



# The Observatory

Los Gatos-Saratoga Observation Nursery School ~ Issue 2, October 2004

## Traditions

by Angie Davidson, Board President

This week we so fortunate to hear Bev Bos speak about creating traditions and memories with our children. Bev was really wonderful, and I don't think anyone left without being moved by their own memories and energized to begin to do the things she'd talked about.

For me the discussion about music really touched home. My husband, Todd, and mother-in-law, Phyllis, play guitar and seem to know almost every song there is (although they probably couldn't have guessed that German song Bev knew!). Phyllis also plays piano beautifully. When we go camping, they bring the guitars and play around the campfire late into the night. When Phyllis comes to visit she plays her beautiful piano, which now resides in our living room, and Julia and Sophie dance, sing, or try to play along. We all seem to move into the room when she starts to play. Holidays, especially Christmas, are especially fun and full of music. The girls and I have learned so many songs and we love it! Phyllis and Todd's music has added so much to our lives, and hearing Bev talk made me want to learn to play piano again so that I could be more a part of the music and memory-making.

Another thing that really struck me about Bev's talk was what she said about letting your kids get to know you, not just the other way around. Getting to know my dad meant working at his side, usually with plants. I don't remember much sharing of emotions because we were more focused on the chore or task before us. But that was fine; it was great just being with him. What I learned about my dad were the things he enjoys doing, his particular way of doing things, how he takes pride in a job done well, the way he looks at nature. Those memories have a certain rhythm, because we were always doing something: planting, weeding, gathering seeds, mending or making something. I loved the feeling of companionship that I had when we worked together, and I still do.

Getting to know my grandmother was tougher. She had eight children and my grandfather died when the youngest was six months

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## Gratitude

By Marie Imai, LGSONS Director

Dear Families,

Thanks so much to everyone who attended the general meeting last week for helping celebrate my birthday in such a grand way. I've never ever had a purple birthday cake before nor been sung to by so many people. During this last year I had begun thinking about retiring but now I know that I'm not at all ready to leave this wonderful community. Your generosity and love is overwhelming and I feel truly honored and very happy tonight. Thank you to the board for the surprise celebration which included purple hiking socks and a special bottle of Savannah Chanelle wine. My husband, Kent, and I will enjoy toasting the winery and Mt. School at the same time! He also feels very attached to our school and always wishes he had more opportunities to get acquainted with all of you.

The 4/5s and Friday 2s workday at the schoolhouse was last Sunday afternoon and like every year I was amazed at how much was accomplished in cleaning and repairing and painting. Thank you so much to all who came and participated and even stayed late to finish just one more project. The most exciting project was ridding our outdoor cupboards of the black widow spiders who had moved in during our absence to make their strong webs and tuck their egg sacks into the corners. Thanks to Tom Yore, our maintenance chair's vigilant eye and quick hand we even have one in a jar at

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Saratoga Springs for you to see. He raised them as a boy and still has the curiosity of a child for these interesting arachnids. Look in the insect book at the springs to learn more about them.

I am certain that I speak for all of the teachers when I say that we are just delighted to be playing outdoors again and exploring the woods with you and your children. Watching the children in the 4/5s climb the boulders so boldly that they slipped on last year or scamper up the steep part at the top of the bunny hill like spiders is so exciting. Each child in their own way and own time is becoming the master of this environment. We can best support this growth through patiently observing their play and letting them take the lead and set their own pace. A particularly effective way to support their social development is to arrange a play time with another child in the class outside of school. After spending just a few hours together it is much easier to connect at school and continue the relationship. I hope that you can also start now to get better acquainted with another family in your class and build your own community. Share a pizza for dinner, exchange babysitting, go to the park together or come to the all school picnic at Saratoga Springs on Sunday, October 17 at 11:30am. Better yet come and camp out the night before. If you have never camped before this is the perfect way to start and it's only for 1 night! As you sing songs around the campfire you'll be creating the musical memories that Bev Bos feels are such important family traditions. With love from a grateful heart, Marie ☺

### LGSONS T-Shirt Sales

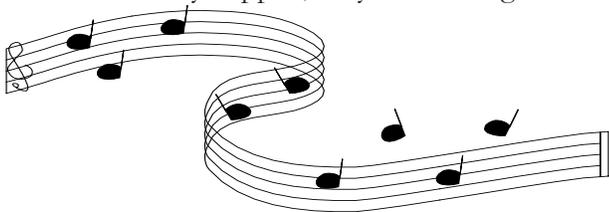
by Lisa Liddle  
T-Shirt Sales Chairperson



T-Shirt and Sweatshirt Order Forms Coming October 16th. . .  
Order forms will be available at our Mountain School Camping Weekend & Fall Picnic and thereafter until our November 5th deadline. The LGSONS logo shirts will be offered in NAVY and our traditional RED color, delivered just in time for the Los Gatos Christmas Parade. We may also have one additional color option, so look for the order forms to get more details. Feel free to call Lisa Liddle at 408-353-5131 with any questions. ☺

(Traditions, continued)

old, so she was always very busy. When she did have time and invited you on a hike, her favorite activity, you cancelled everything and went because you knew it was special. She's quite reticent to talk about herself, which makes the times she does share especially meaningful. At those times everyone gets quieter so we don't miss anything, and we ask questions carefully so as not to pry and make her stop. There's a funny tension on both sides as we try to feel our way through those moments, but afterwards we all feel closer with each other. I remember seven years ago driving back to Phoenix from Nogales, Mexico, with my grandma, one of my aunts, my sister and Todd. It was really late and we were all starting to fall asleep but for some reason my grandma started to talk, telling stories about when she was young and dating my grandfather, about when they had young children, different things. She told stories my aunt and mom had never heard before. We all remember that night vividly. In a time in our culture when people confess everything on national television, those little unexpected moments of intimacy, of sharing time together and learning about someone we love, seem especially rare. But when they happen, they feel like a gift.



What will my children remember? Will they remember us doing everyday things together? Does it feel great to them just to be with me? Will they remember our traditions, music, family trips, holidays? Will they remember special moments when we revealed something about ourselves or just felt particularly close? I called my mom the day after hearing Bev, and while I do remember things my parents had specifically done to try to foster good, happy memories of childhood, at least as many of my favorite memories are of unplanned things: working with my dad, conversations in the car, painting something with my mom, skipping school one day (Mom's idea) to spend time with her. Bev's talk reminded me that all of this is important, the making dinner together as well as the planned vacations, the holiday teas, the "bigger" things—and I need a lot of reminding. I get grumpy about the daily tasks and I

rush, forgetting the value of just working together at what needs to be done, of a quiet moment, of a simple talk in the car. I really appreciate the programs, observations and examples of our teachers and other parents, all reminding me of what's really essential.

So in the wake of Bev's talk, here's my promise to myself and my girls: to start playing the piano again, to learn those 5 songs every child needs to know, to see everyday moments in a new light, and to sing more in the car. If you see me driving down the road, join in! ☞

## Fall Traditions at Mountain School

Just as families have traditions, our school has traditions as well, and fall is the time for some of them.

The first is our move indoors to our little red schoolhouse. The school day has a slightly different rhythm here than outdoors, its own wonderful flavor. We can be outdoors in the yard, the garden, the sand or the field, and indoors with crafts, blocks, books, cooking and, in my daughters' case, dress-up. (And there's a kettle and a coffee pot for warm drinks on cold mornings! Bring your favorite tea to put in the cupboard to share!) Back to the schoolhouse: hooray!

We also have our fall picnic on October 17th. It's a great time to play at Saratoga Springs, socialize with old friends and make new ones, stomp in the creek, show off our bunny-hill skills and enjoy a beautiful fall day outdoors.

This year we have a new tradition as well: our 2nd annual Turkey Trot! It will be held at Vasona Park on Sunday, November 14th at 11 a.m. Who'll win the stroller division this year? Start getting in shape to trot! See "Calendar" on page 7 for more info. Gobble gobble!

Please join us in continuing our old traditions and building new ones! ☞

## Warm All Over

by Susi Steiner,  
Community Service Liaison

Hi Everyone,

It's FALL - Let's get "Warm All Over" and help others do the same!

Please consider bringing any items your family has outgrown or is no longer using for donation: Coats, Sweaters, Boots/Shoes and Socks of all sizes, to be donated to those in need. The campaign is called "Warm All Over".



The Fall Giving Campaign began at the General Meeting..Thank you to everyone who made a donation. The donation bin will also be available at the red schoolhouse when we move classes to that location. The final opportunity for giving will be November 14th at the Turkey Trot.

We hope everyone will join in the giving spirit and use this opportunity to teach our children that we can make a difference in the lives of others. Even one warm sweater from your family will be greatly appreciated!

Please contact Susi Stienner for more info, 230-9310. ☞

## A Preview of Upcoming Mini-courses

by Jan Murray

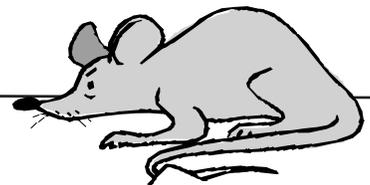
Nov. 9th "Transforming Superhero and Weapon Play". What is so attractive about about superheros weapons in fantasy play for children? What do children learn? When parents have concerns over violence and bad behavior, how can parents foster or transform superhero and violent play into positive experiences for children. Our presenter Eric Hoffman is a developmental psychologist from Cabrillo College where he is the Program Coordinator for the Children's Center

Nov. 17th (Date tentative) "Effective Adult-Child Communication". Expand your communication skills with your child through information and hands-on activities. Learn to redirect behavior in positive ways, manage the feelings of children skillfully, distinguish between clear and unclear communication, praise effectively, communicate in ways that build self-esteem and self-confidence, and increase cooperation and self-reliance. Christopher Glover, liscensed educational psychologist working for Santa Clara County.

Nov. 11th "Small Bodies Need Big Nutrition". Lauren Walker. This class is an encore performance of last year's informative and motivational talk.

Nov. 16th (Date tentative) "Make an Adorable Sock Horse" with our wonderful teachers Karyn Cline and Jan Eby. They will show you how to make your own unique stick horse, that will remind you both of precious Mountain School days.

Date: TBA "CPR" with Holly Brondos-Dane This no-stress CPR class is designed for parents of young children. We will learn many aspects of child and adult CPR. Holly has been an American Heart Associateion CPR instructor for over eight years. ☞



## Needs A Home

Children love animals, and the rat at school is a perfect example. Sometimes it's hard for adults to understand the attraction, but children love to hold the rats at school. Wouldn't you love to give your child the chance to share some "One on One" time with the school's pet rat?

The school rat needs a home until we return to the schoolhouse. Would you be willing to care for him?

Please contact Mercedes Jones at 353-4575 if you can help. ☞

## Schoolpop & eScrip

by Jane Johnson, eScrip & Schoolpop Coordinator

### ESCRIP & SCHOOLPOP – PLEASE REGISTER

Thanks for your patience & listening during the introductory sessions at your circle meetings! Here are the answers to a few of your questions:

- Upromise & eScrip/Schoolpop do not interfere with one another
- You can register with Schoolpop using your own Visa cards (&/or other cards)
- To get the maximum contribution at Macy's, you need to use their card or their Visa card
- You can share contributions between schools by designating percentages
- To insure online shopping counts towards our school, start with schoolpop.com & then choose a merchant (e.g. Barnes & Noble, Eddie Bauer, etc.) or now escrip.com has an online feature, too (e.g. Gap, Macy's, Best Buy, etc.)

You are all so wonderful to embrace this behind-the-scenes no-hassle way to contribute to our children & our school. Thank you in advance for all your help with reaching our goals this year!

If you haven't had a chance yet to enroll, please do so now:

www.escrip.com = our group id is 3593396

www.schoolpop.com = our group id is 0612734

Happy shopping!... ☺

## The All American Apple Cake

Best cake ever, plain or sauced! Developed by the wife of a New England apple grower. This recipe was shared by Kathy Wilcox, Friday 2's Teacher

- 1/4 cup oil
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup brown sugar, lightly packed
- 1 egg
- 2 cups baking apples, unpeeled, coarsely diced
- 1/3 cup whole wheat flour
- 2/3 cup white flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 cup walnuts, coarsely chopped
- buttermilk sauce (optional, recipe follows)



Whisk together first four ingredients in a large bowl. Stir in apples. Sift in flour, soda, salt and cinnamon gradually, beating until smooth. Batter will be stiff. Blend in nuts. Bake in greased 8x8x2 inch pan in a 350 degree oven for 45 minutes. (see alternatives below.)

If you are making the buttermilk sauce, punch holes in hot cake with a long-tined fork, moving times gently back and forth, making even rows across cake. Spoon hot buttermilk sauce over hot cake until most of sauce is absorbed. Let stand at least an hour before serving. Any extra sauce may be spooned over individual pieces.

### Buttermilk Sauce

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 4 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 cup buttermilk or 1/4 cup milk plus 2 teaspoons vinegar

Combine ingredients in a small saucepan: stir over medium heat until boiling. Remove from heat.

### Alternatives:

1. In lieu of buttermilk sauce, can mix 2 Tbsp lemon juice and 1 Tbsp powdered sugar for glaze. Pour over hot cake.
2. Can double recipe and cook in 9x13 pan.
3. Consider adding 1 teaspoon nutmeg.
4. Make as muffins. Cook approximately 20 minutes. ☺

## Teacher Spotlight:

### Jan Eby

by Angie Davidson

*Q: Was your childhood like Mountain School?*

A: Well, not in a school setting but I grew up in a small town where it was cold, in S. Dakota. Winters were very cold, not like here where you can be out. But I liked playing in the dirt, and with horses. One of my favorite memories was playing with little plastic horses in piles of dirt. I always wished I'd lived on a farm. I did eventually have a horse, in 6th grade. I had it until I went away to college. But I loved to be outside when I was little. It was a great childhood.

*Q: How did you come to start teaching at Mtn. School?*

A: I'd been an elementary school teacher and taught second grade before having my children. I was in Mtn. School with my daughter in the 3s and 4/5s, and then when she started kindergarten, I started substituting a little in special materials (indoors, at the tables). Then the next year I became an assistant. And then a spot opened up for head teacher and that was that! I've been teaching at Mtn. School in some form since about '75 or '76.

*Q: What is your favorite thing about teaching here?*

A: The permission to be silly and playful, to appreciate childishness. I love that about the program. And of course the children are so adorable and fun.

I also appreciate the devotion of the parents, and the friendships that

develop. One reason I could be in a job that long is that every year is so different.

Plus the wardrobe requirements are not too stressful.

It's just fun to do things with children.

*Q: What's your favorite thing about working with kids this age?*

A: With the 3- and 4-year-old age group, they're very capable but they're still little and playful.

*Q: You just came back from Bhutan and Thailand. How was your trip?*

A: It was fabulous. We're just going to visit our daughter and were looking at the video that my husband took. It was a fabulous trip.

It was very remote. I'd been to a very Buddhist part of India before, but this was different because of the topography. It's a very heavily forested country, and it's never been logged. That's part of their Buddhist culture. They don't hunt and don't fish, so there are raging rivers full of fish. It's very beautiful. This is a country that's never been colonized like most Buddhist countries have been. They are trying very hard to keep their culture. They have a national dress--for every day, not just for special occasions. They are very warm, seemingly happy people. They live a very simple life and are trying to take their time with modern things.

I got to visit a preschool while we were there. Our guide's wife was the teacher at a preschool there, and we met her one evening and talked with her about the school. The next day

we got to go visit. They were getting ready to do a show with singing and dancing, so we got to see them practice. It was wonderful.

The next day I took a handkerchief and showed our guide, her husband, how to make a doll. I took it apart and showed him again, and wrote a note for his wife about them. A few days after we got back I got an email from her (which was amazing, an email from Bhutan) saying she'd taught the children to make them too. They all bring their handkerchiefs to school, pinned to their coats, so it was easy for her to teach them all how to make them.

I love making those dolls. I'd learned how to make them from Bev Bos years ago, and I told her about that the other night at the general meeting. When we were in Africa too I bought a doll from a woman there out in the bush and made her a handkerchief doll in return, tied with dental floss. They're probably being made out in the bush now.

*Q: Where are some other places you've visited and loved?*

A: I loved Antarctica and Africa. Those were special and also places quite easy to bring into back to class for stories. And India. The puppet show I brought back from India was fun.



I like to bring back something to the class from the places I visit. It's easy to bring back a penguin from Antarctica, but it's harder to bring something to show the culture.

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I'm trying to show my class things from Bhutanese culture now. I learned how to say "thank you" in Bhutanese and came back and taught the children for the thank-you song; one of the 3s parents called and told me her daughter was singing it at home. It amazed me that she had it right after only singing it twice. I have more things to bring in as well.

*Q: What are some other things you love to do in your free time?*

A: I have 3 granddaughters so I love that. When I'm with them, that's a top priority. And so is trying to figure out how to stay connected when we're apart.

I also like gardening, reading, crafts and cooking.

*Q: What's one thing you'd like us parents to remember while we've got young children?*

A: Just to cherish this wonderful time because it goes so quickly. Sometimes when you're in the throes of raising young children you can think, "Oh, when will this end?" But try to find the delightful parts because it goes so fast. ☘

#### *Note From the Editor*

*Thank you for the contributions, ideas, time and help.*

*Do you have information, and article or recipe you would like to submit for consideration for the next newsletter?*

*The deadline for the next newsletter is Friday, November 19th. Please e-mail submissions to [mtnmama@garlic.com](mailto:mtnmama@garlic.com).*

*Thank you.*

*Sonia Casper*

## Calendar

### FALL PICNIC

*Sunday, October 17th, at Saratoga Springs*

### MOVE INDOORS

*Monday, October 25th*

The Schoolhouse anxiously awaits the lifeforce of our children!

### BOARD MEETING

*Tuesday, November 2nd*

*7:30pm at Daves Avenue portable*

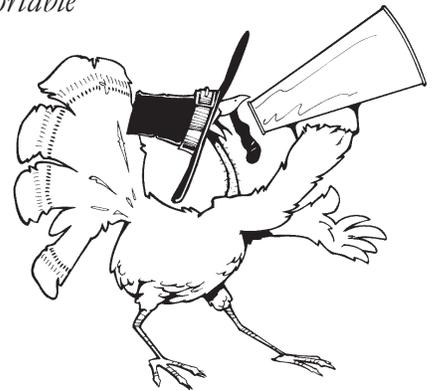
\*\*\*Voting Day! Don't forget to vote.

### TURKEY TROT

*Sunday, November 14th*

*11am - Fun 5k begins*

*Vasona Park*



Runners, walkers, strollers and pets...come one come all to the Second Annual Turkey Trot. Entertainment and a Fun Run for the kids...fun for the entire family! Lunch will be available for purchase.

Registration forms available at [www.LGSONS.com](http://www.LGSONS.com). For more information contact the Trotline: 408-499-8569 or Mary Matlack: [mary@trimbus.com](mailto:mary@trimbus.com).

### HOLIDAY BREAK

*Tuesday, November 23rd to*

*Saturday, November 27th*



In observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday, there will be no classes Tuesday November 23rd through Saturday, November 27th. Wishing everyone joy and peace on this day of thanks.

### LOS GATOS HOLIDAY PARADE

*Saturday, December 4th*

*(See details on page 5)*

# A Reflection on the Mountain School Experience

by Anne Maloney (May 19, 2002)

Recently, my mom reminded me of one of her favorite sayings: "Find the treasure where you fall." As I reflect on these words, I came to realize that they really capture what I believe to be at the heart of the Mountain School experience. Here, the children get to play and grow and we the parents learn how to better see and understand and appreciate the treasures that abound in our children's growth and learning. Even when a moment or a day or a phase is new or challenging-perhaps even hard to deal with--we are encouraged to look deeper, to be more accepting, to try harder, and ultimately to embrace and even celebrate all the lessons learned with growth and change. When we fall into the Mountain School community, we are really landing in a place that says, "Keep looking for the treasures-they are everywhere." The philosophy is here to guide you, the teachers are here to help lead you, the community is here to support you. Class time is our chance to sit still, to observe and listen to our children so that we can know them better, so that we are more likely to notice and celebrate who they are, so that we can better savor the joys and mysteries and challenges of parenting.

Serendipitously, on our last day at Saratoga Springs, the notion of trying to find the treasure where you fall was clearly manifest as I watched Clare on the arched bridge. She was trying to master a new way to slip down through the bars. Despite some bangs and thumps, she continued to climb the arch and try again-sometimes wanting my helping hand, sometimes wanting me to stand close by, and sometimes just asking me to watch. Finally, she was trying the technique totally on her own, when she fell hard to the ground. Slightly sprawled out on the sand and lying rather still, I could see that she was discouraged. Soon, two tears rolled onto her cheek-it seemed like one was for the frustration and one was for the pain. Before any more could follow, though, Clare turned her head to the left. Miraculously, one of the miniscule beads that bespeckle the sand at the Springs had caught her eye. It was little and pink and just barely showed itself, but it was all she needed. Upon spotting the bead, Clare jumped up. She quickly dug it

up, then ran over and handed it to me to hold for her. As I carefully tucked it into my pocket, a renewed Clare ran to the arch bridge and ascended the rungs again.

At that point, the rich pattern of this kaleidoscope of a preschool experience became clearer to me: All these days at the schoolhouse and by the springs and in the woods have been generously strewn with brightly colored beads, with opportunities to uncover the little treasures-even in the most rough spots. Each opportunity to make a mistake, to try something new, to explore the unfamiliar, to extend a favorite activity-all of these moments have been accompanied by teeny-tiny flashes of rainbow-bright colors that have given the days their delightful hue and have so often offered a touch of encouragement, a bit of distraction, or a hearty dose of fun that ultimately made the joys seem boundless, the hard moments seem rewarding, and the imperfect moments seem perfect. ☞



## Annual Holiday Parade Mark Your Calendars!!

The annual Los Gatos Holiday Parade is Saturday, December 4th this year. We all gather together with our families that morning & show off our Mountain School spirit by marching together in the parade. LGSONS red t-shirts &/or sweatshirts (coming soon for sale!) are perfect attire to show that spirit. If yours is in the laundry come parade morning, just don your favorite red shirt/top and come on down Start looking for bells to shake, wagons to decorate and friends and relatives to take pictures as you all go by!! More info to follow. ☞



