

THE OBSERVATORY

“It is good to realize that if love and peace can prevail on earth, and if we can teach our children to honor nature's gifts, the joys and beauties of the outdoors will be here forever.” - Jimmy Carter

Calendar Highlights

APR 19 MiniCourse: Using Stories to Overcome Struggles by Mindy Dirkes. 7pm Schoolhouse <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f094faba828a0fa7-using>

APR 21 Mountain School Survey deadline extended <https://forms.zohopublic.com/virtualoffice3055/form/20162017/formperma/m2H49K5FCGFJ68FaDBA61104a>

APR 24 May Fair Registration deadline. This is a mandatory fundraising requirement to purchase a "Family of Four Registration" (if you plan to attend or not). Preregistration required for admission. <https://lgsons.ejoinme.org/.../MayF.../tabid/862182/Default.aspx>

APR 25 MiniCourse: Best Preschool Books for Summer by Valerie Lewis. 7pm Hickleebee's <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f094faba828a0fa7-summer1>

APR 26 MiniCourse: Developmentally Appropriate toys by Teacher Jane. 7pm Schoolhouse <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f094faba828a0fa7-toytalk>

APR 27 MiniCourse: DIY Personal Care Products by Adrienne Cox, 7pm Schoolhouse <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f094faba828a0fa7-diynatural>

APR 30 May Fair + Buy-A-Spots Open

MAY 5-7 Spring Camping Trip

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A NOTE FROM LESLIE

Dear Mountain Schoolers,

I had coffee with a friend this morning who teaches at a private high school that has an alliance with Challenge Success (<http://www.challengesuccess.org/>). We got to talking about how many teens are not developing the skills they will need to build a life. In their pursuit of “building a resume” for college acceptance, and how parents can sometimes unwittingly contribute to this by smoothing out all the bumps in the road to let their children focus on what’s important, i.e., the resume. But what if the *bumps* are really what’s important? Knowing how to schedule your work so you can still meet your obligations to your family—walking the dog, washing your clothes, helping prepare a meal; taking time out to visit a sick grandparent; helping another student who didn’t understand the assignment; taking on a part-time job and responsibility for helping with expenses. The bumps build character. As my friend described the initiative her school will undertake this summer to refine their core objectives, I kept thinking about how these same ideas apply at Mountain School.

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Make the Ordinary Come Alive

From The Parent's Tao Te Ching

by William Martin

Do not ask your children to strive for extraordinary lives.

Such striving may seem admirable, but it is a way of foolishness.

Help them instead to find the wonder and the marvel of an ordinary life.

Show them the joy of taking tomatoes, apples and pears.

Show them how to cry when pets and people die.

Show them the infinite pleasure in the touch of a hand.

And make the ordinary come alive for them.

The extraordinary will take care of itself.

You will have to constantly contend with the pressure for ever more, and ever bigger, that culture seeks to impose on your children and you.

It takes courage and discipline to go slow, live simply and see clearly.

But the rewards are great.

What ordinary thing can you do together today?

(continued from Page 1)

Resilience. Resilience is picking yourself up after a fall, taking a deep breath, checking to see if you are hurt, accepting the comfort or help you need and then trying again. It's finding a different friend to play with if your friend is busy with someone else. It's not letting a little rain spoil your day by the creek.

Leadership. Leadership is demonstrating through your actions how to care for a friend who has been hurt. It's listening for the cooking bell or other prompt and coming to cooking or circle time when the teacher asks and bringing your friends with you. It is standing up to someone who wants to exclude another child and saying that you want to play with both friends.

Wellness. Hiking, climbing and playing tag all contribute to wellness as does taking a deep breath when one is upset or learning to identify the other feelings that are hiding behind being angry. Lying back and looking up at a redwood, watching clouds move across the sky, listening to the birds talking to each other or the creek burbling along can also bring a sense of well being. Discovering the pleasures of fresh, wholesome food at cooking time lets children see how their bodies feel when they make good food choices.

Peak experience. These are milestones that form character, help a child find out who they are. Learning to care for living beings by holding a baby chick. Discovering one's strength and bravery by climbing the bunny hill for the first time. Experiencing tenacity by finally catching a chicken. Understanding how good it feels to be a friend by making room for one more friend to join the game.

It might all seem like play, but the children are building a foundation for everything that will come later. As you think back on the last eight months, what has your child discovered this year? What have you discovered?

With summer right around the corner, I'd like to encourage you to make the most of ordinary moments...

Love,

Teacher Leslie





**FAMILY BBQ &
FUNDRAISER**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 30, 2017
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM**

THE SCHOOLHOUSE
Ticket Sales Open April 2nd

**Mark your calendars
and join us for the largest
all school event of the year!**

We will gather together at the
Schoolhouse to celebrate May and
all the gifts of Springtime.

Festivities include:

BBQ and country home cooking by our
very own alumni, Chef Jason Jillson

County fair games for the kids

Live auction of the class projects

Silent auction

Buy-a-Spots

Dances & music around the Maypole

Children's book walk

And so much more!

Teacher Profile

Lilo Campeau, Wednesday 2s

"Whatever landscape a child is exposed to early on, that will be the sort of gauze through which he or she will see all the world afterwards." -Wallace Stegner

I love this quote because it represents so much of what Mountain School brings to children and parents; Nature and Nurture. I grew up in Los Gatos an only child of two full time professionals. Books, stuffed animals indoors, and flocked animals in the garden, and a couple of real cats, were my earliest companions. I went to Mountain School (4/5s), Daves Avenue Elementary, Fisher Middle School, Los Gatos High School, Mills College (undergrad), Stanford University (MA in Ed) and now Santa Clara University (MA in Counseling Psychology/MFT Program). I was an exchange student twice in France (High School and Undergrad), and once at Wellesley in Massachusetts (for an undergrad semester). The year after I graduated from college (double majored in English Lit and French Studies), I worked as an English Language Assistant in a French Public High School (Lycee), followed by a couple years in San Francisco in a law firm where among other things I worked with a Coder, trouble shooting an early billing software program (1990-91). When I finished Stanford, I taught Middle School in San Francisco to kids from Bayview, Hunters Point and the Mission for three years, and married my kids' father along the way. My stepdaughter, Kathleen, was 4 when I married her dad, and she is about to give birth to my first grandchild. (Her husband is a Veteran and a sophomore at Northeastern, and she is a lawyer in Boston.) I stopped working for a couple years when I had my son, Aidan (now a junior at NYU), and have taught part time at Mountain School since he started the 3/4s class all those years ago, taking a hiatus when my youngest, Declan, was born. The boys, their father and I lived in Seoul, South Korea for a year for my then spouse's work. We had the time of our lives.



My youngest is still at home and will be a Freshman next year at LGHS. Two and a half years ago, Declan shifted from being the baby of a nuclear family of five, to an "only child" of a singlemom (who had been) teaching a class at Mt. School again, and enrolled full time in graduate school. Declan says he misses the time when our house was "shiny". Not all is challenge, however, for example, he is thrilled that his electronics time has increased dramatically as a result. I am thrilled to be focusing on my career for the first time in more than twenty years. I have no time to waste. I am lucky Declan is currently (and always was) a trooper. Fingers crossed as he moves into young adulthood.

Teaching the Wednesday Twos class at Mountain School is my passion; I mean this with all my heart. The best job on the face of the planet is one in which with warmth I get to help children learn about themselves, each other, nature, and the glory of questions and investigating answers. When my own schooling is done, I hope to work in a therapeutic setting with young children. My therapy practice will hopefully pay the bills, and allow me to continue teaching and learning at Mountain School as long as I am upright.

Despite all of the formal and informal education I've been lucky enough to have, my most treasured and daily valued learning has come from the mentoring of the Mountain School Teachers who taught my children, and who have taught me. The way in which they have modeled compassionate, patient, strong, inquiry based teaching will forever be an inspiration for me, both as a teacher and as a human being. And it's through them that I realized how much I learn from the children and you, parents, as you all work so hard to show up for your families and for each other.

Teacher Profile

Jeanne Cosby, Saturday Afternoon



“Are we forming children who are only capable of learning what is already known? Or should we try to develop creative and innovative minds, capable of discovery from the preschool age on, throughout life?” -Jean Piaget

Do we want more synchronous relationships that are respectful, responsive, and reciprocal interactions?

Hi, I am Jeanne Cosby, the Saturday Afternoon, multi-age class teacher. I grew up roaming the Berkeley hills, sailing on San Francisco Bay, living with a mother with whom I rode horses, a father who told stories and illustrated postcards sent home during his business trips, about mice and cats with names such as Elderberry and Steinmetz, and a brother who thankfully still lives nearby. I lived in England with my godparents when I was 12 and 13, in France for over a year after graduating from Colorado College (English and History), and in Japan for six months with my husband and children. I have travelled in much of western Europe and had short stays at various times in parts of India and Tibetan cultural areas.

Much of my educational philosophy and strong preference for learner initiated pedagogy comes from my experiences teaching and developing a humanities program at Sunnyvale High School; being in the Demonstration Infant Program at the Children’s Health Council in Palo Alto, California, observing with Tom Forrest, M.D. as Magda Gerber modeled how to respectfully interact with normal and at risk children in a play group setting; and being at Bing Nursery School, Stanford University, for ten years, as both a head teacher and a parent with our youngest, Theo. My M.A. in Human Development is from Pacific Oaks College.

As parents living in Palo Alto, it was a real disappointment that we couldn’t work out how to be in Mountain School with our three preschoolers, Michael, David, and Amanda, but I had two very memorable years at Mountain School with my granddaughter, Maddie. She is now a freshman at Saratoga High School, but I stayed as the Saturday Afternoon teacher, because we have such a nurturing and respectful community of teachers, parents, and children. I treasure the on-going opportunities to foster play; to model respect by being supportive and patient; to give children time and space to initiate things themselves; to ask questions, listen and learn from others, be they child or adult; to encourage children, parents, and teachers to speculate, to verbalize feelings and wants, to talk out differences. I think it’s so critical to healthy child development for parents and teachers to work with each other as we strive to interpret concepts such as conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, and wonder and to integrate our practices into our daily lives. Thank you, thank you, thank you very much!

Honoring Willys and Betty Peck in Saratoga a worthy idea

By SAL PIZARRO | spizarro@bayareanewsgroup.com

There's an effort underway in Saratoga to honor Betty and Willys Peck with a bench in Blaney Plaza featuring life-size sculptures of the couple. It's a wonderful way to commemorate the Pecks' contributions to the town for more than five decades.

Willys, who died in 2013, had a long career as a copy editor at the Mercury News, but he was best known in Saratoga as a historian who was passionate about preserving the town's history. Betty, who is now 95, was a longtime kindergarten teacher and the founder of the Saratoga Community Garden.

Sculptor Jerry Smith, a former mayor of Saratoga, has been enlisted to create the life-size bronze likenesses to accompany the "Blessing Bench" – in reference to the backyard bench where Willys and Betty said they would sit and count their blessings. Of course, with any project like this, the biggest hurdle is funding such a tribute. The materials are estimated to cost about \$70,000, and while a good chunk of that has been raised, I'm told the fundraising committee headed up by Hugh Roberts needs to bring in about \$13,000 more to get things rolling.

Donations can be sent to Peck Bench, c/o Saratoga Historical Foundation, PO Box 172, Saratoga, CA 95071. Or you can contribute online at www.gofundme.com/willysbettypeck.



An effort is underway in Saratoga to honor the late Willys Peck, left, and his wife, Mountain School Founder, Betty Peck, 95.

(Photo by George Sakkestad)