to attend the ‘70s Mega Reunion, **Ben Sias** and his wife visited campus in early April on a bike trip, touring the campus and finding the campus well tended. Ben remembers Midland fondly, and the valuable experience and lessons he learned at the school have helped

him throughout his life. He writes, “Thanks to all the faculty, staff, and students for continuing to make Midland a truly unique and wonderful life learning and educational experience.”

**Class of 1971**

**Ken Edwards** visited campus for the 1970s Mega Reunion and was inspired to give new books to the library and supplies for the metals program.

**Class of 1975**

Kaoru and **James Fahey** traveled from their home in New Jersey to join **Dick Stubbs, John Hintzen, and John Stiff** in celebrating their 40th Class Reunion. The “Gang of Four” envisioned, planned, and executed the 1970s Mega Reunion in late April. Many thanks to these dedicated alumni whose efforts resulted in a wonderful gathering of more than 150 former students, their family members, and former faculty who all got to reminisce and celebrate their Midland experiences.

**Class of 1977**

Midland Ranch Manager **Ben Munger, ‘79**, visited with **Henry King** during graduation weekend and took him to see the Fonda Music award which Henry received twice during his years at Midland. Henry credits the Mungers with having a profound influence on his life and academic career, and today he works with community groups in Los Angeles.

**Class of 1990**

**Jason A. Burns**, founder and owner of RocketGate PR, lives in Dorado, Puerto Rico, and looks forward to visiting Midland this summer when he and his wife return to spend time in California.

**Class of 1991**

Many thanks to **Joe Hargrave** for hosting a Midland event at his popular San Francisco eatery, Tacolicious, on Valencia Street.

**Class of 1993**

**Katie McGrath** writes, “My adorable daughter just turned 15 months. My wife and I have been married for seven years. Beata is a nurse practitioner at an Urgent Care Clinic. I assist the superintendent of schools at the Los Angeles Unified School District as an instructional director (I evaluate and support school principals). Beata and I have lived together in Pasadena for the last ten years where I have owned a home since 2003. We love hiking in the Angeles Forest near our home, visiting the nearby Southern California beaches, and spending lots of time with our family members.”

**Class of 1996**

**Elizabeth “Liz” Mertz Collins** returned to campus to climb Grass Mountain in April and enjoyed a visit with the Cummings. She writes, “It was a blast to come back to Midland and walk around campus with some friends. We were all

visiting from Jackson Hole, Wyoming, where I now live with my hubby and two kiddos, Greer and Tell.”

#### Class of 1997

**Aaron Rockett**, a documentary filmmaker at TheFixerDocumentary.com & Aaronrockett.com, recently moved from Washington, DC, to the Pittsburgh area of Pennsylvania. Aaron’s documentaries have aired on PBS and include a piece on Afghanistan, which afforded Aaron several opportunities to travel overseas. Aaron’s parents still live in Santa Barbara, and he visits regularly with his fiancée, Bethany.

#### Class of 1998

**Isaiah Chase** left Midland for Oberlin College, where he majored in East Asian Studies and Japanese Literature. Isaiah received Oberlin’s Shansi Award and lived and taught in Japan for two years, then returned to San Francisco, changed paths, and decided to become a doctor. He is currently Chief Resident of Psychiatry at Yale University, married, and soon to be a father.

#### Class of 1999

**Jon Lee** generously took time out from a busy schedule to return to Midland in March to offer a Tuesday evening “club” for students interested in the field of technology. Sharing his experience, both professional and personal, Jon said that a focus on self-reliance and simplicity helped him achieve success: “Sometimes it’s as simple as doing the work (required).” Many thanks to **Chase “Geoff” Thornhill** for continuing to encourage classmates and friends to stay connected to Midland, most recently at the Tacolicious San Francisco gathering of Midland alumni/ae and friends. **Pat Walker** has been visiting Midland somewhat frequently to take landscape photos and hike. He shared some of his photos with Midland and writes, “I have fallen head over heels for the arts. I continued studying darkroom photography when I left Midland until I changed to drawing and painting. I followed that as I studied English, and I worked at a wonderful old book store in Pasadena for seven years.” Pat later studied counseling and briefly considered becoming a drug and alcohol counselor, but then returned to his English studies. His goal now is to teach, share photography exhibits, and write novels.

#### Class of 2001

**Ryan Hofman** visited Midland during Alumni/ae weekend and stopped by the metals shop, where he observed Johnny Ninos leading a group of parents and students in jewelry making using cuttlefish bones as castings. Ryan is the director of facilities and construction for the Hofman Hospitality Group in Southern California and is co-founder and vice president of Stone Cold Solutions, a commercial equipment manufacturing company. He has several patents pending in refrigeration and water saving technologies.

#### Class of 2002

**Ming Holden** won the Bellingham Review’s 2015 49th Parallel Award for Poetry for her poem “For My Aspirated.”

#### Class of 2004

**Amelia Adams** shed sunshine on the San Francisco gathering as she and her step grandfather **Jim Cooley**, ‘49, greeted each other and embraced in remembrance of her grandfather. Jim is responsible for Amelia finding and attending Midland School. Congratulations to **Bryce Kellogg** for completing his graduate studies at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

#### Class of 2006

**Tristan Brenner** lives in Larkspur, CA, recently became engaged, and manages a 156-acre goat and sheep dairy, which produces farmstead cheese in Tomales, CA. He and his co-workers are just beginning a management intensive grazing program and will soon be introducing 90 laying hens into the program. The land is protected by the owners and a Marin Agricultural Land Trust easement, and it will be saved in perpetuity as agricultural land.

#### Class of 2007

**Charles Heery** and **Jasper Jackson-Gleich** joined friends from Midland at the San Francisco gathering. Charles has taken his Midland building skills to new heights, literally, as he constructs “sky scarpers.” Jasper works in Northern California in the beverage industry.

#### Class of 2008

Congratulations to **Katie Cromack** upon completion of her graduate studies at Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies. She earned an M.A. in International Relations and International Economics.

#### Class of 2009

**Ross Kellogg** completed his undergraduate degree at the Rhode Island School of Design. **Sophia Rocco** begins a Ph.D. program at Cornell University in plasma physics this fall. **Colin Weaver** continues to show his support for all things Midland, attending the February gathering in San Francisco and returning to campus for graduation. Midland thanks Colin for the fine video tribute he and his classmates created for the Mungers, Kresses and Redls.

#### Class of 2011

**Mariah Chen** returned to Midland to visit with faculty and friends, a well deserved break from thesis writing and preparation for her Barnard College graduation. **Rachel Featherstone** shared her gratitude for Midland when she visited the campus in May and volunteered to help **BG Kresse**, ‘68, prepare pizza. Rachel has one more semester left before she completes her undergraduate degree from Guilford College in

North Carolina. **Shue Him Lau** (known as “Sean” at USC) spent the winter studying in London. He is involved with a colleague at USC creating a project and proposal they hope to have accepted by Los Angeles area auto sales businesses.

#### Class of 2012

**Gillian Beery-Beesley** writes, “Currently, I am in my junior year of college. I have spent the last semester studying abroad in London, England, and I will be backpacking all around Europe this summer. By the time I return I will have seen 11 countries. I have one more year of school at CSU Sacramento, and then I graduate—hoping to take my Sociology major with a Labor studies minor and turn it into a career.”

#### Class of 2014

Upon receiving the winter edition of the Midland Mirror, **India Salter** wrote to Will Graham and the Mirror staff to thank them for the edition and to express gratitude for her Midland experience. This summer, India will do archival work on campus and help care for the Midland horses.

#### Former Faculty:

**Dan and Kathy Kunkle** (1989-2000) and their daughter, **Emily**, ‘02, spent a day on campus with the Grahams this spring. After more than thirty years in boarding schools, Dan and Kathy have retired to their family home in Pennsylvania. They warmly recalled their years at Midland with deep appreciation for their Midland experience and support Midland’s vision for the future.

Gratitude to **Allen and Diana Russell** (1964-1976 and 1987-1995) for making the journey from Idaho to Midland for *both* Alumni/ae and Graduation weekends. Allen offered a beautiful tribute to **Ben Munger**, ‘79, as Ben received the Alumnus of the Year Award, and he and Diana added warmth and wisdom to the post graduation celebration the Class of 1968 hosted for BG and Joanne Kresse.

**Derek Svenningsen** (2000-2010) and his son Elias returned for Midland graduation weekend to bid a fond farewell to his former colleagues, the Kresses, Mungers and Redls. Derek is currently marketing coordinator at Sun Valley Sotheby’s International Realty in Sun Valley, Idaho.

**Dan Mays** (2007-2009) owns and runs an organic farm in Scarborough Maine where **Jack Melican**, ‘16, will work this summer.

#### In Memoriam

John Frost, ‘42  
Pete Hermes, ‘53  
Brooks Hoar, ‘40  
Charles Soley, ‘63

**DIRECTORY**

**FACULTY & STAFF**

Will Graham 2006  
*Head of School*  
BG Kresse, '68 1977  
Ben Munger, '79 1985-89; 1999  
Laurie Munger 1985-95; 1999  
Doris Adams 1990  
Lynda Cummings 1994-96; 2004  
José Juan Ibarra, '87 1996  
Tom Rogowski 1998  
Faith Nygren 2001  
Phil Hasseljian 2001-03; 2004  
Jill Brady 2002  
Lise Goddard 2003  
Don Redl 2004  
Jill Redl 2004  
Paul Gelles 2005  
Gloria Murillo 2006  
Marguerite Graham 2007  
Ashleigh Ninos 2007  
Johnny Ninos 2007  
Gillian Kinnear, '04 2008  
Katie Isaacson-Hames 2009  
Celeste Carlisle 2010  
Derek Harwell, '88 2010  
Kyle Taylor 2010  
Roddy Taylor 2010  
Amy Graham 2011  
Eve Southworth 2012  
Rebecca Anderson 2013  
Cierra Ensign 2014  
Susan Gentry 2014  
Alison Nikitopolous 2014  
Chris Elstner, MD 2015  
Janet Willie 2015

*The list at left includes all full-time and part-time faculty as well as all administrative staff.*

**CLASS OF 2015**

Thorpe, Emma Boise, ID  
*President*  
Valle, Lupita Orlando, CA  
Cooley, Crawford Pennngrove, CA  
Nwakanma, Ezi Castro Valley, CA  
Cummings, Sean Los Olivos, CA  
Dreyfuss, Emma Los Angeles, CA  
Cody, Talei McCloud Los Olivos, CA  
Crawford, Miles Los Angeles, CA  
Hummingbird, Nayana Cambria, CA  
Murillo, Isa Santa Ynez, CA  
Nwakanma, Sylvia Castro Valley, CA  
Swidenbank, Jordan Monrovia, CA  
Sha, Fanrui Dalian, China  
Zeng, Lei Fuzhon City, China  
Wang, Johnny Shenyang, China  
Wang, Root Shanghai, China  
Xun, Jingya Beijing, China

**CLASS OF 2016**  
Dasmalchi, Lauren Half Moon Bay, CA  
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Ibarra, Deyanira Los Olivos, CA  
Mills, Graham Santa Barbara, CA  
Salehpour, Sawyeh Upland, CA  
Weatherford, Madison Lompoc, CA  
Aufderheide, Graceson Ojai, CA  
Avenidaño Dreyfuss, Cruz Los Angeles, CA  
Frost, Alec Santa Barbara, CA

Lebow, Sofie Santa Barbara, CA  
Mulberry, Cameron Arvada, CO  
Struebing, Emma Summerland, CA  
Choi, Jae Diamond Bar, CA  
Grimes, Jack Austin, TX  
Kashyap, David Guwahati, India  
Koehler, Derek Los Olivos, CA  
Drew, Hannah Mammoth Lakes, CA  
Melican, Jack Encinitas, CA  
Moskowitz, James Los Angeles, CA  
Wang, Sophia Chino Hills, CA  
Wilson, Michael Santa Barbara, CA  
Frausto, Cristina La Paz, Mexico

**CLASS OF 2017**

Dreyfuss, Lona Los Angeles, CA  
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Kelleher, Jazzy Cambria, CA  
Derbyshire, Derby Salt Lake City, UT  
Arbuckle, Nef Minden, NV  
Burton, Skyler El Cerrito, CA  
Ciani, Olivia Santa Barbara, CA  
Engebretsen, Bernt Santa Barbara, CA  
Ewing, Tate La Grange, IL  
Furmanski, Roan Ventura, CA  
Gong, Mark Chengdu, China  
Kelley, Grace Santa Ynez, CA  
McCarthy, Duncan Pleasanton, CA  
Murillo, Angie Santa Ynez, CA  
Schuyler, Jaime Santa Barbara, CA  
Silveyra, Anneliese Sherman Oaks, CA  
Barrera, Matias Mexico City, Mexico  
He, Ashley Zhejiang, China  
Wang, Muning Shijiazhuang, China

**CLASS OF 2018**

Tang, Maggie Eastvale, CA  
*President*  
White, Andrew Berkeley, CA  
Alvarez, Ashley Orange, CA  
Attia, Kareem Mission Viejo, CA  
Burton-Orton, Chris Discovery Bay, CA  
D'Attile, David Banning, CA  
Ehrhart, Nayeli Encinitas, CA  
Fagen, Shannon Carson City, NV  
Frost, Erynn Santa Barbara, CA  
Hannahs, Cynthia Atascadero, CA  
Howard, Adrienne Santa Barbara, CA  
Kuyper, Thomas Paso Robles, CA  
Li, Paul San Jose, CA  
Lichtwardt, Claire Altadena, CA  
Rothenburg, Martha Santa Monica, CA  
Struebing, Dorcy Summerland, CA  
Swidenbank, Braeden Monrovia, CA  
Tunberg, Annabelle Tempe, AZ  
Ungard, Wolfie Altadena, CA  
Wang, Patrick Glendora, CA  
Williams, Jireh Inglewood, CA  
Yamasaki, Julia Seaside, CA

**MIDLAND MIRROR**

**Founded in 1932 by**  
George Martin, '33,  
and Paul Squibb

**Editor**  
Lynda Cummings