



# ∞ The CDS Weekly ∞

## Catching Up on the Coming Weeks

(415) 861-5432  
December 4, 2003

### Words From Rick *Roots of Learning*

A first grader was sitting on the log in front of the farm looking like he was deep in thought.

A teacher asked "You look like you're thinking seriously about something. What is on your mind?"

He replied, "I am thinking seriously about something. I'm thinking about square roots."

"What about them?"

"During calendar we learned that the square root of 36 is 6. I used a calculator and found out that the square root of 25 is 5. So I was just trying to think of other square roots I could share during class."

This is just another vision of what excellent education looks like. What should impress us is not so much that first graders are learning something that by national standards is taught in the sixth grade, but rather that at CDS, mathematics is something a first grader might contemplate.

One of the active ingredients in excellent academic education is, of course, good teaching, teaching which increases the students' responsibility for their own learning. Mathematics is not something we do to kids any more than art or recess is. Mathematics is something one might be as curious about as insects. In fact, guess what the first graders are going to be observing and gathering data about in the garden soon? Insects. Last evening on the third floor I saw Morgan preparing a large chart with pictures of about two dozen insects they have so far seen in the garden, and they are now going to study.

Another active ingredient is that we maximize the students' contact with primary stuff: things, phenomena, events that are real and immediate, things that can be touched, smelled, manipulated, investigated, drawn, counted, experienced. This is so much more valuable than trying to teach kids through secondary sources like textbooks. You can tell kids about something and they may be interested to some degree if you are a good story teller, but to fully engage their interest adults need to set it up so children have direct contact with primary data—it is so much more intriguing.

Mel Levine likes to remind us of the paltry value of standardized tests. The only thing that SAT scores predict is grades freshman year in college. What does predict success, he says, is collecting things, "for collecting things correlates with a mind that is interested, and interests turn to passions and passions turn to domains of competence."

Evidence of student interests abound in this school; so it is no

### ∞ This Week's Hot Dates ∞



#### Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup>

10:45 a.m.

All-school assembly, 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> class presentation  
*Parents welcome!*

#### Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>

6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

4<sup>th</sup> Annual CDS Holiday Book Fair  
A Clean Well-Lighted Place for Books  
601 Van Ness Avenue, Opera Plaza  
*(Childcare available at CDS, call Robin Wander at: 286-3689)*

#### Wednesday, December 17

Last day to sign up for Winter Break Camp

#### Thursday, December 18<sup>th</sup>

5:00 p.m.

2004-05 Sliding Scale Tuition Applications Due  
in the Business Office

6:30 p.m.

Faculty Holiday Party  
Bay View Boat Club

### Thank You!

- ▶ Thank you to Mary Beth Towery and Georgia McNamara for being such great helpers (once again!) on Photo Retake Day.
- ▶ Thank you to Kathleen Cologne for donating wood and Tina and Kevin Corse for donating rock polisher and tiles to the Art room.
- ▶ To Karen Axel Georgiades, Kristen Wurz and Steve Donovan for helping with admission tours.
- ▶ To all the parents who helped make our visitors feel welcomed at Grandparents' and Special Friends' Day, especially:
  - The Kindergarten families, led by Patrice Costello and May Elawar, who provided such wonderful food.
  - Karen Axel Georgiades for the two large floral arrangements on the food table.
  - David Peterson and Maxfield's Coffee Shop for providing coffee.
  - Susie Carlson for loaning her 30-cup coffee maker.
  - Stephanie Scarpulla for setting up and staffing the tee shirt sales table.
  - Gia Cincone and Patricia Buse-Ruppert for overall support and willingness to "go with the flow."

surprise that the students' test scores are strong AND that they love learning.

Another necessary ingredient in excellent academic education is that we have teachers who, themselves, are passionate about something. Our teachers are artists, authors, athletes and musicians in their own right. A learning community is a necessary context for this kind of teaching, and teachers who are learners are at the core of a learning community. We are a creative group of people who enjoy sharing ideas, building better mousetraps and helping kids invent their own.

Of course it doesn't hurt that we appreciate the learning value of play, that we design things so that the students collaborate a lot, that we have art teachers who understand that they are also teaching mathematics, and that we have a garden in which to contemplate whatever is in need of contemplation—even if it is only square roots.

In this context we can guarantee that each child will be challenged in ways that are appropriate for him or her. There is no guarantee that all first graders will enjoy contemplating square roots, or that all Middle Schoolers will come to love the human brain the way some of them have, or even that everyone will move on from third grade having mastered the multiplication tables. But with a good partnership with parents to identify a child's cutting-edge needs and interests, we can guarantee success.

Yesterday, as our six-year-old contemplator of mathematical concepts walked in the gate I said, "Good morning. What's the square root of 16?"

"Four!" He beamed back.  
—Rick Ackerly, Head of School

### Preschoolers and Middle Schoolers: A Story

While I was coming back from the bathroom, a preschool class was going outside. They must have stopped at the bathroom because they were going out that door. One kid was at the front of the line. He stopped to wait for his friend that was at the end of the line. Once he reached his friend, he put his hand on his back and walked out the door with the rest of the group. Then, I slightly bumped into a little girl. I said I was sorry and then I waved goodbye. While I was walking away, I heard the little girl say, "that big kid said 'Hi' to me. She said 'Hi' to me. Hey, she said 'Hi' to me." She was saying this to her teacher that was in the classroom. How sweet!

—Sonja Carlson, 6<sup>th</sup> grader

### Visit the CDS Middle School

Curious about our new middle school? Interested in seeing the MS students and faculty in action? A CDS parent who attended our CDS-parents-only tour a few weeks ago relayed to me how impressed she was with the middle school students and faculty. This visit confirmed for her that CDS' middle school really is as great as she had hoped. Thanks to her encouragement, I have scheduled 3 more opportunities for CDS parents to observe our new middle school class in action. The schedule is below. Parents of CDS children of ALL ages

are invited - please come! RSVP to me if you plan to attend (415-861-5432 x22).

### Middle school open house dates:

Friday, 12/5, 8:50 a.m. - Math with Mr. Doug  
Monday, 12/8, 10:10 a.m. - Language Arts with Mr. Andre

Tuesday, 12/16, 1:45 p.m. - Science with Mr. Doug  
—Aimee Giles, Director of Admission

### Another Photo Retake Day and Class Photos

We will be rescheduling **another** Photo Retake Day after the first of the year for those students who missed the retake day before Thanksgiving Break. **Also, class photos are being sent separately from individual portraits, so do not worry if your child did not receive their class photo yet...it will be coming**

—Amanda Coggin, Assistant to the Head, x12

### Parking in Notre Dame Plaza Spots... Just *Don't* Do It

We have had several instances and numerous complaints from the residents of Notre Dame Plaza that members of the CDS community have been parking in their spots. This also applies during morning drop-off; you should never block Notre Dame parking spots.

**Be forewarned. Effective immediately, Notre Dame Plaza will begin towing all unauthorized vehicles that are discovered in Notre Dame parking spots.**

—Laurance DeVries, Business Manager

### Please Donate Your Baby Food Jars to Kindergarten II

Miss Jennifer and Miss Gladys' Kindergarten class needs 20 clean small baby food jars for a class project. Please drop off the jars in their classroom on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

### Holiday Performance Volunteers Needed

We are looking for parent volunteers to help us move sets and costumes to The Boys' and Girls' Club at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 18<sup>th</sup> and to return the sets and costumes to CDS on Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup> directly after the performance. Do you have a van or truck, and can you help? Please contact Ms. Elizabeth or Ms. Karen in the Art room.

—Elizabeth McClellan & Karen Slovak, Art teachers, x18

### Development Update

I know it's a bit corny but have you seen our growing ear of corn in the first floor hallway? Thanks to our resident artists, Karen and Elizabeth, you can now check the progress of the annual fund toward our goal of \$350,000. To date we have raised \$187,000 in pledges or gifts, so

we're a little over half way to our goal! Thank you to everyone who has helped get the Annual Fund started this fall: Development Committee members, faculty and staff, callers, writers, and especially donors.

If you have an outstanding pledge, the first reminder will be mailed in the next week. If you have not yet pledged, please call or email Development Director Beth Ditlefsen (ext. 23 or [bethd@cds-sf.org](mailto:bethd@cds-sf.org)). Remember, the amount of your gift is not as important as your participation.

Jen's kindergarten class is leading the way to 100% parent participation with the second grade and middle school classes tied for second place. Which class will be the one to set the standard?

Another exciting project in the Development Office is the beginnings of a Grandparents organization. With the help of Fred Scarpulla, grandpa of Teddy Bear Lily Glickman, an organizational meeting is scheduled for Dec. 16, 2003 at 4:00 pm in the Faculty Lounge. Several grandparents who visited on Grandparents' and Special Friends' Day expressed interest in joining the group to find ways to support CDS and have fun doing it. Everyone is invited to attend the first meeting when those assembled will decide how the group will function. There is no obligation; just come to the meeting and see where it goes. —Beth Ditlefsen, Development Director

### Sliding Scale Tuition

As you know, the founding vision of CDS is to provide an excellent education for children in the Bay Area regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or the ability to afford tuition. Our sliding scale tuition is one of the many manifestations of our core commitment to diversity. The families of approximately 33% of our students pay sliding scale tuition, making us a leader in economic diversity among independent schools in San Francisco. Financial support for the sliding scale is derived from the school's operating budget (i.e. tuition revenue and fundraising). CDS currently dedicates 18% of its operating budget to sliding scale tuition. Sliding scale tuition is available based on need.

If you are currently paying sliding scale tuition, you have been mailed information for the 2004-05 school year. If you did not receive this information and would like to, please contact Laurance de Vries, Business Manager, by phone (861-5432 x14) or email ([laurance@cds-sf.org](mailto:laurance@cds-sf.org)).

#### Sliding scale tuition deadlines:

By December 18, 2003:

1. Complete a Parents' Financial Statement (PFS) and mail to School and Student Services (SSS) in Princeton, New Jersey;
2. Submit a copy of your PFS, a copy of your 2002 tax forms (1040), a signed copy of IRS form 4506 and a CDS Parent Contribution form to the Business Office.

By February 5, 2004:

3. Submit a copy of your 2003 tax forms (1040) to the Business Office.

—Aimee Giles, Director of Admission

### Book Fair Late News Flash

Chef Sarah Kirnon will prepare a delicious spread of light holiday "fare" for our book fair -- all thanks to some very generous parents. And, of course, there will be plentiful wine & soda to round it off for your enjoyment.

### A Clean Well-Lighted Place For Books Hosts Annual Book Fair

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Annual CDS Holiday Book Fair**

Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 6:00-9:00 p.m.

A Clean Well-Lighted Place for Books  
601 Van Ness Avenue, Opera Plaza

If you would like to volunteer to help with the book fair, please contact Sally Nielsen at [sn@hausrath.com](mailto:sn@hausrath.com) or (415) 861-4575.

Is it possible to have a great time, support our school library *and* cross items off of your holiday shopping list? On December 10<sup>th</sup> it is. Come to the CDS Book Fair to purchase books, enjoy terrific conversation, sip wine and munch hors d'oeuvres. Twenty percent of *all* sales – books purchased for the CDS library AND gift books for your family and friends – will go toward the library's book fund.

When you buy one or more titles for the library from a table of pre-selected, teacher-approved books, these books will help to support classroom work and build the library collection, which is available to every child at CDS.

Choosing gift books for your family and friends will be easier and more fun this year, thanks to the "CDS Recommends" books we're highlighting at the book fair. There's sure to be something for everyone on your list in our wide-ranging selection of titles personally recommended by our parents, faculty, staff and students. "CDS Recommends" titles – everything from cookbooks to poetry, novels to art books – will be displayed on special tables, with placards giving short descriptions and the recommenders' names.

### Childcare Available at CDS During Book Fair

**Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 6:00-9:30 PM**

While you are enjoying a delightful evening of shopping, browsing, chatting, eating and drinking at A Clean Well-Lighted Place for Books, your children are welcome to a cozy evening together at CDS. Extended Care teachers Rob Gillespie and Michael Gast have offered to keep the children entertained with play, yummy food & a video appropriate for all ages. The cost is \$5 per hour/child. They may come dressed in their pj's if they like! Siblings are welcome, but sorry, no infants. Please contact Robin Wander at 286-3689 to reserve a space now.

CDS Parent-Teacher-Trustee-Administrator  
Association: PTTA Update

Friday Morning Coffee

Suffering from separation anxiety...from fellow adults? Try to schedule a few free minutes into your Friday morning to join other parents for hot coffee and grown up conversation outside in the yard after drop off, 8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

PTTA Questions or Ideas?

Contact Marion Quinones at 701-1957 or  
MQuinones@fbm.com.

Do You Prefer *The Weekly* by Email?

If you would like to help us reduce our paper usage and receive the *Weekly* via email, please drop us a quick email at cdsweekly@cds-sf.org and give us your email address. Also, let us know the name and class of the child your hard copy usually goes home with so we can remove him or her from the classroom distribution list. Thanks!

Upcoming on the CDS Calendar



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10:45 a.m.

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6:30 p.m.

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Bay View Boat Club

**Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup>**

10:45 a.m.

(doors open at 10:30)  
Winter Performance  
Boys' and Girls' Club (17<sup>th</sup> and Guerrero)  
Noon Dismissal (No Extended Program)

**Monday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> - Friday, December 26<sup>th</sup>**

Winter Break; No School  
(No Camp Available This Week)

**Monday, December 29<sup>th</sup> - Friday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
Winter Break; No School  
(Winter Break Camp offered except for January 1<sup>st</sup>)

How to Submit to *The CDS Weekly*.  
Submissions are to be received **no later than Wednesday  
at 8:00 a.m.** Please email them to cdsweekly@cds-sf.org.