



The Observatory

Los Gatos-Saratoga Observation Nursery School ~ Issue 2 ~ Nov/Dec 2009

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Turkey Trot Time!

By Angie Buse

It's not too late to sign up for everyone's favorite Trot!! There will be food, music and fun for everyone. Great prizes will be awarded to the top male, female and child finishers! A new category for 1st Stroller Finisher will also be added this year!

This year's Turkey Trot 5K Race & Family Fun Run will take place on Sunday Nov. 15 at Vasona Park in Los Gatos. You can pre-register at www.active.com or by downloading a registration form from the school website: www.LGSONS.com or contact Tracy Pingree at tracypingree@yahoo.com. Online registration closes Friday, November 13th at midnight. Any registration form mailed in must be postmarked November 12th. Goodie bags will be distributed to the first 200 registrants and spots are filling fast!!

Race Day Schedule:

- 9am: Walk-in Registration begins (*please note that t-shirts and goodie bags may not be available to race day registrants*)
- 11am: 5K begins
- 12 pm: Prize Ceremony
- 12-2pm : Food & fun at Gateway Pavilion!

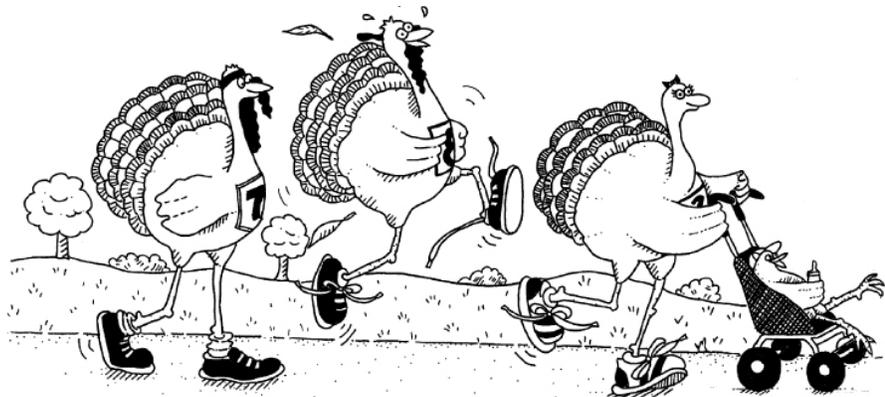
Volunteers Needed!

Interested in working with a great group of people on Race Day (if you have a high school student it's a great way for them to earn community service credit!)? We are still searching for the following:

- o Race day registration volunteers
- o Volunteers to staff course
- o Volunteer to maintain list of runners' times
- o Volunteers to set up & distribute food & drink on race day

If interested in any of these volunteer positions, please contact Angie Giacalone as soon as possible at (650) 703-7950 or angiebuse@hotmail.com.

Dust off your old sneakers and get running... see you there! -■



A Sense of Place

By Teacher Marie Imai

There is a special aspect of the outdoor part of our school that we don't discuss very often and yet feels very important to me. It is the opportunity for you and your children to begin developing a sense of place, a relationship with a specific natural area. Part of our school's philosophy and mission is to foster connection and caring for others and for the earth. Look in your handbook on page two and three for some inspiration!

Connection to the earth starts with feeling comfortable out of doors and that happens when one knows a lot about one place.

Think about being at Saratoga Springs, Savannah Chanelle or the Red Schoolhouse:

- what was your favorite place to sit?
- which were your favorite trees or plants?
- what did the creek sound like with your eyes shut?
- what else did you hear?

Think of a very cozy place and how you felt there, how did the tree bark smell?

And think of the vastness you experience when lying on your back staring up at the layers upon layers of branches which seem to reach all the way up to the sun.

The next time that you are at the schoolhouse find a special place to sit and examine your surroundings more carefully than usual. Listen with your eyes shut, sift the earth, look for bugs, lie on the ground and really feel at home there. Or do this in your own backyard or at your favorite park. Do it with your kids for the minute or two or five that they will sit down and you may be surprised at what they find and at how observant they really are.

“The smell of fir trees and their needles in the sunshine is one of those sensory experiences that always reminds me of my childhood and allows me to really appreciate my parents for rooting me to this land.”

I grew up in Oregon and lived near one of the passes in the Cascade Mts until I was 6 and we moved to the outskirts of

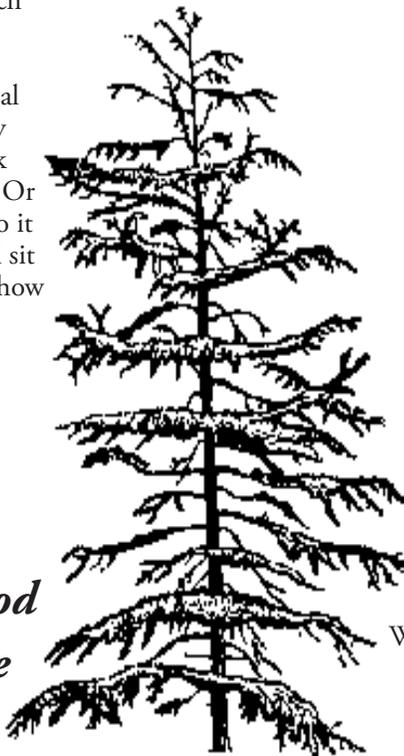
Portland. My father took us camping, hiking, skiing and boating and I was active in the Girl Scouts with my mother. The smell of fir trees and their needles in the sunshine is one of those sensory experiences that always reminds me of my childhood and allows me to really appreciate my parents for rooting me to this land. Of course in Oregon there was plenty of rain and snow and wind and fog as well but being outdoors in all kinds of weather just adds to one's understanding and love of that place.

And now it is your turn to help your child know their special places in these unique Santa Cruz mountains where we live. With your family and friends revisit the field trips your class takes as well as our regular locations. Talk about what you find and hear and smell and touch and write down your discoveries in a journal to read at bedtime. Let your Mountain School experiences be the beginning of a mighty web that connects you to our earth and gives you strength to embrace all the challenges that lie ahead.

Love, Teacher Marie ■

The Beatles' "Child of Nature"

Submitted by Annette Rau, Editor



On the road to Rishikesh
I was dreaming more or less,
And the dream I had was true
Yes, the dream I had was true

I'm just a child of nature
I don't need much to set me free
I'm just child of nature
I'm one of nature's children

Sunlight shining in your eyes
As I face the desert skies
And my thoughts return to home
Yes, my thoughts return to home

I'm just a child of nature
I don't need much to set me free
I'm just a child of nature
I'm one of nature's children

Underneath the mountain ranges
Where the wind that never changes
Touch the windows of my soul
Touch the windows of my soul

I'm just a child of nature
I don't need much to set me free
I'm just a child of nature
I'm one of nature's children ■

New Funding Challenges Ahead

By Jill Hansen, Board Chair

I wish I had better news, but I want to provide everyone with an update on our adult education funding. As you're already aware, our funding for the 2009/2010 school year was reduced and absorbed by the school without any impact to families this year. Unfortunately, we were just informed that the state is completely eliminating funding for adult education programs in our district for the 2010/2011 school year. This means that effective July 2010, our preschool program will need to be completely self-funded. The money we receive from adult education pays for our head teachers' salaries and is approximately 25% (or \$62,000+) of our combined annual budget.

We are hopeful to find creative solutions that will keep us from having to significantly raise tuition to bridge this gap for the 2010/2011 school year. We are currently 'crunching the numbers' and looking at other sources of funding. We are also evaluating all aspects of our program. If any of you have creative ideas, please feel free to contact Jane K or myself.

Since we feel our core values are important and need to be preserved, we are putting together a survey to understand which portions of our program are most important to you. We will ask you to rate different attributes of the program, rate how much (if any) of a tuition increase you would find palatable, etc. There has also been the suggestion that current families and alum write letters regarding the value they receive from being part of our Mt. School community. Please take the time to respond when you see the survey.

In the meantime, we are meeting with other preschools who have had their funding cut, investigating other preschools to better understand the tuition rate for other parent participatory preschools, speaking with CPAs and other financial advisors and exploring grants. Jane and I will be meeting with the LGS rec department next month, and as more information becomes available I will keep you posted.

I want to emphasize that we do not want to compromise the core values & success of our school, but we will have to make changes and/or increase tuition. We are assuming this cut is going to be in place for several years, but of course it is impossible to predict how long our state's current funding crisis will continue.

Thank you all for your support and don't forget to fill out that survey when you receive it. ■

Holiday Angels

By Jean Lattie, Community Service Chair

Holiday Angel drive Nov 16th - Dec 12th

The holidays are upon us. Families are busy in the hustle and bustle this time of year we often forget to stop and think about those families less fortunate.

Mt School has a great tradition of holding an annual giving program during the Holidays. The Christmas Project provides holiday wishes to local migrant labor camps in the Watsonville area. Last year the program was able to deliver gifts to 380 families including over 1600 children. Mt School will have 60 Angels to fulfill wishes for this year.

If your family would like to participate in this giving program there are many ways to get involved:

1. There will be Holiday Angels displayed in the school house for families to pick and fill the child's holiday wish.
2. In addition to Holiday Angels, we will be accepting gently used stuffed animals.
3. Cash donations are also welcomed and may be made out to the "Christmas Project"

The Angels will be in the schoolhouse beginning November 16th and all donations must be turned into the schoolhouse by December 12th.

Thank you for your interest in this program. ■



Last Fairy Mother in the Kitchen

By Alis Whitman, 4/5s, <http://www.bellespring.com/blog>

The point at which I had just about lost my patience with the suburbs was about the same time I reached for “Last Child in the Woods” by Richard Louv <<http://richardlouv.com/>>. Starting to read the book and listening to Richard Louv speak could not have happened at a better time.

When we moved from the mountains to the suburbs I thought it would be fine. I figured we would continue our routine of outdoor adventures; they would just be a little farther from our home. Well, by the time Seth goes for three days of Mountain school, and mobile time with dad he is fairly adventured out. When he spends time here at the house with me all he wants to do is relax, play and stay out of the car!

In the meantime I am suffering from severe nature deficit disorder (I only get to go to Mountain school one day a week ;-). When we lived in the mountains all I had to do was walk out the door for a healing breath of fresh air. The solace of forest and field was readily available all the time. In Mountain View (there is no view of mountains from our house) I walk out the door and am instantly bombarded with the roar of three different highways. Not to mention the distinct traffic noise from the busy street that borders our fence. The sky is smoggy, and although this lot is almost an acre of space, and there are some amazing old oaks and other trees in the yard, there is little sense of wilderness.

Since I am unable to get out and adventure with Seth as much as I'd like, I've had to find a compromise. I had to find an outdoor destination in the yard that could pinch hit as “wilderness”. We have several outdoor destinations in our yard, the first and most obvious being the “kid ghetto”. This is the area of the yard that houses the play structure, sand box, playhouse and dirt pile, all littered in plastic toys and vehicles, in various states of decay. The kids love it, but it looks like Target meets the dump covered in sidewalk chalk. The second destination is the vegetable garden. This is a magical place, but it is also a working place, a place where Seth is a caretaker, and like it or not is surrounded by thinking and “structure”. There are several tween places that we use but don't necessarily inhabit, like the fairy garden or the tree forts (adults are not allowed in the overgrown shrubs that serve as “base”). However, there is one wild place in the yard that fit the bill to a t, that place is the Fairy Kitchen.

The Fairy Kitchen was aptly named by Lily After our egg hunt last spring Lily spent at least an hour playing by herself on a patch of Bermuda grass, a little spit of quazi lawn wedged between some Lamb's Tongue and an abandoned rock garden. Lily plopped down in perhaps the most interesting spot in the yard and started playing house. When Geoff asked her what she was doing she explained that she was in “the Fairy Kitchen”.

Since it's naming, the Fairy Kitchen has been a place, but not a destination. I realized I had to change this, so I took an active role in playing there myself. I set out little metal “kitchen” objects and began to set up house. Seth soon caught on, and now we have Fairy Kitchen fever! We go out there at least once a day. At first it was me suggesting we spend time there, but now Seth initiates visits himself.

He seems to sense when I get fussy or distracted in the house and marches us out to the Fairy Kitchen. If we are there and I am preoccupied with something else, he makes me stay in the kitchen and work it out. He obviously senses that the Fairy Kitchen is a meditative place for me and that he should see to it that I self medicate wither I like it or not.

The thing I like about the Fairy Kitchen is that it always leads to something exciting. After we both putz around in the kitchen for a while we get good ideas. 99% of the time the ideas are outdoor related. It is almost as if spending time in the Fairy Kitchen is a “practice” of sorts. Something that we do to connect to nature, gather our wits and focus on one another. Rearing a child seems to involve lots of daily practice that fosters patience and reveals joy. I'm sure it's the same for Seth, because growing up is not an easy job. My memories of growing up were always difficult between 4 walls and blissful without.

Richard Louv says that nature is a gift that if given to a child may allow the child to do something profound for the world in return. It occurred to me early on in our Fairy Kitchen explorations that a gift of nature was given to me. I was often left with my Grandmother Marge who lived on the loveliest hillside on the Stanford Campus. My memories of these visits are full of wonder and magic. She let me play anywhere I wanted in the meandering gardens. She taught me how to suck nectar from the Vinca blossoms, pick geranium flowers, entice a sleeping cat into play and differentiate between jays. Grandma Marge was even kind enough to let me play house in her amazing succulent garden that lined the borders of the stairs to her front door. She taught me how to pick just one leaf at a time and replant it somewhere else to make a new plant – such a simple action, but such a profound gift.

I'm sure I have returned her gift to the world at large, and will continue to do so for my entire life. However, my job right now is to give the gift of intimacy with nature to my son. We are spending time in The Fairy Kitchen to center ourselves, “checking in” with the earth every day. Stopping and taking the time to make sense of our intentions for the day, the week and the rest of our lives. ■



Upcoming Adult Education Events

By Lisa Liddle and Jamie Fleming, Programs Co-Chairs

The following are descriptions of our first semester mini-courses and General Meeting. Parents are required to attend at least one mini-course and the General Meeting per semester. No need to sign up with exception for Stick Horses and getting your ticket for the "Stronger, Faster, Smarter" talk ** see below. Please make note of the locations as they differ depending on the course:

"Beyond Sibling Rivalry"

By Erica Pelavin, L.C.S.W., PH.D on 11/16 (Mon.) 7-9pm at LGHS , Rm. 507

In this workshop parents will discover the reasons for sibling quarrels and learn techniques to help children learn to minimize and resolve conflicts. Discover when and how to become a successful mediator and help your children develop the skills they need to become cooperative, caring and compassionate.

Erica Pelavin, L.C.S.W., PH.D. , is a family therapist and organizational psychologist specializing in relationship issues and worklife integration. A believer in individual and family resilience, she approaches her client's family and school challenges from a strength based perspective.

Stick Horse Creation

With Teachers Karyn & Jan on 11/18 (Wed.) 7-9pm at the Schoolhouse

Come share in a Mountain School tradition! You will make a beloved stick sock horse to give to your child. They will forever cherish your creation and you will have fun sharing the night with other parents and our wonderful Teachers Karyn and Jan. Some supplies will be provided and an email will be sent to all who RSVP to let you know what materials you will need to bring with you.

** To plan supplies, please email jaimefleming@aol.com to RSVP **

"Stronger, Faster, Smarter: The Amazing Science of Exercise and the Brain"

By Dr. John Ratey on 11/19 (Thurs.) 7-9pm at Harker Upper School, Nichols Hall, 500 Saratoga Ave., San Jose

Would you like to improve motivation and performance at home, in the classroom and at the office? How about reduce feelings of stress, sharpen your focus and improve your mood? Harvard psychiatrist Dr. John Ratey will redefine the concept of "peak performance" with new research that illustrates how exercise actually sparks the growth of new brain cells and leads to greater physical and mental well-being. He'll present persua-

sive evidence that certain forms of exercise may be the best defense we have against ADHD, substance abuse, mood swings and the effects of aging. Don't miss this chance to hear about cutting-edge science and the ways it may be applied to help you and your family become smarter and happier.

Dr. Ratey is a clinical psychiatrist and an associate professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. He is the author or co-author of eight books, including *Driven to Distraction* and *A User's Guide to the Brain*. He is a national expert in the areas of autism, ADHD and the mind-body connection. His recent book, *SPARK: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*, is an urgent call to action for parents, educators and professionals.

** You will need to pick up a special ticket at the Schoolhouse in order to attend the talk at no charge. Tickets will be available starting 11/9/09** ■

Goodbyes

By Jane Krejci, Director

There are many times we say 'good-bye' - to our spouse going off to work, to our children going off to school, to our parents following a visit, to a friend moving away. Most of the time the separation is temporary; sometimes it is forever. One family had a tradition when saying good-bye:

"I love you and I wish you enough."

I wish you enough sun to keep your attitude bright.

I wish you enough rain to appreciate the sun more.

I wish you enough happiness to keep your spirit alive.

I wish you enough pain so that the smallest joys in life appear much bigger.

I wish you enough gain to satisfy your wanting.

I wish you enough loss to appreciate all that you possess.

I wish you enough hellos to get you through the final good-bye.

I wish you all enough! jk

Goodbye Superb Herb:

When I wrote about the 'forever good-bye,' I thought of Herb Quon who was in hospice. The next day I learned of his death. He was a great friend of Mountain School; many children remember when he brought in amphibians and shared his love of animals and nature. He was a loving husband to Ann - a wonderful father to Tia and Zoe - a gifted teacher - a fun and funny guy -and always an upbeat and positive person. Herb will be sorely missed. So although we are saying 'good-bye,' he will always be in our hearts - as will be Ann, Tia and Zoe ■



Raise Children, Not Flowers!

By Jack Canfield, The Huffington Post Oct. 2009

Submitted by Jen Clark:

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I'll never forget the story of David, my next door neighbor a while back, who taught me a great lesson one morning as I watched him trying to teach his seven-year-old son how to push the gas-powered lawn mower around the yard. As he was showing him how to turn the mower around at the end of the lawn, his wife Jan called to him to ask a question. When David turned to answer the question, Kelly pushed the lawn mower right through the flower bed at the edge of the lawn--leaving a two-foot wide path leveled to the ground!

David was not happy about this. As soon as he saw what had happened, he began to lose control. David had put a lot of time and effort into making those flower beds the envy of the neighborhood. The moment his voice climbed higher in a semi-rage toward poor Kelly, Jan walked quickly over to him, put her hand on his shoulder and said, "David, please remember...we're raising children, not flowers!"

The moral of this story couldn't be more important today. Each one of us is enduring more stress as we face a recession and a deep financial shakeup that has no end in sight. During times like these it's essential for us parents to remember what our priorities are. Our kids and their self-esteem are more important than any physical object they might break or destroy. The window pane shattered by a mishit baseball, a lamp knocked over by a careless child, or a plate dropped in the kitchen are already broken. The flowers are already dead. All of these things are replaceable; our children are not. We must remember not to add to the destruction by breaking a child's spirit and deadening their sense of aliveness.

Words, especially when yelled in anger, can be very damaging to a child's self-confidence. The child probably already feels bad enough just from seeing the consequences of his or her behavior. Our sons and daughters don't need more guilt and self-doubt heaped upon their already wounded egos. If anything, they need to be reminded that we all make mistakes throughout our life. (Here's an exercise to try: the next time you feel like raising your voice to one of your kids, stop and think about the last time you made a mistake. It probably wasn't too long ago, and you really don't care to be yelled at for that right now.)

More recently, I was buying some new clothes in a men's store and the owner and I started talking about parenting. He told me that while he and his wife and seven-year-old daughter were out at a restaurant for dinner, his daughter knocked over her water glass. It spilled everywhere and messed up her mother's dress as the water flowed over the edge near her seat. After the water was cleaned up without any recriminating remarks from her parents, she looked up and said, "You know, I really want to thank you guys for not being like other parents. Most of my friends' parents would have yelled at them and given them

a lecture about paying more attention. Thanks for not doing that!"

Once, when I was having dinner with some friends, a similar incident happened. Their five-year-old son knocked over a glass of milk at the dinner table. When they immediately started in on him, I knocked my glass over, too. When I started to explain how I still knock things over even as an adult, the boy started to beam and the parents seemingly got the message and backed off. How easy it is to forget that we are all still learning.

One of the best stories I've ever heard about "spilt milk" and the lessons of making a mess comes from a famous research scientist who made several very important medical breakthroughs. A newspaper reporter once asked him why he thought he was able to be so much more creative than the average person. What set him so far apart from others?

He responded that, in his opinion, it all came from an experience with his mother, which occurred when he was about two years old. He had been trying to remove a bottle of milk from the refrigerator, when he lost his grip on the slippery bottle and it fell, spilling its contents all over the kitchen floor--a veritable sea of milk! (Thankfully, no glass shattered, but the milk kept flowing out like a river.)

When his mother came into the kitchen, instead of yelling at him, giving him a lecture, or punishing him, she said, "Robert, what a great and wonderful mess you have made! I have rarely seen such a huge puddle of milk. Well, the damage has already been done. Would you like to get down and play in the milk for a few minutes before we clean it up?"

Indeed, he did. After a few minutes his mother said, "You know, Robert, whenever you make a mess like this, eventually you have to clean it up, and restore everything to its proper order. So, how would you like to do that? We could use a sponge, a towel or a mop. What do you prefer?" He chose the sponge and together they cleaned up the spilled milk.

His mother then said, "You know what we have here is a failed experiment in how to effectively carry a big milk bottle with two tiny hands. Let's go out in the back yard and fill the bottle with water and see if you can discover a way to carry it without dropping it." The little boy learned that if he grasped the bottle at the top near the lip with both hands, he could carry it without dropping it. What a wonderful lesson!

This renowned scientist then remarked that it was at that moment he knew he didn't need to be afraid to make mistakes. Instead he learned that mistakes were just opportunities for learning something new, which is, after all, what scientific experiments are all about. They are simply that--just experiments to see what happens. Even if the experiment "doesn't work," we usually learn something valuable from it.

Continued on p.7

Raise Children, Not Flowers!

(Continued from p. 6)

Wouldn't it be great if all parents responded the same way Robert's mother responded to him? After all, why do we have that phrase, "Don't cry over a little spilt milk." It truly is no big deal. We need to remember that we're raising capable, confident kids--not shiny linoleum floors.

One last story which illustrates the application of this attitude in an adult context was told by Paul Harvey on the radio several years back. A young woman motorist was driving home from work when she snagged her fender on the bumper of another car. She was in tears as she explained that it was a new car, only a few days from the showroom. How was she ever going to explain the damaged car to her husband?

The driver of the other car was sympathetic, but explained that they must note each others license numbers and registration numbers. As the young woman reached into a large brown envelope to retrieve the documents, a piece of paper fell out. In a heavy masculine scrawl were these words: "In case of accident . . . remember, honey, it's you I love, not the car!"

Let's remember that our children's spirits are more important than any material things. When we do, self-esteem and love blossoms and grows more beautifully than any bed of flowers ever could.

I'll end this by reminding you that parenting during acutely stressful time periods adds another element to the job that can be hard to prepare for. We are bogged down by our own emotions and woes such that the slightest mishap by one of our kids will send us over the edge. That said, our children can act as great buffers to that stress. They may not have a handle on all that's going on in the world, nor understand the decisions we have to make as parents to ensure the health and security of our families, but surely you can agree that the joy they bring to our lives outshines so much of that stress. Let them act as children--let them make mistakes and learn from them. After all, it's those same mistakes we made growing up that allowed us to mature into thoughtful, productive, and compassionate adults. And remember, you are raising children, not flowers!

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Jack Canfield is America's #1 Success Coach, co-founder of the billion-dollar Chicken Soup for the Soul brand, and a leading authority on Peak Performance. If you're ready to be more accomplished and have more fun in all that you do, get your FREE success tips from Jack Canfield now at: www.FreeSuccessPrinciples.com.

Read more at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jack-canfield/raise-children-not-flower_b_268607.html ■

Thankful

By Jane Krejci, Director

I am THANKFUL for...

**Teachers who are supportive of children, parents - and me.
Hardworking and competent Board members.**

An expanded play yard.

Nutritious cooking projects.

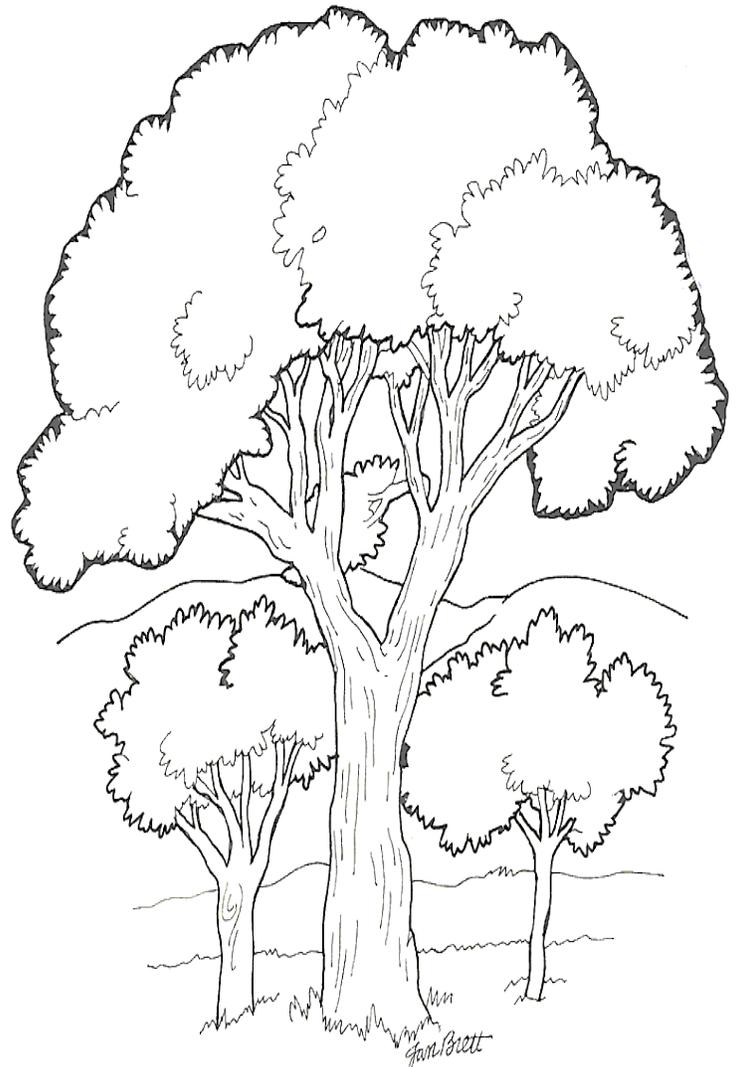
Kids who are eager and curious.

Fathers and mothers who do so much.

Useful ideas for improving our school.

Luscious food and plants in our garden.

and, of course, our new zip line!



Children's Books: feelings/emotions

By Jane Krejci, Director



A nice follow-up to the topic of our General Meeting...

Cannon, Jenell, **Stellaluna**

Story of bat raised by birds. Same / different.

Cheltenham School Kindergartners, **We Are All Alike...We Are All Different**

Ways we are alike / different.

Couric, Katie, **The Brand New Kid**

Curtis, Jamie Lee Curtis, **Today I Feel Silly and Other Moods**

Freyman, Saxton & Elffers, Joost, **How Are You Peeling? Foods with Moods**

Beautiful photographs of real food with 'faces.'

Fox, Mem, **Whoever You Are**

Children all over the world - different houses, schools, foods, clothes, paths

Giles, Andrea, **Giraffes Can't Dance**

We can all dance; we just have to find our own kind of music. Everyone is unique.

Intrater, Roberta Grobel, **Two Eyes, a Nose and A Mouth**

Photographs and simple text of wide variety of peoples.

Katz, Bobbi, **Could We Be Friends?**

Book of poems; best one is "Kids" for Green Circle.

Katz, Karen, **The Colors of Us**

Everyone has their own special color.

Kissinger, Katie, **All the Colors We Are**

Pictures and text regarding differences.

Lallie, Judy, **I Like Being ME**

Poems about feelings and getting along.

Lionni, Leo, **It's Mine**

Story of three frogs and how it went from 'mine' to 'ours.'

Moss, Marissa, **Regina's Big Mistake**

Everyone makes mistakes.

Parr, Todd, **It's Okay to Be Different**

Childlike drawings - fun - celebrates differences.

Parr, Todd, **The Peace Book**

Childlike drawings - title describes it all - practical ideas.

Pfister, Marcus, **The Rainbow Fish**

The most beautiful fish is lonely until he share his 'scales' with other fish.

Raschka, Chris, **Yo, Yes**

One boy reaching out to another; they become friends.

Reider, Katja & VonRoehl, Angela, **Snail Started It**

Snail criticizes pig, who ridicules rabbit, etc....and when it comes full circle, everyone apologizes. Okay to be who you are.

Silverman, Erica, **Don't Fidget a Feather!**

Duck and Gander are in competition with each other, until their lives are at stake.

Silverman, Ilyssa, **It Feels Good to Be Let In**

What it feels like to be left out; how to join in the play, how to invite others in.

Spier, Peter, **People**

How people are different - yet the same.

Walker, Alice, **Why War is Never a Good Idea**

A poem on the wanton devastation of war - what happens to environment, animals, people. ■

Parties at the Schoolhouse

By Jane Dodge, Interim Party Coordinator

Mountain School is now offering parties at the Schoolhouse.

If you were in attendance during the exciting Live Auction portion of the annual fundraiser last March, you might remember a new addition to the prizes: a chance to host a children's party at our beloved schoolhouse.

The Hansen family was the highest bidder, and a few months later they hosted their daughter Nicole's party at the Schoolhouse and its grounds. The little guests loved playing all over the grounds, dressing up in costume, and having cake in the garden.

The prize was a gift from that year's 4/5s class, who had asked the school for permission to offer a party. Based on feedback from the Hansen family and others, the board decided to look into the possibility of offering the grounds for parties as a fundraising opportunity for the school.

At the Nov. 3rd board meeting, the motion was passed to offer school parties on a trial basis for Sundays in the 2009-2010 school year. Jane Dodge was appointed interim Party Coordinator, who will schedule the parties and answer questions with potential hosts.

Parties are open to any currently enrolled families, for a total cost of \$300. Hosts and guests are welcome to use the indoor and outdoor toys, books, and costumes but we request that they not use the carpentry materials or art supplies and that they please leave our pets undisturbed. For information or to book a party, please contact parties@lgsons.com . ■

For Some Parents, Shouting Is the New Spanking

By HILARY STOUT, The New York Times, Published October 21, 2009; Submitted by Annette Rau, Editor

JACKIE KLEIN is a devoted mother of two little boys in the suburbs of Portland, Ore. She spends hours ferrying them to soccer and Cub Scouts. She reads child-development books. She can emulate one of those pitch-perfect calm maternal tones to warn, "You're making bad choices" when, say, someone doesn't want to brush his teeth.

That is 90 percent of the time. Then there is the other 10 percent, when, she admits, "I have become totally frustrated and lost control of myself."

It can happen during weeks and weeks and weeks of no camp in the summer, or at the end of a long day at home — just as adult peace is within her grasp — when the 7- or 9-year-old won't go to sleep.

And then she yells.

"This is ridiculous! I've been doing things all day for you!"

Many in today's pregnancy-flaunting, soccer-cheering, organic-snack-proffering generation of parents would never spank their children. We congratulate our toddlers for blowing their nose ("Good job!"), we friend our teenagers (literally and virtually), we spend hours teaching our elementary-school offspring how to understand their feelings. But, incongruously and with regularity, this is a generation that yells.

"I've worked with thousands of parents and I can tell you, without question, that screaming is the new spanking," said Amy McCready, the founder of Positive Parenting Solutions, which teaches parenting skills in classes, individual coaching sessions and an online course. "This is so the issue right now. As parents understand that it's not socially acceptable to spank children, they are at a loss for what they can do. They resort to reminding, nagging, timeout, counting 1-2-3 and quickly realize that those strategies don't work to change behavior. In the absence of tools that really work, they feel frustrated and angry and raise their voice. They feel guilty afterward, and the whole cycle begins again."

Amy Wilson, a writer and actress in Manhattan, used to give up shopping for Lent. That was before she had children, now ages 6, 5 and 2. This year she gave up yelling. Or tried to. "It didn't really work," she said, "but I definitely yelled less."

Ms. Wilson has written a humorous autobiographical book about parenting, to be published next year, called "When Did I Get Like This?" An entire chapter is devoted to her personal efforts to curtail her yelling.

A ONE-WOMAN show, "Mother Load," which she wrote and performed Off Broadway and will take on tour for the second time next year, opens with a yelling scene that draws laughs and includes the line "I have had it with looking for puppy" in a high-decibel lament that rings true to anyone who has searched for a favorite stuffed animal for the seventh time in a day.

Familial screamers have long been a beloved part of American pop culture, from the Costanzas of "Seinfeld" back to the Goldbergs of radio and early television, but they didn't yell at small children. And though previous generations of parents may have yelled in real life — Dr. Spock called shouting "inevitable from time to time" — this generation of parents seems to be uniquely troubled by their own outbursts.

"My name is Francesca Castagnoli and I am a screamer," began a post on Motherblogger.net earlier this year. "Admitting I'm a mom that screams, shouts and loses it in front her kids feels like I'm revealing a dark family secret."

"It's not kind," said Ms. Klein in Oregon. "When I'm done I feel awful."

To research their book "Mommy Guilt: Learn to Worry Less, Focus on What Matters Most, and Raise Happier Kids," the three authors, Devra Renner, Aviva Pflock and Julie Bort, commissioned a survey of 1,300 parents across the country to determine sources of parental guilt. Two-thirds of respondents named yelling — not working or spanking or missing a school event — as their biggest guilt inducer.

"What blew us away about that is that the one thing you really have ultimate control over is the tone of your voice," said Ms. Pflock, a child development specialist.

Parental yelling today may be partly a releasing of stress for multitasking, overachieving adults, parenting experts say.

"Yelling is done when parents feel irritable and anxious," said Harold S. Koplewicz, the founder of the New York University Child Study Center. "It can be as simple as 'I'm overwhelmed, I'm running late for work, I had a fight with my wife, I have a project due — and my son left his homework upstairs.'"

Numerous studies exist on the effect of corporal punishment on children. A new one came out just last month. Led by a researcher at Duke University's Center for Child and Family Policy, the study concluded that spanking children when they are very young (1-year-old) can slow their intellectual development and lead to aggressive behavior as they grow older. But there is far less data on the more common habit of shouting and screaming in families.

One study that did take a look at the topic — a paper on the "psychological aggression by American parents" published in the Journal of Marriage and Family in 2003 — found that parental yelling was a near-universal occurrence. Of 991 families interviewed, in 88 percent of them a parent acknowledged

Continued on p.10

For Some Parents, Shouting Is the New Spanking

(Continued from p.9)

shouting, screaming or yelling at the kids at least once (though it didn't specify how many did it more often) in the previous year.

"We are so accustomed to this that we just think parents get carried away and that it's not harmful," said one of the study's lead authors, Murray A. Straus, a sociologist who is a director of the Family Research Laboratory at the University of New Hampshire. "But it affects a child. If someone yelled at you at work, you'd find that pretty jarring. We don't apply that standard to children."

Psychologists and psychiatrists generally say yelling should be avoided. It's at best ineffective (the more you do it the more the child tunes it out) and at worse damaging to a child's sense of well-being and self-esteem.

"It isn't the yelling per se that's going to make a difference, it's how the yelling is interpreted,"

"It isn't the yelling per se that's going to make a difference, it's how the yelling is interpreted," said Ronald P. Rohner, director of the Ronald and Nancy Rohner Center for the Study of Interpersonal Acceptance and Rejection at the University of Connecticut. If a parent is simply loud, he says, the effect is minimal. But if the tone connotes anger, insult or sarcasm, it can be perceived as a sign of rejection.

Professor Rohner noted that while spanking is considered taboo by the major medical and psychological associations, there are still some religious and conservative groups who support it as an effective disciplinary tool, believing that the Bible explicitly allows it.

But, he said, "There is no group of Americans that advocate yelling as a parenting style."

"My bottom-line recommendation is don't yell," he said. "It is a risk factor for a family."

Easier said than done. Strategies to stop yelling abound. Ms. Klein said she has a friend who gives herself a timeout by going into another room when she feels a scream coming on.

Experts suggest figuring out ways to prevent situations that make you most prone to yell. If forgotten homework sends you into the stratosphere, make sure the children have their

books and notebooks packed and waiting by the door before they go to bed. If you're stressed and hungry after a long day at the office, make sure you grab something to eat in the kitchen before you tackle, say, a brewing disagreement over Legos.



Still, there are those moments.

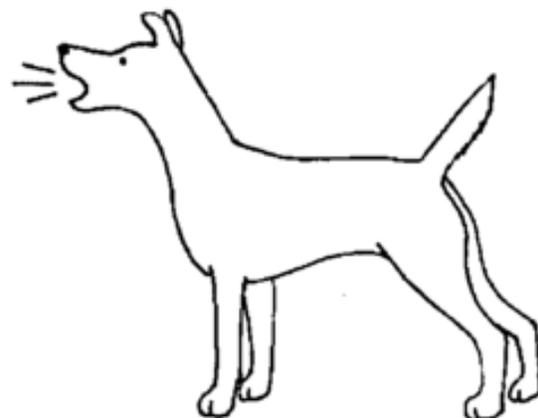
"I'd like to think that most of the time we have a good interaction based on reason," Lena Merrill said of her 4-year-old daughter, whom she has never spanked. But then there are the times when "she's done something like poured milk on the floor or ripped a page out of a book," Ms. Merrill said. "I just lose it."

Usually, she says, she shouts something like, "Why did you do that? Why would you do that?"

"It's phrased like a question to make her think, but the tone scares her," Ms. Merrill said.

Still, Ms. Merrill, a travel consultant in Rutherford, N.J., finds that the threat of yelling can be a convenient stick, much the way the threat of a spanking was in her childhood. Even her husband has taken to using it to encourage good behavior, she said, issuing the warning:

"Don't make mommy mad." ■



Only Zipper should bark!

The eScrip Number Crunch

By Yumi Hiroshima, Fundraising

It is often difficult for me to get a clear picture of my spending unless I see it written down on paper in black and white. Whether it's in the format of a table marking all of my monthly transactions, a grid or a simple list from a credit card statement, once it's all there, right in front of me, it becomes quite shocking just how much I can spend without realizing it!

Now, just think if some of that spending also went towards benefiting our school? Let me give you an example of just how much you could contribute towards our school without any effort just by registering with eScrip. I thought that seeing the numbers crunched into a table would best prove my point.

The table below illustrates the potential monthly and annual earnings that a family of four can realistically generate by shopping at eScrip merchants.

Program Type:	Based on:	Monthly:	Annually:
Grocery (1.5% contrib)	\$400/month	\$6.00	\$72.00
Credit/Debit card merchants (2%)	\$100/month	\$2.00	\$24.00
Online Mall (5%)	\$10/month	\$0.50	\$6.00
Total for one family		\$8.50	\$102.00

This table illustrates the potential earnings our school can generate based on 100 registered eScrip supporters

Earning Potential		# of Supporters:	100
Program Type	A family of four	Group Potential Earnings	
	Based on	Monthly:	Annually:
Grocery:	\$400/month	\$600	\$7,200
Credit/Debit card merchants	\$100/month	\$200	\$2,400
Online Mall	\$10/month	\$50	\$600
Total Earning Potential for 100 Supporters		\$850	\$10,200

Now you see it in black and white! The numbers have been crunched and you can see that our school has the potential of earning over \$10,000 annually if 100 families participate in eScrip. Last year, I'm sorry to say, we only earned about 10% of this potential number! Mountain School has well over 100 families enrolled at our school, yet only 30% have signed up with eScrip. If we encourage other family members, such as grandparents, friends and alumni to participate in this simple and secure program our earning potential would increase significantly.

So, now that we've crunched the numbers, let's get cracking! ■

Pajama Drive Ends Soon

By Jean Lattie, Community Service Chair

Pajama Program drive ends Nov 15th.

Thank you all for supporting our first community service drive of the year. The Pajama program provides new pajamas and books to needy children. Our donations will be distributed to children in the local area. Some of those include:

Children's Shelter of Santa Clara County
 Future Families (located throughout Santa Clara County)
 Rebekah's Children's Services (located in Gilroy)
 Santa Cruz County Family & Children's Services
 Pajaro Valley Shelter (located in Watsonville)
 Rebele Family Shelter (located in Santa Cruz)
 Next Door Solutions to Domestic Violence (located in San Jose)



I asked April Fuchs-Smith the President of the Northern CA Chapter of the Pajama Program, why new PJ's? April provided me one woman's story. "There was a little girl who spent a significant amount of time at a children's shelter here in San Jose. She grew up to be a very successful business woman. Now, every year during the holidays she donates around 20 pairs of PJ's to the shelter. The reason it struck me is because pajamas probably do not seem like a big deal to most of us; but for that little growing up in the shelter, she missed the cozy, new soft PJ's so much in her life. Now as a successful adult, the way she chooses to continue giving back to the kids is by giving pajamas." ■

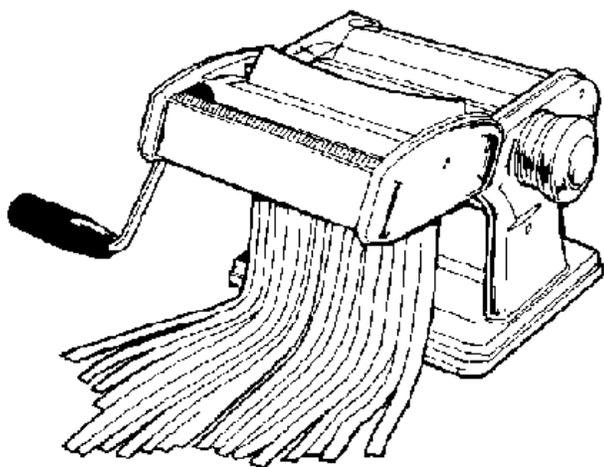
Needed/ Wanted:

By Jane Krejci, Director

Pasta machines. If you have one to donate, please contact Teacher Jane (janekrejci1@verizon.net)

Large plastic pots or tubs (18" ± diameter) for planting potatoes in straw. We would like one for each class (7). If you have an extra one, please deliver to garden.

Thanks!



Editor's Notes

By Annette Rau, Newsletter Editor/Publisher

Thanks to all of you, and especially Jane Krejci, for your contributions to this issue of *The Observatory*.



The **deadline** for the next issue of the newsletter is **January 20, 2010**. Please send me your submissions, in the body of your email or as a Word doc attachment, with the subject heading "Newsletter" to newsletter@lgsos.com.

We'd love to hear from you... Have something you'd like to share with our Mountain School community? Please don't hesitate to contribute your **ideas, articles, thoughts, poems, recipes, events, letters, or news items**. All submissions are most welcome.

Enjoy reading! ■

Mark your Calendars!

See newsletter articles for further details regarding each of the below events:

- **Nov 15** Turkey Trot (article p.1)
- **Nov 15** Pajama Drive ends (article p.2)
- **Nov 16** Mini Course (article p.5)
- **Nov 16 - Dec 12** Holiday Angel Drive (article p.3)
- **Nov 18** Mini Course (article p.5)
- **Nov 19** Mini Course (article p.5)
- **Dec 11** Scrip 2nd due date (article p. 11) ■

