



The Observatory



Los Gatos-Saratoga Observation Nursery School ~ Issue 6 April 2006

Enjoy This Time

by Marie Imai, Director

Dear Families,

It seems impossible that it is already time to move back outdoors – that is if it ever stops raining. Though we have only a few weeks of school remaining it is one of the most special times in the year for me. The children have grown so much since the beginning of the year and consequently they know what they want to do and how to go about it. And you, the parents, are much freer to sit back and truly observe your child. It can be a much more meditative, thoughtful time as your child's growing independence allows more separation from you. The teachers, too, can relax a bit more and enjoy the children's developing social and physical skills and the confidence that surrounds them. It is truly a magical time to enjoy the children's accomplishments as they explore and play in our wonderful mountain settings. And just as importantly it is a wonderful time to enjoy our adult friendships and to plan ways for your class to get together in the summer (and perhaps beyond) so that these special relationships may continue to grow. I still have a close friend from 30 years ago when my daughter was at Mountain School and I wish the same for you.

I also want to extend a great big thank you to all our board members who have given so much of themselves to keep our school functioning so successfully. So many people have contributed in so many ways it is truly amazing. However, I am especially appreciative of Liz Montgomery and Gillian Claus for being co-chairs of our wonderful auction evening that brings in the funds we need to operate our school and pay our teachers. It was a wonderful evening and I had a lot of fun that night. I'd also like to thank Mary Matlack for taking over my position as director this year. Her ability to shepherd our school through the tuberculosis episode in such a kind and caring manner was truly remarkable. She deserves many hugs and much appreciation for all she has done for our school this year.

And equally important to everyone at Mountain School are all of

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Evaluation Information

by Lori Lux, Board Chair

Thanks to everyone who completed the evaluation form this year. Have you ever wondered what happens with those after you turn them in? Does anyone actually read the comments, are they carefully considered, is any action derived from the suggestions? Yes, yes and yes!

At our most recent board meeting, I presented the findings and each board member is currently evaluating the responses to see what changes can be made and whether or not the changes should be made. Should be made? You bet. Part of the charm of our school is its rustic appeal and back to nature philosophy. If we incorporate all the modern conveniences and programs that other schools offer than we risk becoming just another school and not the truly unique place we all know and love.

So what did we learn this year? We learned that your children LOVE their teachers. No surprise there! We are so lucky to have an amazingly gifted group of teachers and should tell them this every chance we get. We learned that the children also enjoy the animals, the creek, digging in the sand, cooking projects, and of course their friends.

The parents cherish the sense of community, the teachers, the ability to spend time with their child and learn about them at the same time, the adult education component

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(Evaluation Information, continued)

of the school and the chance to enjoy the great outdoors. It was fun to read the many variations of the “it’s perfect, please don’t change a thing” message, but there were also areas noted for improvement.

The most common request was for an intranet or web site that offers more information as it relates to the classes, calendars, fundraisers and requirements. We hear you! Earlier this year we established an Intranet Steering Committee to research the best way to automate information while protecting the security and privacy of all school members. We hope to have more to report on this soon.

Fundraising is always a contentious issue -- some people love the auction, some people do not. The fact is that our tuition does not cover our operating costs and we must raise money. We can do that by raising tuition significantly or continuing with fundraising activities. My guess is that very few are in favor of a \$500 tuition increase, so it’s really a matter of how we raise money. We are currently looking for a fundraising chair, or possibly a committee, and we’ve also started discussions about different fundraising activities. This next year will be a fun one for whoever steps up to take over this position, as there is so much flexibility and willingness to try new ideas.

Try this. Ask your child if he/she would rather ride to school with their friends or alone. I’m pretty sure I can guess the answer. I know it’s a little unsettling to think about your child riding with someone they don’t know, but this component of our curriculum is so important in “developing” the whole child. Children have the opportunity to interact in a small group environment, and parents have the opportunity to observe and learn more about not only their children, but themselves. As I’ve mentioned in past articles, our second-grader is still in contact and maintains a special bond with her carpool partner. It’s a very unique requirement of our school and one that really does offer a new and exciting experience for your child. We do have two great moms, Jenn Mateus and Linda Aggarwal, who will be the carpool coordinators next year and will help organize the carpools for your class.

Other suggestions include more parenting books for either sale or check-out, items such as replacing the sponges and improving our recycling and composting program. There were also the suggestions that make perfect sense, but we’re unable to accommodate, including adding more classes, expanding the schoolhouse, and making changes to the Lakeside Elementary property.

Thanks again to all of you who took the time to complete the evaluation and offer your opinions. We appreciate it and want to continue to make the school the best it can be. Look for an update from us either via e-mail, or in the first newsletter next year! ☺

Mountain School 50th Anniversary Celebration

Where: The Little Red Schoolhouse
When: Sunday, April 30th
11 am – 2 pm

Please join us at our little red schoolhouse to celebrate 50 years of wonder. All Mountain School alumni are invited to the annual spring picnic for a day of fun, food, celebration and a presentation to Founder Betty Peck and past School Directors.

Visit with friends old and new while enjoying these activities:

May Pole Dance
Potluck Lunch
Crafts
Music
Scavenger Hunt
Face Painting



Please bring your picnic supplies, a potluck dish to share, and a blanket to spread on the lawn. Any scrapbooks or mementos of your days at the Mountain School can be shared.

If the rain decides to join us, we will meet in the auditorium of Lakeside Elementary.

For more information, please visit www.lgsons.com
RSVP to Kristin at (408) 395-2892 ☞

(Enjoy This Time, continued)

our teachers. Thank you for the dedication and love that you share with the families in your classes every day that you teach. We are very fortunate that so many parents are interested in teaching here and passing on their wisdom and love of nature to the children and adults in their classes. I'm looking forward to our 50th anniversary celebration and spring picnic on April 30 and hope to see many alumni and former teachers on that day.

Love, Marie ☞

Katherine von Damm

Former Mountain School teacher in the mid-eighties, Katherine "Kay" von Damm of Los Gatos, 69, died February 1st of liver cancer.

Kay is remembered by T. Sally and T. Jane as a fantastic teacher, who's knowledge of art was instrumental in increasing our awareness of its proper applications within our program, and for her warm and gentle ways with children. "She was a bright, professional and dedicated teacher," said T. Sally McElravey. Kay worked as an assistant and lead teacher.

"She was a great asset to our community," says T. Jane Krejci. She was appreciated for her art and creativity, and her knowledge about children's art which she shared by leading mini-courses (even after leaving the school). She also taught private art lessons to students out of her home.

Upon leaving Mountain School she became a Kindergarten teacher at Mulberry School.

Kay is survived by her husband of 47 years, Charles "Chuck" von Damm, and her daughters, Lia von Damm of Los Gatos and Gina Bogart of Davis. Donations can be made in her name to MidPeninsula Open Space Trust and the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley.

From the Editor

Thank you to all the parents, teachers and Board members who have contributed to the Newsletter this year. Your time, knowledge, creativity and generosity is greatly appreciated. Also, thank you to my husband David who has stayed up late on many a night to proof read for me.

I hope you all have a wonderful summer!

Warmly,

Sonia Casper
Editor

Making Change for UNICEF South Asian Earthquake Relief

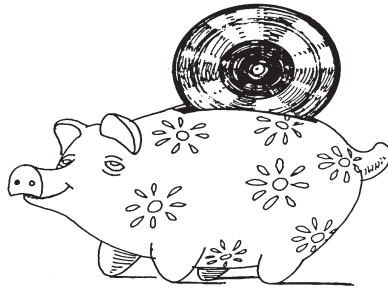
By Linda Aggarwal

It is helpful to discuss with our children how sharing good acts or money builds a strong sense of belonging to a community and how rewarding generosity can be.

As we near the close of the school year, we will be collecting “change” to support the thousands of women and children disabled by the earthquake in Pakistan in October 2005. Poverty is widespread and a little goes a long way. See below to make your own “sharing” piggy bank, and/or drop change in the UNICEF bank on your day at school. (For more earthquake and relief details, go to <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/pakistan>)

Three Little Piggy Banks *(excerpt from Kids Magazine)* Helping Children Learn About Money

Long ago people made banks out of an orange clay called pygg; that’s how piggy banks got their name. You can make a bank using a plastic bottle. Better yet, make three: one for spending money, one for savings, and one for sharing.



It isn't too early to help your child begin to:

- Achieve goals by budgeting money for spending, saving and sharing
- Understand how to use and think about money
- Establish the foundations for long-term security and independence

To get started, you will need:

colored paper, scissors, mini water bottle, white glue, hole punch, wooden beads, yarn/ribbon, utility knife

How to make a bank:

1. Cut a piece of paper into a long wide strip. Wrap the strip around the middle of your bottle, and glue in place.

2. Cut out ears. Use different paper for the inside part of each ear; glue on. Bend back bottom of ear; glue to bottle.

3. Use a hole punch to cut eyes from black paper and nostrils from pink. Glue in place. Glue beads to the bottom of the bank (on the paper band). Glue yarn to form the tail.

4. A parent must do this part: When glue dries, use a utility knife to cut a slit large enough to get a quarter in and out.

For more creative ideas on encouraging savings and allowances, go to <http://www.moonjar.com>

Thank you all for your generous community service.

40+ Hurricane Katrina Hygiene Kits
347 lbs. food for Second Harvest Food Bank (Fall)
Second Harvest Food Drive (Winter)
UNICEF Pakistan Earthquake Relief

Emergency Supplies

Personal Supplies

Pulling together supplies for your Car Emergency Kit can be time consuming and costly. After much research into different kits available, Nigel Cockroft is hoping to provide Mountain School families the opportunity to place an order through the school, giving us buying power as a group. Watch for order forms soon.

School Supplies

Do you have any spare blankets laying around the house? We could still use a few blankets to put into our Emergency Kit at the school house. If you have a blanket you would like to donate please contact Nigel Cockroft at (408) 356-1193 or n.cockroft@gemfire.com.

It's Hard to Believe

by Jill Templeton
submitted by Jan Eby

It's hard to believe
it's the end of the year.
Farewells and good-byes
to children so dear.

Just nine months ago
our names were all new.
With whom will I carpool?
"Oh, what shall I do?"

Learning together
both inside and out.
We began to discover
what we're all about.

They've clung, then they've climbed
abandoning fear.
Could all this have happened
in less than a year?

Whether clutching small cuddlies
or with arms open wide,
"I did it myself"
they beam with such pride.

While we as adults
are not ready to part,
the children move on
with joy in each heart.

If we meet by chance
in a year, or a few,
don't be surprised if they say
"Is she someone I knew?"

Snapshots and scrapbooks
keep memories clear, but
it's the days spent together
which make life so dear. ❧

The History of Lakeside School

Taken from the Observatory May/June
2002 issue, originally written by Hannah
Paul

Lakeside School was founded in
1881. School was originally held in
the wine cellar of a house on Gist
Road. Soon it was relocated to
Thompson Road.

In the 1890's the whole school was
cut in half with saws and dragged
down Thompson Road by teams
of horses to its current location
on Black Road. There were usually
only about 15 kids at the school.

Lakeside School had lots of
water problems. Their hand dug
well dried out. The students had
to carry buckets of water to the
school from a spring down the
road. Everyone shared the same
water dipper for drinking. In later
years the students could walk to
the neighbors and use their hose
for water. Once the students for-
got to turn off the hose, and the
neighbor's well went dry.

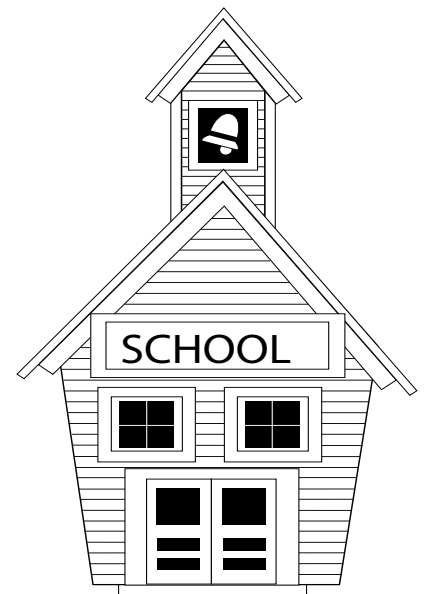
In 1917 the little red schoolhouse,
current home of our beloved
preschool, was built. The first
teacher at the red school house
was Marion B. Werner. She taught
at Lakeside from 1915-1918. The
large fir tree above Lakeside's
clubhouse was planted in 1912,
by a teacher (Isabel Martin) and a
student (Louis Flockhart).

After building the new red school-
house the school district ran out

of money. In 1917 John and Jenny
Stewart used their money to help
build the school a well to bring
water in pipes to the school. The
school workers would have to
keep the well clean by taking out
dead rodents and pouring bleach
in to purify the water.

In those days, in the classroom,
you would find a teacher's desk
and chair, desks and chairs for
the children, a blackboard made
of slate, as well as a slate and a
piece of chalk for each child. The
kids had a bottle of water to clean
their slate. It was considered rude
to spit on your slate to erase the
lesson. There was one wash basin
for everybody to wash in at noon.
Usually the classroom had all the
grades mixed together in the same
room.

The little red school house was
used from 1918 until 1964. The
present school building for Lake-
side Elementary School was built
in 1964. ❧



Teacher Spotlight: Sally McElravey

by Sonia Casper

Q: Where did you grow up and what was your childhood like?

I was a pre-war baby. 6 months pre-war. When the war descended on us, my father, a physical education/math teacher, enlisted thinking he would be stationed in Oakland training the new troops. Much to our family's chagrin he was shipped out to sea on a Navy vessel. So for the first four years of my life there was the intense drama of my father being away for months at a time. When I was two I spent a bit of time on an island in the Puget Sound where my mother and younger brother and I attempted family life while my father's ship was in for repair. Three children were born after me during this tough period. Though I was born in Oakland, my memorable childhood was spent in Santa Barbara where my father landed a job at the University and my mother continued to raise, ultimately, eight children.

My education, outside of home life, which was rich with many "on hands" learning experiences!!, was entirely in Catholic schools until college, as my father, a non-Catholic, signed a contract that we children would be schooled so.

Our household, as you can imagine, was full of every kind of noise and much coming and going. As we were a family with little extra money, we all had chores and if we hung around the house there were more of the same...so we were mostly out-of-doors kids. Living in Santa Barbara made this easy. If we were not at the beach or the tennis courts or the public pool we were running around the neighborhood streets with a gang of kids having a great time. We were allowed much freedom in our activities and whereabouts. We only had to be home when the dinner bell rang from the kitchen window. And many a night we would be enjoying the fun of playing outside in the twilight as it grew dimmer and dimmer. No television pulled us indoors. (Not until I went to college did my family acquire one.) No computers vied for our attention. There was one phone in the house and one bathroom ...until we moved to another house where the last two kids were born. There we had five bathrooms. Wow! One could bathe alone!

Would you tell us about your life before MS? (e.g. education, career, children, etc?)

After four years at UCSB (where I had to keep a clean profile as my father was the Dean of Students), I worked in San Francisco briefly and then got a job in the Oakland Public Library as an Assistant Librarian. My time there involved work in the branches, in the main library and on the BM (book mobile). While there I married Jack. He was a Cal Poly student who had wandered south to UCSB with a group of guys for enlightenment! Quite a few settled into marriages instead!

Mountain School has been a part of your life for many years and you've played a very important roll in our success. Can you tell us how Mountain School first came into your life?

We sired two children, Toby and Alison, who are LG-SONS alums. Upon moving from Fremont to Saratoga a friend, Jan Anderson, told us in no uncertain terms that this was the ONLY place to put a preschooler for many reasons. So we added our son's name to the bottom of the list with little hope of entering as this school, even in the 70's, was widely acclaimed. But the week before we were to start in another parent coop, the phone rang. We were in!!

There I learned so much about life from the eyes of a preschooler. Ruth Carbone, Nancy Ferreira, Tommy Lacy are some of the fine teachers who embodied the philosophy of LGSONS. I was truly smitten with them and their work. They made me aware of the choices I had as a parent. Voraciously, I read and read all the tomes touted by these teachers...until I realized that just by being present and observing the skills of the many wise teachers and parents in our school I had absorbed much.

Could you give us a history of your MS career?

When parents in the school, Jack and I took on the role of Maintenance chairs for several years. We build two entire staircases in a barn on the site where our school was on Bear Creek Rd.

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(Teacher Spotlight, continued)

When I became Chair of the Board we moved the school to our present site.

I was the assistant teacher to Bon Fenchel for a few years.

I stepped into the job of Head Saturday Teacher a week before school was to start when a new teacher decided the job was not for her. I was the Head Saturday teacher for a couple of years.

I became Director of the School in 1980. I taught the Wed two's for 10 years along with this job.

In 1990 I handed the Director job over to Marie and took on Head Teacher for the 3/4/5 class . I taught here for 10 years.

I think I had one year off before I began to work with Jan Eby's 3's class ...job sharing with other teachers.

What is it about MS that has kept you interested all these years?

For me there is no job that is as meaningful as a teacher in our school. I love working with little children. Their freshness, openness, eagerness for life is enchanting. I am always learning from them,... not just facts, though they always stretch one in this category, but in the nuances of emotions and the ranges of human reactions and needs.

Obviously you have a life outside of MS. Could you tell us about it, hobbies, favorite pastimes?

My life is now different from the days when my children and I would be doing HOMEWORK together in the afternoons...me reading your "Notes" and my children their school work. Now I can spend time gardening in my lovely, though not fancy, yard. I often am on the tennis courts in the mornings. I enjoy knitting for my grandchildren; another one is expected this Fall so I have to get those needles clicking rapidly. Reading is always a passion. I cannot be without a good read and share this with good friends in a book group composed of many people associated with our school or teaching.

I love music and theatre. For 15+ years a group, mostly

ladies, has traveled to SF for the symphony rehearsals that spark such appreciation for the talents in our midst. Another group attends local Repertory theatre. Life is good!

I hear you are a distinguished tennis player. Could you tell me about the tournament and the award you won recently?

Yes, along with a group of tennis ladies (Super Seniors) from this area, I experienced winning a National title, in our rating group. It was after winning in our immediate area, than winning Northern California in Carmel, arriving in Palm Springs to face 17 teams from around the US. We (The Magnificent Seven!! Tee hee) won all but three matches in the 18 we played in three days. Very exhilarating times. ☺

Dinner Out

Where: Aquil Grill & Bar,
1145 Lincoln Ave., Willow Glen

When: Sunday May 7th
4 pm-9 pm

Come to Aquil on 05/07/06 from 4:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Present the flyer when you place your order, and Aquil will donate 20% of the net sale to Los Gatos Saratoga Observation Nursery School. You may dine in, or place an order for takeout. (Watch for fliers coming soon.)

The hip, inexpensive, family friendly Aquil Grill serves a style of cuisine known as "Cal-Mex," which mixes influences from California, Mexico, the American Southwest and Asia. Truly fabulous food, including desserts and drinks, at a reasonable price.

So pack up the kids and join your Mountain School friends for a fun and tasty dinner out (family and friends welcome). Step out for a casual Sunday dinner, have a great time and raise some money for the school in the process...after all, we all have to eat. ☺

Please Join Me in Welcoming...

by Lori Lux

As the 2005-2006 school year draws to a close, I would like to extend a very big thank you to our Board of Directors. This dynamic, dedicated and fun group of individuals has kept our school running smoothly and deserves a round of applause for their hard work. Thank you to each and every one of you for your contributions this year!

Please join me in welcoming your incoming Board of Directors for 2006-2007. It is people like this who generously offer their time and talents that help to make Mt. School such an incredible experience for our children. Please be sure to give them a pat on the back and a big "thanks" when you see them!

We still have one open position at this point, Fundraising. If you would like to learn more about this position, or have a nomination, please contact either Sonia Casper at 353-9728 or Tracy Halgren at 867-2701.

Voting Positions

Chair	Tracy Halgren
Treasurer	Jeanne Moore
Information Membership	Nicole Engel
Registration Membership	Kristin Mitchell
Secretary	Elizabeth Montgomery
Marketing Communications	Aimee Frank
Fundraising Chair	OPEN
Facilities Chair	Rebecca Curran
Programs Co-Chairs	Marina Rush Linda Aggarwal
Newsletter/Librarian	Sonia Casper
Social Chair	Claudia Yore
Forms/Correspondence	Sandy & Mel Hatzis
Purchasing	Nigel Cockroft

Non-Voting Positions

Garden	Therese Voelker
eScrip & Schoolpop	Shilpa Young and Marie Crawford
Webmaster	Leila Sink
School Photos Coordinator	Jenn Mateus
T-shirt/Sweatshirt Sales	Wendy Grant-Richards

Community Service Liaison	Stevie Caceres
Workday Coordinator	
Scholastic Book Sales	Jane Johnson
Animals	David Casper
Historian	Jim Gensheimer
Carpool Facilitators	Linda Aggarwal and Jenn Mateus

Many Thanks! ☺

Kids Say the Darnedest Things

Will Matlack (3 yrs old) loves butter sandwiches and was recently overheard singing, "Peanut sitting on the railroad track, his heart was full of BUTTER!"

Looking at directions for Brio building toys,
"Look guys, I found the corrections."

"Mommy, what is this called?" pointing to the dryer.
"That's a dryer, Will."
"What is this called?" pointing to the washer.
"That's the washer."
"No, that's the wetter."

.....
Alex and Eva Voelker, 4 yr old twins:..
When asked what he was doing staring out the window, Alex replied "I'm watching the bird show Mommy!"

Alex and Eva were having a conversation the other day and Eva responds "Oh Alex, you have such an imagination"
Alex's response "Imagination is my middle name!"

.....
Chance Molenda (4th Grade & MS alumni) sometimes comes to visit his sister Faith at preschool. He remarked in awe, "This place is immortal."

.....
While sitting at the dinner table, talking about Jacob's recent move to his "big boy bed" Jacob (2 1/2 yrs old) said, "You can put my crib in the basement. I'm done with it. You can keep it for my baby. When I have a baby it will use my crib and I will take it to Mountain School and it will love Mountain School and it will have Teacher Jane and my baby will love Teacher Jane." ☺

Swank, Swizzle & Swing

by Gillian

What a night! I hope that everyone enjoyed the flashback to the fifties - ultra lounge style. Sipping Bunny Hills and Cooking Moms while we shopped, dancing to Wally's Swing World's swinging tunes and most importantly... raising money for our beloved school on our 50th anniversary!

Although we still have items to sell and the final tallies have not been completed, here is a rough breakdown of gross proceeds to date.

Safe-cracking	\$800
Merchandise	\$3,500
Tickets	\$3,800
Buy-a-spots	\$6,000
Raffle	\$6,820
Silent Auction	\$13,000
Live Auction	\$13,000

Total	\$46,920

Thank you! The LGSONS fundraising auction was a success because of the enormous support which poured in from parents, teachers, alumni and the local business community. Thanks to the volunteer hours that each of you poured in, the evening went so swankily. Special thanks to chairs Lisa Bailey, Angie Davidson, Nicole Engel, Shilpa Garg, Sandy Hatzis, Jane Johnson, JoAnn Lambkin, Amoreena Lucero, Lori Lux, Jenn Mateus, Arianne Panell and super-chair Mary Matlack.

248 tickets were sold for the auction which included 16 alumni and 21 guests. Over \$65,000 worth of items were donated by families and local businesses. Please take a moment to thank those merchants who donated to our auction this year when frequenting their businesses. A list of supporters will be posted in the parents room.

Mountain School is partially supported by tuition, summer school tuition, application fees and interest. However, we rely upon fundraising events such as the auction and Turkey Trot to produce more than 25% of the budget. Thanks to your generous support, we will meet our goal for 2005-6.

Not only does the auction generate these much-needed funds, but it provides an opportunity to put names to faces, let your hair down and swizzle!

The Mountain School community is such a special group of people and we enjoyed working and laughing with all of you this year. Thank you!

Best wishes, Gillian & Liz ☺

Auction Item Correction

Did you happen to notice the clothing rack at the auction, previously located in the dress-up area at the schoolhouse? During the remodeling done to the area the rack was removed and rescued by Teacher Sally. She decorated and outfitted it with some clothing items and donated it to the auction with credit for the donation given to Teacher Sally. However, she would like to share the credit with Teacher Froggy's husband, Don Davis, who actually made the rack years ago. Our apologies go out to Don for not recognizing his talents and generosity.

The rack, a piece of Mountain School history, was a hot ticket item at the auction and sold for \$250! A huge thank you to Don and Sally for their generosity. ☺



Enjoy Summer Boredom

by Jane Krejci, Assistant Teacher F2's
reprinted from the April 2004 Observatory

Summer can...and should be...a down time away from the busy schedules most of us keep during the school year. This is especially important for children.

Summertime is a chance for children to develop their skills in a free, unhurried, and nonscheduled environment. Instead of planning their summer, turn off the TV and try letting your children discover what really interests them. In order to do this they need time to daydream, do "nothing" - even become bored (avoid the temptation to rush in and rescue them by entertaining them). Children need time to reflect and wonder, instead of work and accomplish. Many great thinkers like Albert Einstein and Buckminster Fuller said they had lots of time to daydream. Instead of worrying about giving your children endless opportunities for organized activities, lessons, and camps (the list is endless), try giving them the gift of uninterrupted time. They will learn to just "be", pursue their own interests, make choices and thus learn the important developmental skill: self direction.

"I have no time to be in a hurry." - Henry David Thoreau. ☞

Kittens Available

Sue Bozzini has 4 kittens available to good homes. They are 5 weeks old and are so cute and very used to kids!! If interested, please call Sue at 364-1187.

Play...Play...Play

submitted by Jane Krejci, F2's Asst. Teacher

"For many of today's children TV has taken the place of play. Yet, scientists tell us that play is absolutely critical for healthy development. Besides being fun, play is a brain builder, a body builder and a self builder." *Karen Scarvie, The Wooden Horse.*

National TV Turn Off Week is April 24-29. The San Jose Mercury News has a pull-out section in the April 6th paper on 'Kid Friendly Fun.' It includes fun ideas and activities related to history, learning, outdoors, and animals.

The Wooden Horse has a week of free activities including gardening, arts and crafts, stories and games. The week's culmination is a 35th Anniversary Celebration on Saturday April 29. There will be three performances under the tent: Rhythm Circle, Bob Reid and Mickey Magic. In addition, there will be games, face painting, arts and crafts, favors and prizes..

For more information contact The Wooden Horse at 408/356-8821 or www.woodenhorsetoys.com. While visiting their web site may I also suggest that you read their collection of "Articles on Play". ☞

The Sense of Wonder

Submitted by Jane Krejci, F2's Asst. Teacher

I sincerely believe that for the child, and for the parent seeking to guide him, it is not half so important to know as to feel.

If facts are the seeds that later produce knowledge and wisdom, then the emotions and the impressions of the senses are the fertile soil in which the seeds must grow.

The years of early childhood are the time to prepare the soil.

Once the emotions have been aroused - a sense of the beautiful, the excitement of the new and the unknown, a feeling of sympathy, pity, admiration or love - then we wish for knowledge about the object of our emotional response.

Once found, it has lasting meaning.

Rachel Carson
The Sense of Wonder ☞

If You Give a Mom a Muffin

reprinted from the December 2002 Observatory

Written by Kathy Fictorie, based on "If You Give a Mouse a Cookie" by Laura Numeroff.

If you give a Mom a muffin,
she'll want a cup of coffee to go with it.
She'll pour herself some.
The coffee will get spilled by her three year old.
She'll wipe it up.

Wiping the floor, she will find some dirty socks.
She'll remember she has to do some laundry.
When she puts the laundry in the washer,
she'll trip over some snow boots and bump into the
freezer.
Bumping into the freezer will remind her she has to plan
dinner for tonight.

She will get out a pound of hamburger.
She will look for her cookbook (*101 Things to Make With
a Pound of Hamburger*).
The cookbook is sitting under a pile of mail.
She will see the phone bill which is due tomorrow.
She will look for her checkbook.

The checkbook is in her purse that is being dumped out
by her two year old.
She'll smell something funny.
She'll change the two year old.
While she is changing the two year old the phone will
ring.
Her four year old will answer it and hang up.
She remembers that she wants to phone a friend to
come for coffee on Friday.
Thinking of coffee will remind her that she was going to
have a cup.
She will pour herself some.
And chances are...

If she has a cup of coffee...

Her kids will have eaten the muffin that went with it. ☺

Blueberry Muffins

submitted by Kathy Wilcox, Fri. 2's Teacher

Makes 18 muffins

1 cup whole wheat flour
2 cups white flour
1/3 cup white sugar
1/2 tsp baking soda
1 tbsb baking powder
1 tsp salt
1/3 cup brown sugar
peel of 1 lemon, grated
1 banana, mashed (overripe is best)
3 eggs, beaten
1 1/3 cups buttermilk
1/2 tsp vanilla
1/2 cup butter, melted
2 cups blueberries, fresh or frozen (or more!)



Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Put muffin papers in
tins or butter liberally.

Sift the two flours, white sugar, soda, powder and
salt into a bowl and then stir in the brown sugar and
lemon peel.

Mash the banana thoroughly and combine it with the
eggs, buttermilk, vanilla and melted butter. (I do this
in the food processor - makes it easy).

Add the egg mixture to the dry ingredients and stir
together with a few quick strokes (12-14). The batter
will be lumpy and streaked with dry ingredients, but
do not over blend or muffins will be tough.

Lightly fold in blueberries with a few strokes (5-6).
Some unevenness will remain in batter. If it's com-
pletely smooth, it's over mixed.

Bake in center of oven for 15-20 minutes until a
toothpick comes out clean.

Enjoy! ☺

Precious Days

by Stevie Caceres

It amazes me how fast time flies watching my children grow. It feels like just yesterday I was both nervous and excited as we arrived for our first day at Savannah Channel in Karyn's Wednesday 2's. I remember how timid we both felt approaching the sea of new faces.

I recall feeling much more comfortable the next year in the 3's. Approaching the first day in the woods felt refreshing and familiar. I was so excited that Teacher Amy would be there again to greet Antonio; however, we both missed our old friends as most had moved on to the 3/4s. It still took me a couple of months until I would leave Antonio's side. I remember clearly, as he clutched his yellow lunch box, holding Audrey's hand and waving good-bye. I sensed he felt nervous, but ready. After Amy reassured me, I stayed in the car, hearing their voices and missing his sweet face.

This year, it seems, Antonio prefers the days without Mom hovering. He often tells me now that I will miss him because he will be in kindergarten soon. I held on, hoping to send him to the 4/5's. It just seems like it has all gone so fast. My heart aches with sadness that my baby is gone, but at the same time, leaps with joy as I watch him grow, so confident now. I feel lucky the days he stops to give me a kiss good-bye when I drop him off. He takes pride, telling me his best friend in school is Max.

After lots of debate, we have decided to move on....but before we go, I wanted to share with you a recent observation I wrote. I guess I am hoping by making it public I will put extra effort forth to make it happen. Each day is a new day to start again. This observation is on "Resolutions and Goals," asking us what we would like our child to remember about their family and childhood. It also asked us to think about specific parenting goals. Here goes:

One of the most important things I would like my kids to remember is nature: the smell of the trees, the sound of running water, the names of various plants. I hope they feel grounded by nature.

I hope they do not feel rushed. They need time to play and be idle. I hope they feel we (parents and teachers) had time for them, that their voices were heard, that their thoughts and dreams mattered, that they were an important part of a whole.

I hope my children learn from me that mistakes, weakness and insecurity can be overcome (over and over) and that we are never too old to change, to admit we are wrong and that forgiveness (especially for ourselves) is healing. I hope they learn from me a bit of humility, spirituality, and simplicity. It would be wonderful if we could learn to garden, to cook, to enjoy the company of others, to host, and to comfort. I also hope we don't forget to give to those less fortunate and to remember how blessed we are.

This new year, '06, I've begun to slow down, to take walks right outside our front door. I want to enjoy the beauty of the mountains we live in. I would like to begin setting new limits with both my children in order to meet my personal needs. In the past, I feel, I've given too much, I've burnt out and lost touch with what is important. I have forgotten to connect with them, to look into their eyes, and to hear their words. I've forgotten to let Adrian help with bedtime stories so I could get a few moments of silence.

I hope to spend more time with like-minded moms who enjoy simple living and nature to help foster friendships that will last – for me and for them.

Finally, I hope that this year we can all just focus on the bright side. There is so much to be thankful for; I just hope I can be an example.

Thank you, Antonio, for 3 of the most precious years of my life. Go on your way now, and don't worry about me....I will be OK. I love you. ☺

