



The Observatory

Los Gatos-Saratoga Observation Nursery School Issue 2, October 2003

Fundraising Fun

by Angie Davidson, Board President

Hello everyone!

Another Mountain School year is off to a great start! School is well underway now and we're all finding our stride. Fundraising efforts too are picking up steam. As you may know, tuition does not cover our operating expenses, so we must raise a considerable amount of money each year through other means. This year we're trying to make our smaller fundraisers work a little harder so we don't need to depend so heavily on the Spring auction.

Some of these smaller fundraisers are things we've done in the past and are continuing this year. The eScrip and Schoolpop programs, for example, are easy, ongoing ways for our school to make money through your everyday purchases, from groceries to clothing to books and music; if you haven't signed up, I encourage you to do so. (See page 3 for more information.) Our Mountain School t-shirt and sweatshirt sale has arrived, as well. You'll definitely want a red one for the Christmas parade! Our annual Sally Foster gift-wrap sales drive has just begun, too; you should have received your sales materials at school this past week. (See article on page 6 for details.)

This year we have introduced some great *new* ways to raise needed funds. Make your holiday wish lists now for ... shopping nights at *The Wooden Horse* in Los Gatos and *Hicklebee's Children's Books and Toys* in Willow Glen, where we will receive a percentage of any purchases made. (Dates and details are in the article on page 8.) Each of these stores is wonderful and has long supported Mountain School, so

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A Grateful Attitude

by Marie Imai, LGSONS Director

Dear Families,

I was so inspired by our school's founder, Betty Peck, who spoke at our October board and staff meeting that I want to share one of the guiding principles of her life with you. And that is – A deep sense of gratitude! ... For our lives, for our wonderful, natural world, for our families and our communities.

Betty has always been inspiring to those who know her and I believe it is because her grateful attitude enables her to approach life so positively. If: we greet each day with a thankful attitude for all that we have received; If: we fully appreciate the wonderfulness of those we love and cherish and let them know it; If: we are grateful for the opportunity to be a parent, a sibling, a spouse, a child. Then: we can more happily greet mistakes as opportunities for learning; we can more easily be optimistic about life's challenges; we can more quickly use our sense of humor to get through each day.

Betty told us that when she was a kindergarten teacher at Oak Street School in Saratoga and a child was having a hard day she would take that child to her magic cupboard

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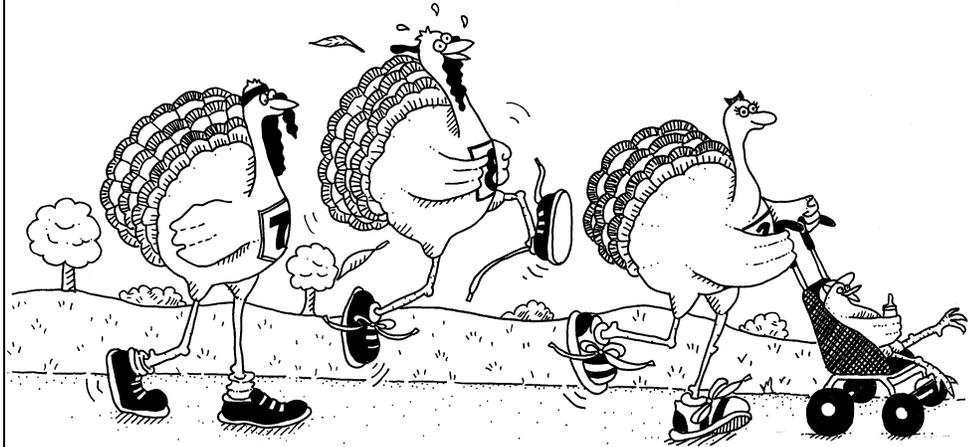
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Two Shopping Opportunities

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(Fundraising Fun, continued)

please take a moment next time you stop in to say, "thank you". It's so important to let them know we appreciate their support!

The most visible and fun new fundraiser is the Turkey Trot, November 9TH at Vasona Park. We see this as a chance to do two vital things: to raise money, of course, but also to spread the word about Mountain School by giving us some exposure to the larger community. Please invite your friends, neighbors and family! Along with the "race" there will be t-shirts for Trot participants, prizes, lots of fun activities for kids,



music, entertainment, and the chance to enjoy the afternoon with Mountain School friends and show others our incredible community spirit.

Online splurges that make money for the school, fun t-shirts that display our school spirit, holiday shopping at great local stores, and trotting with turkeys: who said fundraising wasn't *fun*? See you at the Turkey Trot! ☺



Teachers' Wish List

by Marie Imai, LGSONS Director

Here is a wish list for materials to update our schoolhouse supplies. If you can donate any of these items or know where to obtain them at a reasonable price please let your teacher know. Thanks so much.

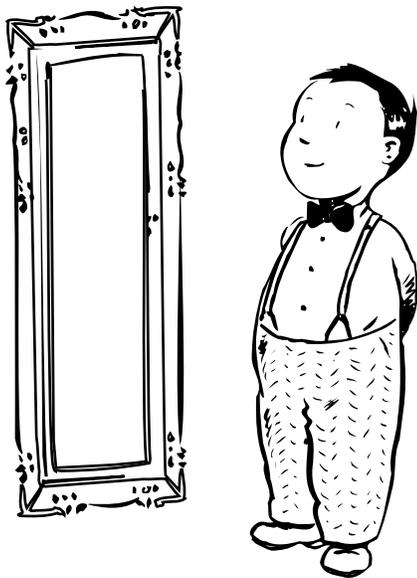
Dress-up: chefs' hats; aprons; train conductor hats; police hats; safari hats; knight helmets; bandanas; capes (red, blue, purple); cowboy boots and hats; suit jackets, army jackets; other items for boys; fancy party type dresses; These items can be new or used but must be small enough to fit two-, three- and four-year-olds.

Miscellaneous: matte board and pieces of wood picture frames to

use for collages (available from some framing shops, we can saw the framing leftovers into small pieces); a spin art kit; 18 flashlights; children's umbrellas (we hope to eventually collect 18); wooden train whistle; a wooden marble run similar to the one Teacher Jan brings to school and which was made by her husband; butterfly type nets with wooden handles; extra plastic food containers to use in art storage. ☺

(A Grateful Attitude, continued)

and open the doors exposing a large mirror. She would then ask the child "Have you forgotten how wonderful you are? Look at your amazing body." We need to give our own mirrors the magical power to remind us of our own specialness and our own gifts to share with others. When our



heart is grateful we can love and support those around us so much more easily. Thank you, Betty, for your wise words and your tireless work promoting education for young children that continues the philosophy of this school you began so long ago. It is strong family involvement and time outdoors to grow deep roots into the natural world which strengthens our souls to deal with life in the 21st century. I want to personally thank all the board members and teachers who give your time, talent and love to this special school as well.

Love,
Marie ☺

Schoolpop & eScrip

by Jane Johnson,
eScrip & Schoolpop Coordinator

Registration Cancelled or Out of Date?

Do you carry credit cards with banks like Citibank? If so, some of the banks recently transferred their cardholders from one company (such as Visa) to another (in this case, Mastercard). And, when they did so, any automatic payments or links (like eScrip) were made void. So, please, please check your registrations with both fundraising sites and ensure your information (including school ID and card numbers) is up to date!

Holiday Shopping News Flash

The holidays are quickly approaching and you may be thinking about your upcoming shopping expeditions. We have an opportunity to save you shopping time and money, while making money for the school at the same time. Schoolpop has just launched a new program through which you can purchase items such as Leapfrog SchoolHouse™ products, books, music and educational software at reduced prices – up to 70% off retail! And, while we're saving with great gift purchases, our school is earning up to 40% behind the scenes. How will this work? We'll have a special event to earn this maximum school funding during early November. Look for a catalog at the schoolhouse (once we return there for our classes), mark your orders on the included form and return by the deadline with your check to a box. Orders will ship directly to your home in time for the holidays.

Online Purchasing

To ensure that our school receives funding at no cost to you, just make sure before any online purchases to go to www.schoolpop.com and then choose your website (e.g. Nordstrom, Eddie Bauer, etc.). Schoolpop even offers a "reminder service" to ensure that any of their member websites produce a reminder pop-up ("Schoolpop Buddy") so you can link those purchases to Schoolpop. To download the Schoolpop Buddy software, visit the schoolpop website.

Important Safeway Update

Please, please go to www.eScrip.com and update your Safeway card. Even if your card has not expired, eScrip is requiring you update no later than November 1, 2003 for your purchases to count this year. ☺

Our School Days in the Woods

by Jodi Myers, Mother of Nathaniel, 3/4s Class

Light filtering through exquisitely beautiful
Redwood, and Bay Laurel trees,
Trickling down to the sparse creek, not full
Yet not ready to give up its rippling tease.

We enter this scene, some running, some subdued
Never quite knowing what is coming
To seduce us in its innocent fugue
Ever so willing to be wide-eyed and trusting.

Will it be a banana slug or a newt?
Perhaps a lazy salamander, slowly on his way
If we're lucky a minnow, so minute.
Or a delicate butterfly, showing off its glamorous display.

Rumble, growl, our stomachs remind us we're human
Interrupting our discoveries for nourishment
We sit ourselves down, thankful for each crumb
Yummy morsels and cool water lull us into retirement.

But not for long for a small hike is due
We jump to our feet eager for our final explore
A bear hunt song is not just for a few
All were involved and came thru without a sore.

With soiled body and clothes
Tired limbs but filled up souls
Gather themselves up to disclose
Each moment so precious, individual prose. ~



It Is More Than About a New Granddaughter

submitted by Teacher Jane Krejci

We are happy to have a new granddaughter, Lily Jane; her mommy, Liesel, was a student and teacher at Mountain School. I was especially touched by a letter my brother, Gordon, wrote to Lily. He said I could share it with you. It is more than about one child ... it is about connection and family; things we value very much here at Mountain School.



Dear Lily Jane,

We want to welcome you into the world and into our family. While the world can be a scary place sometimes, we hope you will always find your place in our family safe, secure and, as befits your youthfulness, a place to cry and laugh, sometimes at the same time.

We look forward to getting to know you, to watching you play with your cousins, and of course hearing the amazing stories that surely will come from your presence in our midst.

No doubt you yourself will be subjected to the family stories that

(Continued on page 5)

(New Granddaughter, continued)

are irresistible to pass on, of your great-grandfather and his love of the mountains, his family, and of his adopted home, America. Were he here, you would shortly be receiving a card from him introducing you to how a family must stay connected. May we all honor you by doing just that.

You have just brought your mom (and your dad) through their latest adventure, and we hope they are recovering well. Soon you will be treated to something special, a visit from your grandparents, and no one knows young children like your grandma, so get ready for some fun!

We hope to see you soon, as well as regularly over the coming years.

Again, welcome Lily Jane!

Love,
Gordon and Martia ☺

Calendar

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GENERAL MEETING – OCTOBER 23!

The General Meeting has been moved (again) to Thursday, October 23. Join us at 7 pm at Lakeside School. We are pleased to present, Ronald Mah, who will speak on *Discipline: Basic Ideas and Concepts*, including boundaries, temper tantrums, and adults as disciples. In addition, he will discuss *How to Raise a Strong, Successful Child*, which is not necessarily through protecting your child from all unpleasantness. There will be time for Q&A, so come with questions about any urgent parenting issues that you have.



TURKEY TROT – SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9

By now you should have heard about our 5K Turkey Trot coming on Sunday November 9TH at Vasona Park. Here is the Race day Schedule:

- 9 am: Registration begins
- 11 am: 5K begins
- 12 pm: Kids' fun run begins
- 11 am to 2 pm: Food sales, music, entertainment and fun at the Gateway Pavilion.

Invite your family, friends and neighbors! It is going to be a fun event for all.

In addition to the race, there will be raffle prizes and fun activities for kids. Pre-register by October 27 for a guaranteed t-shirt and reduced fee. Registration forms and flyers are posted on www.lgsons.com. There will be an envelope at school for completed registration forms. Any questions, comments or volunteers, please e-mail Mary Matlack at mary@trimbus.com or call her at 408.358.3535 or 408.499.8569.

SCHOOL AUCTION – SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 2004

We have scheduled the auction for March 20, 2004. Save the date! ☺

Gift-Wrap Fundraiser

by Janet Stimson, Gift-Wrap Coordinator

The Sally Foster Gift-Wrap Fundraiser is under way at our Mountain School! You should be receiving a packet with catalog and order form inside, and if not, catalogs will be at Saratoga Springs. Items include top-quality gift wrap, totes, ribbon, stationery and gift items. Please invite family, friends and co-workers to order from you in the next couple weeks. They may share your catalog or browse the catalog online at SallyFoster.com.



Most importantly, our school receives a 50 percent profit on every item purchased. The Mountain School has participated in this fundraiser for several years, raising thousands of dollars. We raised over \$3,500 last year, with about half the parents participating. Our fundraiser runs through October 24TH. Please put your completed forms in the "gift wrap box" at school. All purchased items will be delivered to the schoolhouse in the first week of December.

Thank you for participating in this fundraiser. Everyone benefits!

Please contact me if you have any questions (408.293.7338, janet@bjs.cncds1.com). ☺

Kids Snack/Lunch Ideas

submitted by Jodi Myers, Mother of Nathaniel, 3/4s Class



Homemade "Lunchables"

Purchase a plastic sectional container. With cookie cutters, cut lunch meats and cheese into fun shapes. Add some wholesome crackers, fruit, pudding, etc. Top it off with a fun dessert. The container can be brought home and re-used; an inexpensive way to add some fun to lunch.

Vary the Bread

Instead of regular bread, make turkey, tuna or peanut butter sandwiches on pita, bagels, English muffins, hot dog rolls or even hamburger buns. This is also a frugal way of dealing with a spare bagel or bun. Talking about fun: roll the meat or mixture up in a tortilla and serve these whole or sliced into pinwheels!

Fruit Kabobs

What kid wouldn't like fruit-on-a-stick? For safety reasons, skewer precubed fruit on a plastic drinking straw. To keep the fruit from turning brown, dip the pieces into lemon juice. Pack these in a plastic container to avoid crushing the fruit. Can be served with yogurt!

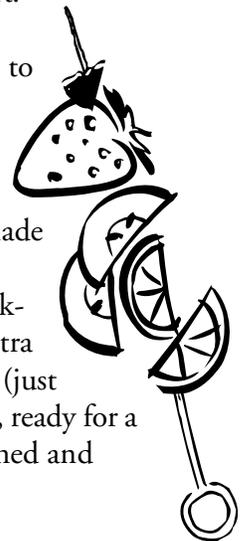
You can also make cheese/meat kabobs! So much fun to eat!

Raid that Pantry Snack Mix

Anything goes when you're tossing together a homemade snack mix. Time to clean out your pantry? Look for bite-size cereals, dried fruits, pretzels, nuts, mini-crackers, sesame bites, and shredded coconut. For some extra fun, throw in some chocolate chips and/or M & M's (just few!). Store these snacks in zipper type sandwich bags, ready for a lunch box or to take on an outing. Voila! Pantry cleaned and snacks made! You're a genius!

Variety for P, B & J Lovers

Try pairing one of the following ingredients with peanut butter for a taste twist on the classic combination: sliced bananas, honey, apple butter, bacon, sliced apples or pears, raisins or chopped, pitted dates, grated carrots, wheat germ and honey; or, come up with your own unique topping! ☺



It's for the Kids, Really

by Marc Gerin

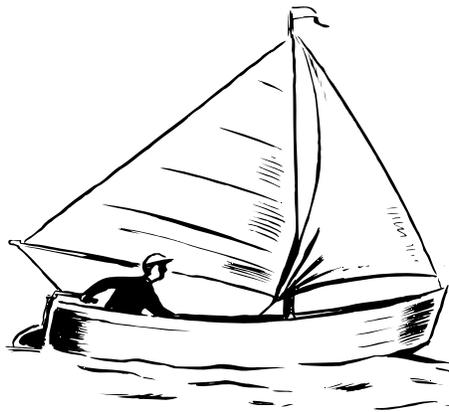
The following article was written by our friend, Marc. Although Marc doesn't attend Mountain School, his family joined us for our annual Family Camp weekend at Sequoia Lake, when a spot became available at the last minute.

*Dianne O'Neil
mother of Grace, 3's class*

This past May long weekend, we were lucky enough to fill a last-minute vacancy at Sean and Dianne's Mountain Cult – uh, Mountain School – Family Camp. We spent the whole weekend by a beautiful lake, privately owned by the YMCA, just outside of Kings Canyon National Park. Tristan (twenty-one months old) spent the whole weekend going Splish! by throwing rocks into the lake. From the time he woke up saying “_ock wa_er... _plishhh” with the appropriate hand gesture, to the time he went to bed saying “o_tshide, wa_er, boat”, he wanted but one thing: to splish (and try to walk, crawl, or jump into the wa_er). With some breaks to go riding in a boat. And some breaks to go riding in his All-Terrain Wagon. California - home of inventing new sports. We can add one to the list: Xtreme Wagoning. Tristan hung on daringly as his Radio Flyer ATW traversed 20 degree slopes through the woods, popped wheelies going up 50 degree inclines, and bounced down wooden stairs on it's AT knobby-tread air-filled balloon

tires. The big red wagon ruled the terrain. Look for ATWs next to the triple suspension chromium molybdenum-frame helium-filled tires mountain bikes at a shop near you.

But that wasn't the purpose of this weekend. The purpose of this weekend was The Regatta! The most anticipated, most participated-in, most fiercely fought, and most bitterly lost event is the Popsicle Stick Boat Regatta. Be warned, this is not for faint-of-heart competitors: for an eight-year-old, it can be devastat-



ing to see one's hopes for victory, cheers, and a toy prize, slowly sink as the sodden paper sail drags the rickety wooden frame onto its side. For spectators it is heart-wrenching to see the shock and horror turning to tears of disappointment on faces which only minutes ago were cheering wildly. First up, the eight-and-under. Their lack of physics knowledge is more than compensated by their creativity. A greater variety of hull forms, more original sail shapes, or a wider range of colors could not be found on a fleet anywhere. Creative accessories abound: seats for the sailors, a

steering wheel, a pink bow or a giant Pooh head taking on the role of crow's-nest. Alas, the goal is to sail from here to there. When the wind fails to do the job, water splashing propulsion takes over, but few of the craft can survive the stormy onslaught. But wait, up ahead, perfect in its proportions, a tiny little boat quietly edges towards shore, edged on by the roar of the crowd lining the bank. Yes, a winner. Hooray!

Nine and older kid boats: Less frill, more form and function, and greater expectations of success. At the go! boats run amok - the fastest veers hard to port, bearing down on the capsized entry with the red sail. Collision! The capsized boat remains, well, capsized. The other boat, its aim straightened, takes off for the shore and victory. First, Second, and Third are happy and adorned with a red ribbon. The others take failure hard (one falls off the dock into the water – Lifeguard to the rescue!). They wonder what went wrong. Was it not a perfect boat with a name like “Winner”, “Speedy”, “#1”, “Ninja”, and “Destroyer”?

All that has happened up to this point was fluff, the opening act, the appetizer. Now, now comes the real competition. This is the Dad's competition! The stakes are high: Dad's Infallibility is on the line. The winner gains greater stature in the eyes of his family and quietly revels in the grudging admiration of his competitors. The losers must reassure their kids that the Dad Superpowers are still there. The losers are given

assurances that it's not about winning. It all comes down to 25 Popsicle sticks, glue, and no more than two sheets of paper.

The kids are ushered off the dock; the Men jostle for a strategic position, measuring the distance to shore, calculating the wind angle, eyeing the competition. Some elder sons are at their Dad's side, there to learn. A lucky few even get to do the launch under close supervision from Dad.



"Two ...One ...Go!". The boats hit the water. The outrigger rafts, the counter-balanced flat hulls, the multi-something deep-keeled bevelled edge boats try to sort themselves out. Hypotheses, assumptions and calculations of buoyancy, drag, sail area to weight ratio, balance, and gut feeling are now tested. One boat, however, quickly breaks away from the pack. The Titoo, powered by a massive Tristan designed sail, slices effortlessly through the water. Designed and built by yours truly, the Titoo is the only catamaran in the competition. The wind shifts and the fleet is forced off course. The Titoo turns downwind, but not so much that it misses the winning shore. Victory!

The O'Neil designed boat also sports a Tristan sail and makes shore in reasonable time "with a little help". With forward buoyancy pontoons, flat weighted stern and vertically curved sail, this complex amalgam "shows great promise, if only I can figure out which part holds the promise" says designer Sean.

Around the campfire that night, talk turns to trim, sail area, keel, rudder, what went wrong and what went right. It's only one race. There is time to improve the design. We will return next year. Yes, but you don't defend the America's Cup by staying still. The victor is also analyzing his design, improvements are already on the drawing board. See you next year. Oh ... and, of course, we do it for the kids. ☺

Two great Holiday Shopping Opportunities

by Mary Matlack, Fundraising Chair

Wednesday November 19th from 7 to 9 pm, we will have a Mountain School shopping night at *The Wooden Horse* in Los Gatos (www.woodenhorsetoys.com). We will serve refreshments and have complimentary gift wrapping. The Wooden Horse will donate 10% of our purchases to the school. So, make your lists, bring your friends and join us for a fun evening at a great toy store.

December 8 through 14, *Hicklebees* bookstore in Willow Glen will be donating a percentage of purchases made by Mountain School families back to the school. Just stop in and when you make your purchases, be sure to tell them you are with the Los Gatos Saratoga Observation Nursery School. If you haven't been to *Hicklebees* before, it is an amazing children's bookstore – well worth a visit (www.hicklebees.com). ☺

Article Contributions

by Nicole Frees,
Newsletter Chair

Thank you to everyone that shared your creativity and wisdom for the current issue of *The Observatory*. Keep it coming!

The deadline for the next issue of the newsletter is: Monday, November 10. Please e-mail me at

nfrees@sbcglobal.net with your submission. If you do not have e-mail, then you may reach me at 650-961-4016.

While the newsletter has a limited timetable and scope, we hope to post additional resources and information on our school website. If you have recipes, field trip suggestions, kids projects, or photos of mountain kids in action, please send those in as well. ☺