

Education

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Educator Spotlight

Teacher: Susan Gelber Cannon

School: Episcopal Academy in Merion. She teaches English and history in the middle school.

What she has done: Cannon, 52, of Narberth, went to China this summer in a program sponsored by China's Jiangsu Provincial Educational Authority and the California State University at Fullerton.

She spent a month in Jiangsu province on China's eastern coast, near Shanghai, with three other teachers. For two weeks, they taught children English at the Yangzhou University Affiliated Middle School in the city of Yangzhou. Then they worked with teachers in a training program at Rugao Normal College to improve the Chinese methods of teaching English.

Question: What was your time at the Yangzhou middle school like?

Answer: Chinese students in city schools start learning English in their third grade. By middle school, the children have had a few years already of English, but they may not have met a native speaker. They're notoriously good with grammar and reading comprehension. But their oral skills can be lacking.

I have been in rural schools [in China]. There's the stereotype of students who don't speak until their teachers ask them to speak. The rural school classrooms did look that way. They were very quiet.

These kids were feisty and naughty. They were spirited. Those stereotypes of Chinese students being good, I'd say at least half were.

It's exotic to think that someone taught in China, but the most important lesson is how similar we are despite our differences.



RON TARVER / Inquirer Staff Photographer

Q: What did you do in the teacher-training program?

A: We were working with teachers in the districts surrounding Rugao Normal College, which is a teacher-training school. I was teaching primary school teachers. Even some of them, in their 40s and 50s, had never met native speakers.

Q: How did you teach them?

A: I read aloud to them from some of the [Episcopal Academy] students' writings.

On the one hand, they're hearing what 12-year-olds in the United States are like, but they can also share in the technique of reading aloud.

We reviewed clothing vocabulary. I would teach the vocabulary, then they had to open a shop and role-play buying and selling.

Q: How do the teachers in China teach English?

A: The impression we get is very heavy drills of grammar. We couldn't elicit from them

how much hands-on, active instruction they were doing.

Q: I heard there was a teacher who had a problem with classroom discipline.

A: It was very touching. One teacher said, "I love teaching, but sometimes the boys misbehave, and I don't know what to do."

It led to a whole discussion of positive, heart-to-heart ways of discipline. I spoke to her about the way I talk to kids. There was one young man at Episcopal who wasn't bringing in his homework. I said to him, "You do very good work, and when we're able to talk about your work, we're able to have a higher level of discussion. I'm counting on you to do your work."

Q: You're on sabbatical now. What are you doing?

A: I'm off the whole year. What I'm preparing now is a huge Web site to put up the writings of the middle school kids and teachers in China.

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Part of my spring, I will be going back to China to lecture at Rugao Normal College and schools in Beijing on my teaching strategies. I will also visit rural schools that are doing fascinating educational development projects.

I'm also working on putting together a class aimed at middle school kids to help them learn about modern China and its mores, what TV shows they watch, what the system of government is, what the schooling requirements are, their literature, art. I'm really trying to give them a sense of what Chinese society is like now. It's in great flux.

— Julie Shaw

School Notes



Ann Amore (left) of Rosemont College and Gloria Ferraro Donnelly, Drexel dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions.

■ **Rosemont College and Drexel University** have signed an agreement to make it easier for Rosemont students to transfer into Drexel University's College of Nursing and Health Professions in Center City to pursue careers as nurses, physical therapists and physician assistants.

Students can continue to live on Rosemont's campus even after they have transferred to Drexel and can complete their clinical work on the Main Line. Students will have to spend a certain number of years at Rosemont and at Drexel. Offerings at Drexel range from bachelor's to a doctoral degrees.

For more information, call 1-888-276-7366 or visit www.rosemont.edu. Or visit Drexel's College of Nursing and Health Professions' Web site at <http://cnhp.drexel.edu>.

■ The Haverford Township Rotary Club is accepting applications for its Gundaker Foundation scholarship program for college students who will be full-time juniors or seniors in the 2006-07 school year.

Awards range from \$1,000 to \$10,000. Applicants must have an outstanding academic record and a record of leadership and community service in their school and community. They also need to live in Haverford Township or attend Haverford College.

To get an application, visit www.Rotary7450.org. Click on "Gundaker" at the top, then on "Foundations Programs" in the box. The deadline is Jan. 15.

Send the completed original application and five copies of the application to Jay Scheinfeld, 8234 West Chester Pike, Upper Darby, Pa. 19082.

For more information, contact Scheinfeld at 610-853-0300.

— Julie Shaw

Reunions

School Reunions

All are high schools unless noted.

Archbishop Carroll Class of 1975. Radnor Hotel, Radnor; 610-935-1783. 11/26.

Conestoga Class of 1985. Jimmy Duffy's, Berwyn; 610-359-7597. 11/26.

Harrington Class of 1965. Cynwyd Club,

Bala Cynwyd; 610-446-1709. 10/29.

Haverford • Class of 1945. Cynwyd Club; 610-558-4402. 11/4. • Class of 1975. Edgmont Country Club, Edgmont; 888-333-6569. 11/26. • Class of 1985. Sheraton University City, Philadelphia; 610-446-4541. 11/26.

Lower Merion Class of 1975. Bistro St Tropez, Phila; 610-527-4998. 11/25.

Phila High School for Girls Class of June 1955. Hilton, City Ave, Phila; 610-828-9648. 11/5.

Philadelphia Girls Class of 1985. Regal Ballroom, Phila; 301-490-7464. www.classmates.com. 11/25.

Plymouth Whitmarsh Class of 1975. Washington (Washies) Fire Hall, Conshohocken; 215-887-0844. 11/25.

Plymouth-Whitmarsh Class of 1985. Great American Pub, 123 Fayette St, Conshohocken; email: thebgirls@comcast.net; 215-699-7363. 11/25.

Shanahan Class of 1990. Downingtown

Country Club, Downingtown; 610-273-0131. 11/5.

Springfield (Delco) Class of 1990. Rosario's Restaurant, Morton; 610-585-4213. 11/26.

St Denis (Havertown) Class of 1956 planning 50th reunion. 610-446-4259.

St Maria Goretti Class of 1960. Colleen's; 610-490-1181. 11/13.

Sun Valley Class of 1995. Ballrooms of Boothwyn, Boothwyn; 302-633-6310. 11/12.