



# *The Observatory*

Los Gatos-Saratoga Observation Nursery School ~ Issue 5, March 2008

## **The Hop**

by Marie Imai, LGSONS Director

Dear Families,

I'm getting really excited about our school auction and party on March 22<sup>nd</sup> and am very appreciative of everyone's hard work to make it a success. My husband, Kent, and I always enjoy the opportunity to socialize with so many friends as well as make some great buys of both useful and frivolous items. The excitement of bidding adds the competitive component that Kent especially enjoys and I am always impressed with everyone's creativity. It is an informal event that is just lots of fun to attend particularly because of the friendly camaraderie that exists in our school community. So, don't miss it! Bring your friends and any alumni acquaintances to help bid on all the wonderful items and to support the mountain school's annual fundraising event. I'll see you at "The Hop".

Love, Marie ~

## **March Into Spring**

by Dianne O'Neil, Board President

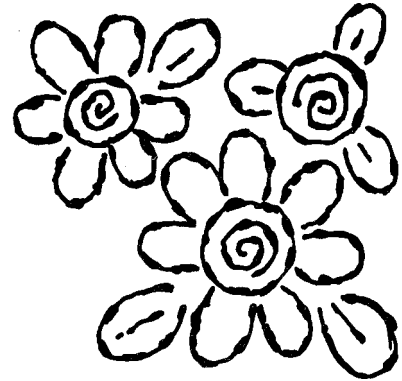
*Written in March*

*The cock is crowing,  
The stream is flowing,  
The small birds twitter,  
The lake doth glitter,  
The green field sleeps in the sun;  
The oldest and youngest  
Are at work with the strongest;  
The cattle are grazing,  
Their heads never raising;  
There are forty feeding like one!*

*Like an army defeated  
The snow hath retreated,  
And now doth fare ill  
On the top of the bare hill;  
The ploughboy is whooping  
- anon-anon:  
There's joy in the mountains;  
There's life in the fountains;  
Small clouds are sailing,  
Blue sky prevailing;  
The rain is over and gone!*

~ William Wordsworth

March is always a month to look forward to. The post holiday doldrums of January and February pass with the coming of milder and nicer weather. The blossoms and bulbs planted in the fall make their arrival, and it seems like winter is gone; the grass and the hills around us are emerald, and



jade and green ... and color is everywhere!

March is also hectic and eventful – everyone is industriously preparing for our fundraiser in a few weeks, and we're all looking ahead to the exciting mini-courses that our Programs committee has put together for us. The Board of Directors is coordinating next year's new team – if you are interested in helping to direct the management of the school and meet more amazing Mountain School citizens, this is a wonderful opportunity! Talk to Maria Olson ([miaolson@earthlink.net](mailto:miaolson@earthlink.net) or 374-3595) if you want to get involved!

While you're in demand with all the events March has to offer, take a second to stop and savor the specter of spring all around us. And I'll see you at "The Hop"! ~

## CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE

### The Hop

Page 1

.....

### March Into Spring

Page 1

.....

### Mini-Courses Spring Series

Page 2

.....

### Taiwanese New Year

Page 3

.....

### Where Oh Where Is Our Friend Harry?

Page 4

.....

### Books, Books, Books

Page 4

.....

### Upcoming Events

Page 5

.....

### The Carpool Mom

Page 6

.....

### Fresh Lifelines for Youth: Mini-Course

Page 7

.....

### New Web Guy

Page 8

.....

## Mini-Courses Spring Series

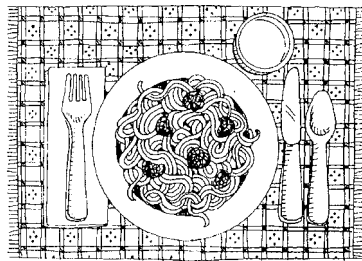
by Marina Barnes & Jutta Braken-Guelke, Mini-Course Coordinators

Here is a summary of the upcoming mini-courses, which present a mixture of a "little bit of everything:" parenting, cooking, arts and crafts, communication and fitness. We hope you like our selection!

✿ *Raising Children in an Affluent Society* (Tuesday, March 11, 7 pm) with Sheila Dubin, at Jane Krecji's, 14941 Karl Avenue in Monte Sereno.

Sheila will address issues that come up when children are brought up in a society of abundance and wealth. What are the roles of money and material things? How are non-material things appreciated?

✿ *Cooking Together; Community Kitchen* (Wednesday, March 19, 6:30 pm), at Dianne O'Neil's, 5466 Drysdale Drive in San Jose.



Jutta Braken-Guelke and Marina Barnes will facilitate this mini-course, which is based on the old idea of a "Community Kitchen" where people get together to cook meals for their families. Usually, a group of up to 12 people gathers to share the task of food preparation and cooking. A number of

dishes will be prepared, then divided up and taken home to their families. At this mini-course we will cook two main dishes, a soup, a salad and a dessert. The dishes are easy to prepare, low-cost, and nutritious. Ingredients and recipes will be provided.

Participants will share the salad and dessert during the class and will get to take the main dishes home. *Bring Tupperware containers! A materials fee of \$10.00 is requested.*

✿ *A Fun Evening with Clay* (Thursday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm) with Erinn Turi & Julia Sonders at the Red School House.

Come and play with colored clay. You can make bowls, flasks, boxes, or whatever your heart desires. The objects will be fired and glazed and returned back to you. *There will be a materials fee of \$25.*

✿ *Couples Communication* (Tuesday, March 25, 7 pm) with Brian Winkler at Marina Barnes' House, 16471 Bonnie Lane in Los Gatos.

Parents with young children face a unique challenge of how to stay connected as a couple, while giving their children all they need. In this lecture you will learn how to increase understanding and intimacy through effective communication, identify common problems of couples with young children and how to resolve them, and learn some tips for nurturing your relationship with your partner. *A \$10 donation from each participant would be appreciated.*

*(Continued on page 3)*

# Taiwanese New Year

by Abby Chen  
Emma's Mom, 3's Class

I grew up in a rural town, nestled in the southwest of Taiwan Island, called *Lunbei*. The most colorful entry of my childhood memory is, without a doubt, the Taiwanese New Year. The days prior to New Year's Eve must be a stressful time for grown-ups. For instance, the house had to be cleaned inside out. The doors would be dressed in new red banners with calligraphy of well-wishing rhymes written on them. Grocery shopping seemed to never end since the holiday menu had to be carefully planned out, both for the family's meals and the ancestral remembrances. Extra money was also needed to buy new, and mostly red, clothes for the children to wear on New Year's Day.

On New Year's Eve, I would wake up to see a kitchen that had had little rest the night before. Judging from the commotion going on and the miscellaneous dishes already prepared and laid out on the table, my parents had obviously started the day hours before us children. So on they went all day long, rushing back and forth around the house and in between the market and the kitchen, until it was finally time for the whole family to sit down at a round (otherwise won't do) table for the year-end feast. My mother's specialty dishes include boiled whole chicken (to be sliced and dipped in soy sauce), rice noodle (stir-fried with shredded pork, cabbage, carrots and

*(Continued on page 8)*

*(Mini-Courses, continued)*

✿ *Getting Fit, Staying Fit, and Getting The Most of Your Fitness* (Friday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm) with Rommell Corpuz at the Performax Training Center, 2306 Almaden Road, Suite 127 in San Jose.

Staying fit is a very important aspect of every lifestyle. In the busy lives that most lead, this becomes very difficult. Exercise becomes time consuming and laborious resulting in inactivity. Fitness should take into account the physical, nutritional and social uniqueness that is inherent in each individual. The approach to defining individuality is key to developing physical efficiency. As the ability to physically function is defined and then enhanced, individuals begin to realize and experience the true fitness benefits of an active lifestyle.

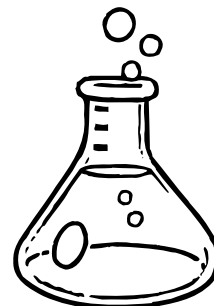
Come join us for a lecture followed by a circuit training class that includes both a cardiovascular and strength training workout. Whether you have never exercised before or you are training for a marathon, this meeting will give you some sound information enabling you to make some wise decisions about your fitness goals.

*The fee for this class is \$20 per participant.*

✿ *Science Play, Children and Science* (Thursday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7 pm) with Dalia Brown at Emily Cervino's House, 776 Poplar Street in Santa Clara.

Science Play is a hands-on inquiry-based and age-appropriate curriculum for children three to eight years old. The program is

based on the idea that children are born scientists: they are curious about the world; they investigate it and communicate about it; they learn to listen to each other's ideas and consider them; they learn how to collaborate and look for information in books and other sources and present their thoughts in different art mediums.



Adults play an important role in fostering this process: children need to know that it is o.k. to try new things, to make mistakes, to dare to ask questions and not knowing all the answers right away. The adult can ask questions to clarify a thought or an idea, challenge an assumption and provoke conclusion to bring deeper exploration.

In this mini-course participants will have an opportunity to have an experience with the hands-on inquiry-based methodology, and a rich forum to reflect upon its implications to their understanding of their child's cognitive development and learning processes.

We hope you will enjoy the mini-courses. For questions and more information contact Marina Barnes at 408.358.7747 or Jutta Braken-Guelke at 408.358.6398. ☺

# Where Oh Where Is Our Friend Hairy?

by Jan Eby  
Teacher, 3's Class

"He's gone."  
"I can't see him."  
"He's disappeared."  
"I see a tiny, squishy piece."

These are typical comments from children in the 3's class as they check the garden plot where Hairy the Pumpkin once sat proudly with his healthy head of grassy hair – sprouted wheat berries.

In recent weeks, Hairy has virtually disappeared – only a grassy bump and a few squishy orange pieces remain; *but* the plot where he sat is the most beautiful in the garden. Daisies, paper whites, fluffy carrot tops, bulbs and snow peas are flourishing! We think they are growing so well because of Hairy. He gave his all for our garden.

Thank you to Hairy and to all the children that took such good care of him.

Where, oh where is our friend Hairy?  
Where, oh where is our friend Hairy?  
Where, oh where is our friend Hairy?  
Where, oh where is our friend Hairy?  
In our garden helping all the plants grow! ∞

# Books, Books, Books

by Jan Eby  
Teacher, 3's Class

The children and parents in the 3's class have busily collected books of all sizes and reading levels for Festus MBinga's boys, Ronald and Roger, who live in Namibia.

One day we read our *Book About Books* which shows a photo of each child with their donated book and a statement about why they chose that one to send. We included a picture of our schoolhouse in the copy that we sent to the MBinga family. We stacked the collected books in a pile which we measured (seventeen inches high!) Then we counted them all and came up with a total of forty-four! During our school holiday the box (thirty pounds) was sent on its way to far off Namibia.

A letter was also written asking the family to let us know if the books arrived and requesting information about the boys' school, activities and favorite games. Now we will wait and hope for a letter from Africa.

Here are some children's quotes from the *Book About Books*:

"I like the *Chugga-Chugga* book because it is about trains. I picked this book because maybe Roger and Ronald won't have it, and it might make them happy!"  
(Alexander Braken-Guelke)

"I like the book, *Dog's Colorful Day* because the dog gets spotty."  
(Jacob Cervino)

"I like the part in *Good Night Gorilla* when the gorilla takes the zoo keeper's keys." (Ryan Backer)

"I like the *Magic Treehouse Book Set* because Jamie, my big sister, reads them to me." (Jenna Kotcher)

"I like *My First Big Book of Questions and Answers: Dinosaurs* because *I like dinosaurs*." (Ryan Bailey)

"I like the book *The Rabbits* because it has rabbits and it shows their babies too." (Nathan Myers)

"I like the *Quilt Maker* book because it looks like presents and Christmas. *Trapped By Ice* looks like there are big snowballs on the front." (Savo Miljevich)

"I want Roger and Ronald to have *Swimmy* and *The Kissing Hand* because I have them already. I like the drawings in *The Giant Peach*, but I don't need the book yet."  
(Emma Chen)

"We hope you like these books and all the others in the box."  
(Teacher Jan) ∞



## Upcoming Events

*Please mark your calendars with all of the important events described below.*

### APPLICATION PERIOD NOW

by Jody McCalmont  
Registration Chair

We're still accepting applications for all classes for next year, so tell your friends and acquaintances to pick up an application online at [www.lgsons.com](http://www.lgsons.com) and send it to Jody McCalmont, 17705 Blackfoot Trail, Los Gatos, 95033.

### THE HOP MARCH 22

*Mountain School's*

# THE HOP



**2002-2003 AUCTION**

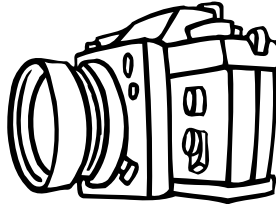
Let's go to the Hop! It's coming ... March 22 at 6:30 pm. Don your bobby socks, poodle skirts, or jeans. Enjoy live music by the Cruisetones and a buffet dinner.

If you have misplaced your invitation, go to [www.lgsons.com](http://www.lgsons.com)

and click on "Fundraising" to view an invitation and map. ∞

### CLASS PHOTOS MARCH 12

by Anne Veis  
Class Photo Coordinator



Our photographer, Susan Weiland, will take individual and class photos on the following dates:

Wednesday 2s: March 12

Friday 2s: March 14

Saturday 2s: March 15

3s: March 13

3/4/5s: March 13

4/5s: March 14

Saturday 3/4/5s: March 15

There is no sitting fee. A price sheet will be supplied to you with your proofs and you may order your pictures directly from the photographer. ∞

### FINAL NEWSLETTER DEADLINE APRIL 11

by Nicole Frees  
Newsletter Chair

If you have any material for this year's final issue of "The Observatory," please e-mail your submissions to me at [nfrees@sbcglobal.net](mailto:nfrees@sbcglobal.net). If you do not have e-mail, then you may reach me at 650-961-4016. The deadline for the next issue is: Friday, April 11, 2003.

### REGISTRATION TIME! APRIL 19

by Angie Davidson  
Registration Chair

Registration time is upon us again! By now you will have received your packets and information for registering your children for the 2003-04 school year.

As with the applications, the registration deadlines are considerably earlier this year; please make careful note of them!

Mail-in registration is open to returning families; packets must be postmarked by April 19, 2003.

Walk-in registration is open to new and returning families and will be the following weekend, Sunday, April 27, from 10-12 am at the Schoolhouse.

If you have any questions or are missing any necessary forms, please call Angie Davidson at 408.978.4702. Thank you! ∞

### SPRING PICNIC SUNDAY, MAY 4

The Spring Picnic is scheduled for 12:30 to 3:30 pm at Saratoga Springs. Stay tuned for more details! ∞



# The Carpool Mom

by Jeanne Dominguez  
Teacher in Saturday 2's Class

A new school year begins, and you start out slowly. Moms and children riding together for the first week or so, switching cars, securing carseats, sharing songs and stories, getting to know each other. Does he like to look at a book while he rides? Will she bring a CD to share? Who wants to sit in the way-back? How do we decide? The lovey comes along to ride in the seat next to her, but stays in the car during class, waiting patiently for the ride home.

Is everyone securely buckled in? Then let's get going! Hmmm, where are we going again? "Mt. School!" What do you think we'll do there today? "Michael's going to paint." "I'm going to play dress-up with Kelly. She's my sister." "Lily's going to work in the garden." What does our carpool do on the way to Mt. School? "Cooperate!" Wow, that's a big word! What does "cooperate" look like? "Share books." "No grabbing." "Gentle hugs." "Buckle in." "Be patient." What does it sound like? "Friendly voice." "No shrieking!" "Saying 'please'." "Singing." "Laughing." "If we're quiet and look with our eyes, maybe we'll see a deer."

Everyone piles out of the car, first one helping the next. The friends

wait (sometimes impatiently) by the fence as each child gets ready to walk to the gate. Everybody have his or her shoes on? Jackets? Backpacks secure? Do you want to wear yours on the front or the back today? OK, single file to the gate. What does this sign say again? Oh, yes, "Be kind to the Gate". We open it gingerly, slip through.



Sometimes all the friends race up the hill. Sometimes one or another hangs back, frustrated by a backpack that just won't stay on, or a little sad that their mom isn't there. "Are you sad?" Nod. "Shall we stand here a little while or do you want to go up to the schoolhouse and sit on the steps?" Stay here. "May I rub your back, or would you like a hug?" "Rub my back." "It's OK to be sad, and we can call your mom if you want, any time during the day." We stand for a while (I kneel), leaning against each other for comfort. Deep breath. Pretty soon he looks up the hill and sees friends pouring out of the schoolhouse, bound for the climbing structure and the garden. "Shall we go find a cubby for your backpack and see what the teachers have waiting for you inside?" "Yes." he says. Then, "I wonder

whose mom is the cooking mom?" He takes my hand and we walk up the hill. As we get to the schoolhouse, he breaks away and stashes his backpack, then disappears through the front door.

As time passes, the friends become more comfortable with each other and with you (their "carpool mom"). Then the day arrives when they come to find you with a painting to share, an ouchie to kiss, shoes that need to be tied, or to find comfort and regain equilibrium after a squabble. What a milestone day that is, what a pleasure and an honor to be asked to admire a work of art, to be trusted with their little hearts, to have them feel confident that they will find comfort and figure out a way to work things out with their friends. ♪

# Fresh Lifelines for Youth

## A NEW KIND OF MINI-COURSE

by Kathy Wilcox, Teacher Friday 2's

A new mini-course with a different focus than usual is being offered on April 29. Instead of tar-

I think, by her warmth, vision, energy and commitment. The program has grown over the last several years and has won wide support from local judges, probation officers, school principals, foundations, and the county director of drug and alcohol services. But at present it can reach

You may or may not decide you want to contribute something to this group (it needs everything from staples for its new offices to gift certificates for mentors to take kids to the movies to funding for leadership retreats that help kids become peer leaders etc.) You will not be asked for

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"I came away from this presentation ... with a new appreciation of all the things I had done right as a parent, and also with a new sense of hope and of connection to the larger community."

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getting our own families and the many pressing needs we have as we try to raise our children, this mini-course will provide an opportunity to turn our attention to the needs of children in our county who find themselves in desperate circumstances.

At the mini-course you will learn about a program established by a local non-profit organization to help children who have gotten in trouble with the law. You will have a chance to meet and listen to several teens whose lives literally have been turned around as a result of the one-on-one mentoring they received through this program. These are kids who have had to try to grow up without any real parenting. The stories they tell of their lives at home, of how they got into trouble, and of how they have managed to get back out of trouble, and even help other kids at risk stay out of trouble as well, are incredibly moving. You will also meet the founder/director of the organization, who graduated from Stanford Law School in 1997, and hear about how she has managed to create a program that actually helps kids turn their lives around. You will be very touched,

only a tiny fraction of the kids who need its help; the more support it receives, the more kids it can work with.

I came away from this presentation (which I heard a few months ago) with a new appreciation of all the things I had done right as a parent, and also with a new sense of hope and of connection to the larger community. The needs of our own families are so great, and the demands upon us as parents are often overwhelming. It is easy to be all too aware of our own shortcomings as parents, and to have our world get smaller and smaller as we work harder and harder to keep our own families going and growing. The disparities in resources for raising children in our community trouble me greatly; the joy I take in trying to think well about my children is diminished by my knowledge that there are too many children out there with no one really able to think about them at all. Yet, I ask myself, what exactly can I do with some level of confidence that it might make a real difference?

As a result of the presentation, I now know of an organization I genuinely would like to support.

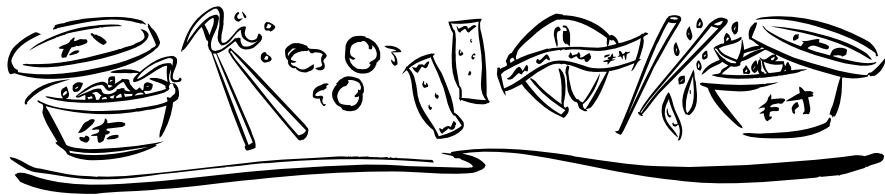
money or put on the spot in any way. But I do think you will come away from the evening with your spirits lifted, happy to know that these good people are out there doing really good things. Perhaps you will know someone else who might be able to help them out. Perhaps you know of some other people who are working effectively in our community to make a difference for children and who could use our support. I hope that our school, in addition to working hard to take good care of our own families, can devote some attention every now and then toward families in the larger community. If any of this interests you, please come to the mini-course on April 29!

I would like to ask a special favor of you, though. Please don't sign up if you're not really serious about coming. I don't want to invite these young people, who have been cared for so inadequately over the course of their lives, to come to tell us their stories and then have no one show up! Of course, there are always last-minute illnesses and emergencies, but please don't sign up if you're only thinking you'll go if it works out. Thanks! ☺

(New Year, continued)

Chinese mushrooms), baby rib soup (with fresh bamboo shoots), pan fried reddish cake, and deep-fried breaded sweet cake (both

Whole fish is an essential dish on New Year's Eve. Fish in Mandarin Chinese sounds like *yu*, which can be another word that means



made of sticky rice flour). My father (my favorite chef, though my mom doesn't know that) loved to show off in the kitchen, and always managed to cook, while also teaching us to cook. So many times he demonstrated the way to curl the fingers while holding down the vegetables in one hand with a fast motioning knife cutting away safely in the other hand. He couldn't stand, say, carrots or bell peppers cut in uniform shape. Every piece ought to have its own unique cut, he said, it looks better that way and tastes better for sure. I gathered that he is a person of conviction. His signature dishes are many. The slow pan-fried whole fish garnered with crushed garlic, ginger slices, and chopped green onions turned up crisp skin on the outside and tender, juicy meat underneath, lovely to the eye as well as the palette. Pork is boiled in plain water and finely thin sliced to go with soy sauce dip and grated fresh ginger. Snow peas and fresh white mushrooms stir fried with simply vegetable oil and salt make a great duo. Cabbage stir-fried with diced celery sprinkles turned up a nice variation of greens and adds a crunchy flair to the bite.

*having left-over* (or *not running out* of things) and is thus related to the idea of *abundance* or, simply, having enough of what one needs. Needless to say, we are not allowed to finish the fish dish. Some *leftover* had to be maintained as a wish-making gesture (perhaps comparable to the custom of the United States that at least a piece of the wedding cake is to be preserved from the wedding day until the first anniversary). Another time-honored custom piously observed is that we would place an empty seat by the table and a set of bowl and chopsticks for the one who couldn't join the family at the table that night. I am sure there have always been a chair, a bowl full of rice, and a neatly placed pair of chopsticks sitting patiently at the round table in my place over the years of my absence from the house.

After dinner, we snacked, played card games, watched variety shows on TV, and waited till the dawn of New Year before going to bed. We would wear clothes with pockets to bed that night because, at bedtime, my parents would give each of us a red envelope with gift money in it. We are not supposed to open the red envelope until we wake up the next

morning, so we went to sleep having the red envelope carefully placed in the deepest corner of our pockets. You can imagine the anticipation and, occasionally, cheating (i.e. opening the envelope before due).

On New Year's Day we went out to the town plaza, usually an open space in front of a local traditional temple, to show off our new outfits and treat ourselves to games and snacks not allowed at home. My all-time favorite treat is big chunks of fresh tomatoes with a special dip made of soy sauce, brown sugar and freshly-ground ginger. You have to taste it to know how good it really is! ☺

## New Web Guy



Rod Crawford, dad in the Saturday 2's class, has volunteered to take on the position of Web Master for our school. Thank you, Rod!

Rod is also helping us make corrections to our group e-mail lists. If you have not been receiving the all-school or individual class e-mails, please notify Rod at

Rod.Crawford@ardbeg.net. ☺