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Jon Beard: Proctor's New Chinese Teacher

By Daniel Sangmin Yeom
Proctor journalism class

"I can see myself working here for a good chunk of time. I feel right at home and am privileged to work here."

Jon Beard, the newest addition to Proctor Academy's World Language Department and Gannett House, is enthusiastic and positive about his start in Andover. An easy-going guy with boundless energy and passion, Jon invited me to his dormitory apartment on the third floor of Gannett House. I immediately noticed two posters: a WWE poster of sweaty, muscley men and a pink poster of two white horses. (Unicorns are his favorite animal.)

Even though Jon is new to Proctor Academy, he is not a stranger to the area, having grown up in Rye, New Hampshire. "I had a pretty fun childhood," noted Jon. "I went to a really small school and enjoyed that."

In high school, Jon started his love affair with foreign languages. Having already studied French and German before high school, Jon picked up Spanish, which he mastered during his time spent traveling in Latin countries. "My Spanish is quite rusty," said Jon with a grin, "and frankly, I just don't love it as much as Chinese."

An avid traveler, Jon has lived in many exotic places. His first trip abroad to England in seventh grade motivated him to travel. Jon sat back on his couch, reminiscing over his year abroad, and recounted his international explorations.

"My first year of college, I ended up going to Spain. Then I came back from Spain, went to school a little bit more, and I went to Mexico for a little while." Jon rubbed a hand in his curly hair and tried to remember the correct order of travels. "Then, I got the travel bug. I took advantage of travel opportunities like study abroad programs, and I ended up going to China. Right after I graduated, I went to Peru to get my Teaching English as a Foreign Language Certification. Then I went to Taiwan, where I lived for a couple years, and then to Belgium with a girl I met in Taiwan. Then we broke up, and I traveled back to the United States!" As he recounted the years, his smile never wavered.

Jon's teaching career took off in Taiwan. "I started teaching in Taiwan back in 2006. I taught many different subjects to a lot of different ages. I taught English, French, Math, Science. You name it, I taught it. That's where I realized that I want to teach."

When he returned to the United States after globetrotting, he took a job offer at Thetford Academy, teaching English and a course called Perspectives, discussing touchy subjects like gay rights and global warming. He also claims to have "taught students how to tame wild unicorns and other mythical creatures by using simple, everyday objects such as ladles." With this admission, Jon chuckled.

So, why does the unicorn tamer teach at Proctor Academy? "I really, really love teaching," explained Jon. His passion for teaching stems from his love of working with people. Jon wishes to help students not only with their Chinese, but also with their development as adults: finding their own sense of self-confidence. "I like to express myself creatively in ways that encourage people to find their own voice," asserts Jon.

Jon now teaches three classes in the World Language Department: Mandarin 1, Mandarin 3, and Spanish 1. He also coaches JV2 Boys Soccer and plans on coaching Intermediate Snowboarding. "Coaching JV2 Soccer is the most fun in the world! These kids are just obviously having a blast, having a great time, and it's infectious. They get me laughing. I already can tell it's going to be a good season."

Although the transition to Proctor's way of life has been overwhelming at first ("I'm still just trying to figure out the schedule here, make sure I'm in the classes on time!"), he is comfortable and happy in his apartment.

Fellow teacher and dorm parent Tom Morgan was all praise when asked about Jon: "I would say Jon is a sensitive and goofy character, fun to have around, and a great conversationalist." An eager teacher and a scholar himself, Jon and his beard are clearly valuable additions to the Proctor community.

His final words to Proctor Academy? "Tell Drew Donaldson to bring snacks to our next student advisory gathering." Perhaps thinking of the poster behind him, he adds, "Oh, tell them that I have like an awesome six-pack. No, like a nine-pack, of muscle."

Dan Yeom is a senior who loves to play soccer. He plans to study journalism in college.

EAVP *from page 41*

We will be continuing our weekly letters and sharing our items that go with each for all of our friends in our classroom to see. With the recent arrival of snow, we will be bringing it into our classroom, coloring it on the playground, and engaging in snowman-building activities.

February

In February we will engage in varied letter, rhyming, counting, and measuring activities, along with many chances to manipulate and observe the world around us.

February 6 will begin our Parent Appreciation Week, which will culminate on Friday, February 10 in a Mother-Son/Father-Daughter Dance.