



The Observatory

Los Gatos-Saratoga Observation Nursery School ~ Issue 2 September/October 2006

Behind the Scenes – Beyond the Duties

by Tracy Halgren, Board Chair

Earlier this month our social chair, Claudia Yore, organized Mountain School's first annual ice cream social. The event was widely attended by both new and returning families. The kids had a terrific time devouring the ice cream, playing at the schoolhouse and exploring the garden. This event could not have been held if it wasn't for the many volunteers who stepped up to help.

Kristin Mitchell, mother of Sydney and Natalie in the 3/4's, said, "I like being involved. It creates unique opportunities to work with families within the school, and a chance to get to know them better. I feel more connected to the program."

By volunteering we stay connected to our school and we get a glimpse of the goings on behind the scenes, beyond our duties and requirements. Without our volunteers our school would not be the exceptional Mountain School that it is today. Our board of directors is all volunteer parents willing to dedicate their time and energy to helping the school run smoothly. Along with the board there are many other volunteers needed to help provide the various events, projects and classes we find so worthwhile at our school.

Volunteering allows us to be a part of something that sets the foundation for our kid's future. For those who wish to reap the benefits of being a more active participant in their child's education, a wide range of projects will readily be available throughout the school year.

Jenny Whitman, mother of Annie in last year's 4/5's class said, "Recycling is no longer an option, it's a necessity. Recycling at our school is a way to show the kids how to preserve our environment." Last year Jenny single handedly started a recycling program at the schoolhouse. We hope to expand on her inaugural efforts and set in motion a project to turn our school green. From learning how to compost and recycle, to engineering an attitude in both parent and child that promotes the preservation of a clean

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First Days

by Marie Imai, Director

Dear Families,

The first few weeks of school are always very exciting as the teachers get acquainted with their new classes and this year is no exception. At our second circle meeting each parent briefly described his or her child's interests & passions and I was so struck by the uniqueness of each child. Here is what I learned about some of the 4/5s and I'm sure that each of your classes has the same amazing variety of personalities.

"My child is very active – today we played football, baseball, tag, chase, bad guys/good guys, mailman, workers and we went to the park"; "my son has a science table outside where he does all kinds of independent mixing, experimenting and making observations of what happens"; "everyday my daughter writes and illustrates lots of secret notes that she hides all over the house for me to find"; "my child loves the 'wildcat club' organized by her big sister and adores the water play in the creek"; "mine loves the computer, board games and Thomas the Tank engine"; "she spends all day creating scenarios for her 10 most beloved stuffed animals"; "my son has just recently become enchanted with figuring out words, signs and how things work. He talks non-stop at home but is content to play quietly at school." "I love the conversations I have with my just-turned-5-year-old son in the car and he loves

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(Behind the Scenes - Beyond the Duties, continued)

environment. We are looking for volunteers who are passionate about this issue to help spearhead this project. Smaller tasks wait as well, including such tasks as assisting the Program Chairs at a mini-course you plan to attend, helping the Social Chair with our Fall School picnic and by-monthly school fundraising dinners, helping care for our school rats or guinea pigs or creating and moderating a yahoo bulletin board so school families, old and new, can share ideas, events and items.

Check out the Volunteer Corner in future newsletters for specific opportunities. We will also have a Volunteer Corner in the parents' room at the schoolhouse highlighting our volunteer needs. If you are unable to volunteer today there will be plenty of opportunities throughout the year.

Thank you to all everyone who has and will volunteer. Without you, Mountain School would not be the wonderfully unique and amazing program that it is. If you can help please call Tracy Halgren at 408/867-2701 or email her at thalgren@earthlink.net. ☞

Fall Picnic

by Claudia Yore
Social Chair

Mountain School Fall Picnic
Saratoga Springs
Sunday, October 15, 2006
11:00pm - 3:00pm



Join us for a day of family fun! Splash in the creek, create some art, and take a hike with Teacher Marie.

The grill will be hot, so bring an entree to grill and a side dish to share. Please bring your own picnic supplies, including: drinks, plates, napkins and utensils.

End the day with singing around the campfire.

Are there any talented or even not-so-talented musicians that would love to lead some campfire songs? Volunteers are also needed for set-up, manning the grill, and clean-up. Please contact Claudia Yore with any questions or to volunteer (phone: 408/354-5150 or by email: c_yore@msn.com) ☞

MS Auction is Scheduled

2007 LGSONS AUCTION WILL BE MARCH 3rd!!

Mark your calendars! Our annual LGSONS auction will be on Saturday night, March 3, 2007. You won't want to miss it!

It's going to be a fantastic adults-night out at Redwood Estates Pavilion. You'll of course have the opportunity to bid on lots of amazing live and silent auction items - including the traditional vacation get-aways, gifts put together by all our classes, buy-a-spots for special events, etc. Plus the event will feature delicious and decadent desserts to nibble on while we socialize and have a great time!

We will be giving you information soon about how you can get your volunteer hours in and make this event a success. As stated in the LGSONS school handbook, each LGSONS family is required to serve on a committee.

You can expect to see committee sign-ups coming out soon for this event. We really appreciate your help. This really is an important fundraiser for our school. We are committed to not only making this a sensational event that raises some great funds for the school, but we also want it to be an event that you enjoy helping out with.

Stay tuned for more info. We'll be reaching out and throwing lots of auction info your way. It's also not too early to start thinking about what you might contribute to our offerings for the auction! We will be sending more details to you soon.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact either one of us.

LGSONS Auction Co- Chairs:
Ann Du Bois & Sherry McNamara

Ann: (408/279-2092; annmariadubois@yahoo.com)
Sherry: (408/353-3556; sherry@scsi.com)

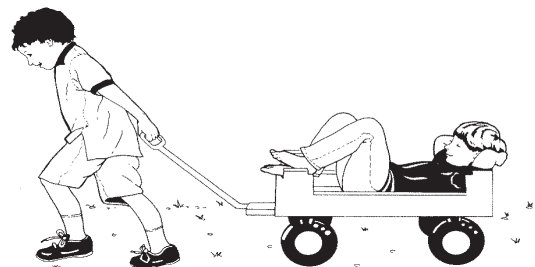
(First Days, continued)

catalogs.” “My son loves guinea pig stories that we make up as well as making music tapes of every kind.”

At school many children play in the creek for most of the day, others prefer the sand or climbing the stumps and rocks while four or five gravitate to the story blanket and are so content that they forget to go exploring. Yet when we're together at cooking or circle we're already beginning to feel like a family who cares for each other and shares these everyday routines as well as our first special adventure – hiking down from the hostel off Sanborn Rd to Savannah Chanelle. It's about a mile and a half with a very impressive detour around a large landslide that occurred several years ago. There was a real sense of accomplishment when we actually arrived back at our familiar redwood grove.

And now I'm also looking forward to getting to know the parents in my class as well – to sharing the joys and challenges of living with young children and finding ways to live a few of our dreams today instead of 20 years from now. I think that the true spirit of Mountain School which touches everyone at some time during your days here comes from the connectedness of all the families and teachers who are part of this community. Just as children's personalities are influenced by all those who love and nourish them through childhood we adults are also being nurtured and encouraged by those with whom we share life's experiences.. So please remember that your time at school, driving your car-pool, volunteering for a committee or even serving on the board brings a bit of special magic to your life and to those around you. By extending ourselves in friendship to others we are blessed in more ways than we can imagine. So let this year's journey begin knowing we have a whole class of families ready to support and enjoy each other.

Love, Marie ☺



General Meeting: How the Young Brain Learns

by Linda Agarwal

Speaker: Kenneth A. Wesson
Tuesday, October 24th
7:00pm - 9:00pm
Louise Van Meter Elementary School cafeteria

How does the young human brain work? What can we do, as educators, to nurture the covert processes by which it operates, especially when the brain is engaged in the enterprise that we call learning?

The biologically-based operating principles by which the human brain organizes, stores and retrieves information were well-guarded neurological secrets for centuries. However, research in the cognitive neurosciences has revealed more about the human brain in the past five years than in all of our previous human history. Annually, new information is discovered about the operational nature of the brain and its amazing catalog of capabilities. Not only are the mysteries surrounding this magnificent mammalian cerebral cortex, known best as the highly-evolved human brain, finally undergoing long overdue exposure, but they are also receiving an increased amount of attention from the field of education. We are now beginning to re-think the very foundations of our pedagogical practices at all academic levels.

There are teaching techniques that both cater to and enhance the natural inclinations for learning in this 3-pound language-enabled impressive lump of the gelatinous cranial matter. During the past decade, research findings in neuroscience have intrigued, mystified, and motivated educators to seek more knowledge concerning the operational nature of the brains in their classrooms.

It has been said that the next great journey for humankind will not take place in outer space, but in the inner space of the human brain. Through the latest research in brain science, all educators can now cultivate a much greater understanding of what happens within the interior walls of the cranium, in that well-concealed cerebral "inner space" of the biological minds that enter our classrooms daily. The centerpiece of this presentation will be in answering the question, "If it's your job to develop the mind, shouldn't you know how the brain works?"

For more info on Kenneth Wesson go to www.sciencemaster.com/wesson/home.php ☞

Mountain School's Parent Library

by Sonia Casper, Librarian

The air is getting cooler, the days are getting shorter, the air is nippy in the early morning, and soon the leaves will begin changing color and falling from the trees. Believe it or not I've even smelled smoke coming from some of our neighbors' fireplaces already. All these are reminders that our return to the schoolhouse is not far off.

Once there I urge you to take a look in the parent's room. Currently Teacher Kathy and I are updating and revamping Mountain School's Parent Library. We've added several new books to the collection as well as a few lecture series on DVD and a few CDs. Here are a few of the titles you can expect to see:

- ☞ [Raising Your Spirited Child](#)
- ☞ [A Child's Work: The Importance of Fantasy Play](#)
- ☞ [How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk](#)
- ☞ [Your Child's Growing Mind: Brain Development and Learning From Birth to Adolescence](#)
- ☞ [Your Two Year Old: Terrible or Tender](#) (*as well as the other books in the series covering ages 2-5)
- ☞ [Peninsula Tales & Trails](#)
- ☞ [Young At Art](#)
...and many more.

In order to give everyone an opportunity to use these new resources we are currently working on a check-out system. Watch for more information on the check-out policy soon.

In the meantime enjoy your remaining days at our outdoor locations. ☞

Oatmeal School Cookies

from Wendy Grant-Richards

Ingredients:

- 1 cup butter
- 1 1/2 cups brown sugar
- 2 lightly beaten eggs
- 3 tsp vanilla
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 3/4 cups whole wheat flour
(pastry flour recommended
but not required)
- 1/4 cup ground flax seed
(or an additional 3/4 cup of
whole wheat flour)
- 1 cup wheat germ
- 1 1/2 cups rolled oats
- 1 1/2 cups chocolate chips
- 1 1/2 cups walnuts

Directions:

- ① Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
- ② Cream together butter and sugar
- ③ Add eggs, vanilla and salt and beat well
- ④ In a separate bowl, mix together dry ingredients: flour, flax seed, wheat germ and rolled oats.
- ⑤ Mix dry ingredients into wet ingredients. (Note: if too dry add a little water.)
- ⑥ Stir in chocolate chips and walnuts.
- ⑦ Place 1 TBSP sized drops of dough onto a greased cookie sheet and flatten.
- ⑧ Bake for 10-12 minutes.

Enjoy! ☞

Sibling Policy

by Tracy Halgren, Board Chair

Recently there have been many questions regarding our school's policy on younger and older siblings attending class. I wanted to explain and clarify our school's policies on these issues.

First of all, we are a community. We cherish the child, the parent and the entire family. We believe that when a new baby is born it is important for that baby to stay with the parent, especially during those first months when bonds are formed and attachments made. As the baby gets older and demands more of the parent's attention it is important to examine the impact on the class as a whole, on your duties within the class and on your enrolled child. The class that you are attending is for you, as the parent, and your older child. This is a time for you to observe and be with that child. When a new baby starts to interfere with your participation and your ability to focus on your older child, that's when we would like to have you find other arrangements for your baby.

The school's official policy is that siblings 5 months and under are allowed to attend class with their parents. We realize this might be difficult for some of you. If you feel you have special circumstances you may officially petition the executive board for approval to have your 6 month or older baby attend class.

In terms of older siblings attending class, we realize that some times having an older sibling attend class is unavoidable. Our official school policy reads "Unregistered children may not attend class. If an emergency arises and a sibling does not have childcare, the head teacher must give permission for that day's attendance." It is important to give the teacher advance notice so they can prepare for an older and more active participant in class.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding our policies on siblings please do not hesitate to contact me.

Because there has been some confusion on our policies, we are giving families a grace period until October 23. Hopefully this will give you plenty of time to find alternate childcare for those younger siblings.

Blessings,

Tracy Halgren
Board Chair ☞



A New Look at the Cooking Program

By Jill Hyman, 4/5's Assistant Teacher

Cooking has always been a central part of the program at Mountain School. In the original farm school, parents and children were encouraged to care for the earth. They planted, tended, harvested and cooked vegetables and fruits directly from the garden. After the farm was sold and the school changed location, that farm experience was so valuable and continued through the cooking program.

Why should we cook? According to Mollie Katzen, author of many vegetarian cookbooks, (including several for children and parents), "...exploring food and cooking is not just about eating. It can also be a playful activity and a way to learn new skills. As an educational experience, consider all the things a child can learn in the kitchen: counting, symbol recognition, reading readiness, patience, self-confidence, use of tools, food literacy, and more."

Cooking is very serious business. It would be no exaggeration to say that an entire curriculum could be built around the cooking program. At the same time, it is incredibly playful. Consider what can be done with melon, in this case cantaloupe (which was named only at the very end of cooking time recently. The naming, or identification of "things" is not nearly as important as the experience of it.) We wondered if the melon would float or sink. In the words of children, the questions was, "Do you think this will stay on top of the water or go down to the bottom?" Each child guessed, then placed the melon in a deep pool in the creek at Savannah Channel. Many of us were surprised at the result (you'll have to try yourself if you want to know what happened.) We smelled the fragrance, one child described it as like lemon. We felt the bumpy texture of the skin, compared it to our own smooth covering. We felt the weight and density of the melon, compared it to rocks of varying sizes. Words like "heavy" and "heavier" were spoken. We guessed what color it might be when cut open. Guesses of red, blue, purple, green, green-yellow, bright orange and light orange were offered, and of course all possibilities were considered equally. (There were only two children who "knew" for sure.) The melons were

cut to see the seed patterns, horizontally and vertically. Seeds and surrounding pulp were touched (by some), and some took seeds home (especially Marie, which her chickens enjoyed). Words like juicy, sweet, and smooth were used. A second melon experience, comparing 2 different kinds, repeated some of the same activities, (and including tasting toasted melon seeds) with a wonderful addition. The cooking dad set up balance scales with two sticks, one supported on the shoulders of two children, the other holding bags (plastic with handles) each with a different melon. He added small rocks until they balanced. It was a dramatic demonstration, met with ooo's and ahh's. So, the playful/experimental aspect of cooking extends to the adults as well! Most of this activity took place long before the formal time of sitting and eating, and in this way encouraged participation and relaxation about food and eating. Several children didn't like cantaloupe, but tried it anyway. One changed his mind; the other didn't, but had fully engaged in the preview activities.

We are following some basic guidelines for considering cooking projects, reflecting the basic philosophy of LGSONS from its very beginnings.

1. Simplicity: 1 or 2 foods, prepared by hand or w/ manual gadgets (ex. apples prepared with a hand crank apple/peeler/corer) No need to accompany with crackers or bread as a "just in case" strategy.
2. Fresh foods grown locally and seasonally available.
3. Natural - bring whole fruits & vegetables as they grow:
 - whole melons, entire bunch of bananas, whole carrots w/tops
 - eliminate sugar, white flour, high fat foods
4. Involve your child with project selection, shopping, planning. Involve all children with table setting, preparation, decorating w/leaves, branches, etc.
5. Identify skill - focus on one or two skills.

Two previous directors and teachers have written cookbooks, brimming with information about developmental and social skills, providing specific recipes for age

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(A New Look at the Cooking Program, continued)

groups, skill levels or holidays. Please check them out, Nancy Fereirara's Mother Child Cookbook (an earlier and later edition) and Ruth Carbone's Learning through Cooking Naturally.

And in caring for the earth, we have decided for each person to bring his/her own reusable water bottle for cooking, hikes, and field trips. We are washing hands with castile soap (a dot will do) and water and avoiding paper products as much as possible.

We are having a great time so far, developing interest in experimenting and a playful, open attitude toward cooking time. I think you'll agree that this seems to fly in the face of the admonition "Don't play with your food". Playing is how we learn, children's natural way of interacting with the world, and it's what cooking is all about, playing with possibilities. Even my daughter, a trained chef, assures me this is true. ☺

From the Editor

Is there something you would like to see in the newsletter? Do you have a recipe, story, poem, field trip, or information you'd like to share? The deadline for the next newsletter is Friday, October 20th. Please send all submissions for consideration to mtnmama@garlic.com.

Warmly,

Sonia Casper
Editor

Calendar

MOVE INDOORS

Monday, Oct. 23rd

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS MINI-COURSE

Wednesday, October 4th

7:00pm - 9:00pm, Los Gatos HS, Room 510

See page 10 for more info. To register go to www.lgsons.com.

FALL PICNIC

Sunday October 15th

See page 2 for more info.

GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, October 24th

*7:00pm - 9:00pm at the Louise Van Meter
Elementary School cafeteria*



"How The Young Brain Learns" with Kenneth Wesson. For more information see page 4.

MAKE AN ADORABLE SOCK HORSE - MINI-COURSE

Tuesday, Nov. 9th

7:00pm - 9:00pm at the Little Red Schoobouse

For more information see page 10

VETERANS DAY - NO SCHOOL

Friday, Nov. 10th

LEARNING EXPRESS SHOPPING DAY

Wednesday, Nov. 15th

HOLIDAY SCRIPT ORDER DUE DATE

Friday, November 17th

Info and order forms should have been handed out at your last Circle Meeting. Please contact Marie Crawford (408/371-4322) or Shilpa Young (408/559-3767) if you have more questions or did not receive the info.



Book Review

by Jane Krejci, Fri. 2's Assistant Teacher

Wisdom of Our Fathers by Tim Russert

Dads - you make a difference! This is a collection of letters and lessons from sons and daughters about their fathers. They are engaging, funny, sad, touching and memorable. The book is inspiring and a reminder of how important fathers are to their children.

(Moms - volumes could be written about you, too!)

Library Books Due?

by Jan Murray, alumni

If you have a little trouble getting your public library books returned on time, you might be interested in this website that a friend of mine told me about. It's called "Library Elf", here's what it does:

- Email and/or RSS alerts before items are due
- Email and/or RSS alerts on overdues and holds
- Consolidated list of yours or your family's library loans and holds
- Cellphone text message alerts for holds (US and Canada)
- Real-time checking by browser

This is the website: <http://www.libraryelf.com/>. The list of supported libraries can be found here: <http://www.libraryelf.com/Libraries.aspx>

Regards,

Jan Murray

Three Little Ratties

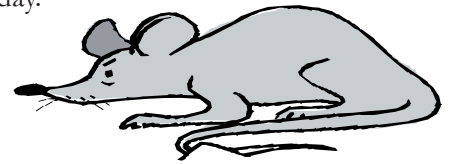
by Sonia Casper

A neighbor of Marie's called one day,
"I have 3 little ratties that love to play..."
Marie said "Bring them over,
I'll take them to school."

But the kids are at the creek
so they went to Sonia's instead.
Sonia got a cage, and gave them all names,
then found them a warm, loving place to stay.

So now Larry, Mo and Curly
are playing at Laura's...
"They're the sweetest little things.
They greet us at their door each day."

She asked me then...
"Do I have to give them back?"
But I had to say "Yes..."
for the kids at school will surely love them too.



So when we're back at the schoolhouse
look for Larry, Mo and Curly..
Give them a hug, some love,
and an apple now and then

.....

Upon our return to the school house our beloved animals will be returning too. The chickens, Poppy, Tallula and Alice will return, as well as the guinea pigs, Cinnamon and Cocoa. This year we also have three rats joining our Mountain School family...Larry, Mo and Curly. They are absolutely lovely rats that come to us via T. Marie's neighbor.

The animals need love, attention and to be fed and cared for properly...including regular cleaning of their cages. Their health and wellbeing is in our hands.

We are also looking for families to watch the rats and guinea pigs over the holiday breaks. If you can help please contact David Casper at 408/353-9728.

Thank you, your help and respect for these creatures is greatly appreciated.

Our Giving Hand

by Stevie Caceres, Community Service Liason

Welcome new and returning families! I hope you all had a wonderful, peaceful and rejuvenating summer. I also expect you are all enjoying the fresh beginning of the school year with your young children. It is wonderful to be back and I am excited to have the opportunity go get to know my daughter a little bit better without the distraction of daily life. Mountain School is such a wonderful gift to us all.

I am also happy to have the opportunity to be a bit more involved as the Community Service Liaison. It has always been a goal of mine to incorporate community service into our family's regular routines.

When Antonio was an infant, finding a community service I could do with baby in tow was tough. Eventually, an opportunity arose and I began taking Antonio to visit with a mountain resident who had terminal bone cancer.

I was not sure what to expect or if we would even make a difference. I was nervous the first day I knocked on her door. She was welcoming and warm. She enjoyed serving fresh cookies and tea. Antonio's smiles brought great joy to her. She watched his first roll over and clumsy steps, and listened to his first babbling words. During our second year of visits, they would play catch. She would lean so far over her walker I would get nervous she would fall. She never let me help. I met her kids, and their kids. She shared her memories of early motherhood, her gardening tips, her smiles, fears and struggles with her disease. She was grateful for her life, her kids and her time left. Holding her hand the last time, I wept. My heart broke and I was changed. I never anticipated the impact helping could have on me...the giver.

Community service is a benefit to all involved. I am thrilled we will get to share in this together, to have the chance to learn more about the needs of our community and see how we can help. Let us get started and kick it off on October 15th with our Fall Picnic Shelter Drive

benefiting the Georgia Travis Center. Donation collections will continue for at least 2 weeks once we move indoors.

The Georgia Travis Center is a shelter that provides food, showers, laundry facilities, transportation assistance, mailing addresses, etc to homeless women and children. Georgia Travis has a well-designed program geared towards gradually moving these women towards a self-sufficient lifestyle. You can learn more about it at www.innvision.org/nf.html.

Simply bring one or more of the following items to donate (gently used items will be appreciated as well). All non-clothing items must be unopened.

Towels, blankets, linens (twin and double beds), hygiene packets (small soaps, shampoos, toothpaste, deodorant, lotions, etc.), jackets, scarves, hats, gloves, sweat suits/sweat shirts, rain gear, children's warm pajamas all sizes, socks, sleepers for babies and toddlers, women and children's underwear, anything warm, laundry detergent, cleaning supplies i.e., bleach, Comet, dishwashing detergent, washing detergent, toilet paper, paper towels, craft supplies for the children, outside toys, puzzles, and books.

I encourage you to send me an e-mail, call me or catch me at school, to share with me where you would like to see our time and resources spent.

I think of how fortunate we are to have such incredible children, and blessed homes. Helping our community with our children is a great way to instill the values we hold dear to our hearts. I encourage you to take time and choose an area (or areas) in which you would like to participate.

I am very excited and looking forward to sharing a whole new magical, mountain school year.

Stevie Caceres Wed 2's.
408/354-7426 or stevie@slaughters.com ☎



Upcoming Mini-Courses

by Linda Agarwal, Programs Co-Chair

Together We Prepare— Emergency Preparedness and First Aid Training Community Disaster Education (CDE) Services

Speaker: John Buckel, American Red Cross
Instructor
Wednesday, Oct 4th:
7-9 pm, Los Gatos HS, room 510

This general disaster preparedness workshop will focus on how the community and the Red Cross can prepare for and respond to a disaster, with a focus on the remote mountain setting of our school locations. There are five key elements to emergency preparedness: Make a Plan, Build a Kit, Get Trained, Volunteer and Give Blood. First aid training without CPR includes bleeding control and treatment of burns, fractures, strains, sprains, seizures, shock, heat and cold emergencies and poisoning. We would like to make emergency preparedness as easy as possible for you. Emergency car supply and backpack kits will be made available to you for purchase from the Red Cross at this event.

Make an Adorable Sock Stick Horse

with Teachers Karyn and Jan
Thursday, Nov 9th:
7-9 pm at the little red school house

Just in time for the holidays, join our annual festive tradition with Mountain School Teachers Karyn and Jan to make an adorable sock stick horse. Made out of old socks or new, stitched and stuffed to become a horse with bridle and rein. Each one is a bit different than the other, ears back or ears forward, old buttons or new, yarn manes and forelocks - a special treasure for a child to ride and play with again and again. Please bring your own sock to decorate, strong upholstery thread, long (doll) needle, yarn, lace, buttons and other favorite notions to decorate with. Wooden stick and stuffing will be provided as well as a selection of materials from past years, if needed. *Material Fee: \$10*

Building Healthy Families – Especially During the Holidays

Speaker: Stephanie Barry Agnew, B.A.
Tuesday, Dec 12th:
7-9 pm (location TBD)

What exactly is a “Healthy Family”, and what can we as parents do to create one? Of course, the answer to that question is different for every family, but in this workshop you will explore what it might mean for yours.

With Stephen Covey’s 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families as a foundation and incorporating Mary Pipher’s The Shelter of Each Other, and the ideas of others we will discuss how to create a family environment where there is communication, trust, respect, affirmation and support for all the members – (especially including parents!). You will learn about how to develop a “Family Mission Statement” and how important it is to balance work, family, and personal time by setting priorities, and particularly during the holidays, the critical role family rituals, traditions, and stories play in the creation of that “Healthy Family” we all strive for. We will also discuss ways to “de-commercialize” the holidays and really enjoy the time together.

Bio: Stephanie has an extensive background in Early Childhood Education with 20 years of teaching experience in Palo Alto area schools. She was trained at Bing Nursery School while getting her degree at Stanford and has taught all preschool age groups. She owned her own small preschool in Palo Alto for 5 years and worked as a parent educator at The Children’s Health Council for 6 years where she was also the director of the Parent Education Program for 2 years. Since 2002 she has been working independently and for the Parents Place in Palo Alto as a Parent Educator and Preschool Consultant. Stephanie’s specialties include young child behavior management, Kindergarten readiness, school choices and preschool teacher training and support. She teaches parenting classes, gives one-session talks, leads teacher-training workshops, observes children at home and at school and offers individual parents information and support about a wide array of parenting issues.

Scholastic Updates

by Jane Johnson, Scholastic Book

Thanks to all of you who ordered either online or with a check. We've earned extra bonus points for our school! Our teachers are currently deciding on what great resources to obtain for our school. Thank you!

Our next group of catalogs will be coming soon - hopefully by the end of September. Look for many more selections for October including:

Honeybee	Toddlers
Firefly	Preschool - Kindergarten
SeeSaw	K-1st
Lucky	2nd-3rd
Click	Software

There could be some other offerings including chapter books. They provide various additional catalogs throughout the year. Also note that some additional catalogs may be offered online as they ship too late to me to get to you. This should change once we return to the schoolhouse.

Deadline for October orders is: Thursday, October 12th (a.m. for paper orders/11 p.m. for online orders)

We are offering a large selection so you can choose items for your own children as well as gifts for others, especially leading into the holidays. If we notice our community is not utilizing a specific catalog, we will remove ourselves from the production to save paper (& trees!).

Our school can also be proud of our communicative community. A few of you alerted me that you were having difficulty placing online orders the night before the due date. Turns out we identified a bug in their new online ordering system which they have fixed as of today. Next month will run even more smoothly.

By the way, many of you have let me know the online ordering system was really easy to use. Remember, you do not have to provide your child's name. For my own order I simply typed in my own name, and did not provide any optional information on that page.

Thank you for helping our school! Have fun reading your new books.

Warmly,

Jane Johnson
jcwjohns@yahoo.com or 408/268-9878

The Apple Tree

reprinted from the October 1997 Observatory
Sung to the melody: Paw, Paw Patch)

Where oh where are the apples
Where oh where are the apples
Where oh where are the apples
They are growing on the apple tree.

Come on children, let's go pick some
Come on children, let's go pick some
Come on children, let's go pick some
Juicy apples on the apple tree.

Watch the tractor pull the wagon
Watch the tractor pull the wagon
Watch the tractor pull the wagon
It will take us to the apple tree.

See the apples on the branches
See the apples on the branches
See the apples on the branches
Pretty apples on the apple tree.

Hold an apple; twist it gently
Hold an apple; twist it gently
Hold an apple; twist it gently
Picking apples off the apple tree.

Wash the apple; rub it dry now
Wash the apple; rub it dry now
Wash the apple; rub it dry now
Shiny apple from the apple tree.

Take a bite and eat the apple
Take a bite and eat the apple
Take a bite and eat the apple
Yummy apple from the apple tree!



A Natural Way to Clean

from Dr. Andrew Weil

An entire industry has been built on developing natural cleaning products - everything from nontoxic bathroom cleaners to environmentally friendly dish soaps. If you want to save money, are feeling creative, or don't have access to commercial natural cleaning products, try some of these non-toxic cleaning suggestions:

1. Baking soda: An all-purpose cleaner; especially effective on glass coffee pots and glassware; removes red-wine stains from carpeting. A paste (made with water) can shine stainless steel and silver; the paste also can remove tea stains from cups and saucers. Make a paste with a castile- or vegetable-based liquid soap and a drop of essential oil (tea tree or lavender) to clean sinks, countertops, toilets and tubs.

2. Coarse salt: Cleans copper pans and scours cookware. Sprinkle salt on fresh spills in the oven, then wipe off. Sprinkle salt on rust stains and squeeze a lime or lemon over them, let sit for several hours and wipe off.

3. Grapefruit-seed extract: Add to water in a spray bottle for an odorless way to kill mold and mildew.

4. Lemon juice: Use as a bleaching agent on clothing, and to remove grease from your stove and countertops.

Add 2 Tbsp lemon juice to 10 drops of (real) lemon oil and a few drops of jojoba oil to clean and polish wood furniture.

5. Olive oil: Use to lubricate and polish wood furniture (three parts olive oil to one part vinegar; or two parts olive oil to one part lemon juice).

6. Potatoes: Halved potatoes can remove rust from baking pans or tinware - follow with a salt scrub or dip the potato in salt before scrubbing.

7. White vinegar: Cleans linoleum floors and glass (from windows to shower doors) when mixed with water and a little liquid soap (Castile or vegetable). It cuts grease and removes stains, and removes soap scum and cleans toilets (add a bit of baking soda if you like). Pour down drains once a week for antibacterial cleaning. Add to water in a spray bottle to kill mold and mildew.

8. Tea tree oil: Can be added to vinegar/water solutions for its antibacterial properties. Use it to kill mold and mildew, and on kitchen and bathroom surfaces instead of chemical products. Add 50 drops to a bucket of water to clean countertops and tile floors.

Taken from Dr. Andrew Weil's "Daily Tip" electronic newsletter. For more information about Dr. Weil or to receive his newsletter go to www.drweil.com. ☞

What Should You Do?

by Jill Hyman, 4/5's Assistan Teacher

Reprinted from the October 1996 Observatory

What should you do if your child is having a "bad day"? Perhaps he has a little cold, or didn't sleep well. Perhaps he fought with his older sibling before school. Now that you're here, he's whining, wants to be held or sit on your lap. He withdraws from other children and won't even look at the teachers.

Though it's tempting to urge your child to get on with it and try some of those enticing activities, resist that urge. Instead, take a deep breath, affirm "I am a patient parent" and be prepared to wait. Take your cues from your

child. she needs close physical contact: holding, cuddling, or sitting quietly together. Your child will let you know when she is ready to engage in activity by leaving your side. It takes calm patience. The waiting period could be minutes, hours or all morning.

Joseph Chilton Pearce, noted researcher on the brain and child development says that your child needs two things: absolute access to the physical world and absolute access to you! So weather those storms by quietly sitting, just being with your child, reassuring her with your presence, allowing her to leave (to explore the physical world) and to return (to you), leave and return, again and again. ☞