



∞ The CDS Weekly ∞

Catching Up on the Coming Weeks

(415) 861-5432
December 18, 2003

Words From Rick

Celebrating an End; Preparing for a New Beginning

Children are in the hallway practicing poetry, in the art room painting sets, singing their hearts out in Notre Dame Plaza, and practicing speeches and dances everywhere. In our rehearsals, the students are just as impressive in their ability to sit, listen and wait. Their enthusiasm makes the walls throb as they prepare their performances and their works of art, and they are remarkably focused and disciplined in their purposefulness. This is how CDS students ring out the old year. This is our celebration; it is glorious. You can see the final results Friday at 10:45 a.m. at the Boy's and Girl's Club.

This time of year can be such a time of joy—especially for children. Of course, the joy is often harder for adults who are feeling the responsibility of making it joyful for children while being reminded of some of the baggage we brought into adulthood. And then there are the usual challenges of staying alive as the days get darker, the nights longer and the weather worse.

This is part of the reason why religious institutions get busier this time of year. It is a good time to light candles, to fast, to gather families and communities together, to pray, to be quiet, to listen and just generally to hunker down in hopefulness and preparation for a new dawning.

In the faculty lounge yesterday, there was discussion about how Santa Claus has trumped Christmas—or rather Advent—with its inexorable drive to buy stuff. Rather than this being a calm time of focusing inward, it gets more and more hectic as we spend even to the point of losing the meaning of giving. Of course, the drive trumps Hanukkah too, as well as every other religious observance including Ramadan.

This time of year can bring forth issues in schools about religion. In the United States, Christmas is so dominant that other religions can get eclipsed. It can be a challenge for Hanukkah to hold a candle to Christmas. Some Jewish families decide to combat it. Others just decide to go with both—or neither. (Ross on the sitcom “Friends” decided to go with the Hanukkah armadillo.)

Out of fear of the “establishment of religion” and fearing the offense of another with our own religions, most of us have downplayed or withheld our religious expressions—certainly at CDS. That's OK, but my vision for a diverse community includes a variety of religious expressions.

This is one of the blessings of being in a school—at least a school like CDS. The children can lead the way. They are uninhibited about what is meaningful to them; their expressions are always meaningful in some way. A variety of spiritual

∞ This Week's Hot Dates ∞



Friday, December 19th
10:45 a.m.

(doors open at 10:30 a.m.)

Winter Performance
Boys' and Girls' Club (17th and Guerrero)
Noon Dismissal (No Extended Program)

Monday, December 22nd – Friday, December 26th
Winter Break; No School
(No Camp Available This Week)

Monday, December 29th – Friday, January 2nd
Winter Break; No School
(Winter Break Camp offered except for January 1st)

Thursday, January 8th
5:00 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.
Diversity Committee meeting

Thank You!

- ▶ To all the parents, staff & faculty who made the Book Fair such a smash success (see PTTA Update.)
- ▶ To Pat Rose for hosting a first grade parent breakfast in her home.
- ▶ To Leaping Lizards parents Lisa Palmer, Bev Griggs, Laura Moon, Joel Cook, Malka Kopell, Bill Glenn, Diana Hunt, Vanessa Lambright and Marie Cross for chaperoning the Brown Bear Factory field trip.
- ▶ To Bev Griggs for organizing the Leaping Lizard Holiday Breakfast celebration.
- ▶ To the Zirulnik family for donating 1,000 beautiful pencils for the teachers and classrooms.
- ▶ To the Towerys for donating a DVD player to the Teddy Bear Class.
- ▶ To the Donovans for sharing their expertise and for creating video discs of the Teddy Bear bakery field trip.
- ▶ To John Kraus for the subscription to Sports Illustrated for Kids.
- ▶ To Eliza Hemenway for donating a puppet theatre to the Starfish class.
- ▶ And to Georgia McNamara for repotting some Starfish plants in beautiful new pots!

expressions happen all around us at school these days. Friday, as we all share the enthusiasm of our children, we can remember the original meaning of enthusiasm is “imbued with the divine.”

Reflections on Author Susan Straight by Cara & Mr. Andre of the Middle School

Last week, an award-winning novelist, Susan Straight, came into our class and spoke to us about the art of revision and literary criticism. She told us a little bit about her own books and life, and then we asked her questions. It was cool to hear that professional authors rack their brains over the same things we do.

Speaking of criticism, our class just wrote critiques of the book Hatchet. Susan Straight read us excerpts from an excellent book review she was working on for the *Washington Post*. We think we're pretty good too. Here is an excerpt from the beginning of Beth Levin's review of Hatchet.

Beth wrote, "When you think of a book, you think of a thick, colorful piece of paper for the cover, and in the inside pages, full of words, just silly words, right? Wrong! Only very talented writers can make an invisible hand stick out of the book and pull you into the book. One of those writers is the author of Hatchet: Gary Paulsen."

Extended Program News

CDS Opens Extended Program to Outside Students

We are opening up the Break Week camps, Elective/Enrichment Classes, and PM Program to children who don't attend CDS. Please help us by spreading the word to neighbors and friends. Families interested in receiving more information can call Jenna at x15.

Winter Electives

Get ready for Winter Electives/Enrichment Classes. Registration packets have been sent home and are full of exciting electives both old and new! If you haven't yet received a packet, please ask for one at the front desk.

Winter Break Camps

There is plenty of room left in both the preschool and elementary/middle school winter break camps. The camps run December 29th through January 2nd. The camps are also open to non-CDS families, so spread the word to friends and neighbors! There will be lots of extra cooking, art, theater, and science activities, plus time to play and relax with good friends and fun teachers.

A Reminder

There will be no extended program available on Friday, December 19th, because of early dismissal. Have a safe and fun holiday!

—Jenna Stephens, Extended Program Coordinator

Diversity Committee Meeting

There will be a Diversity Committee meeting from 5:00 - 5:45 p.m. on Thursday, January 8th in the faculty lounge. It will be short and pithy with a focus on recruitment of families and teachers. Rick will be facilitating the discussion, and everyone is encouraged to attend.

Laminated Visor Signs

Please help afternoon pick-up run more smoothly by placing the laminated sign bearing your child's name on your car visors. This notice allows teachers to have your child ready to go when you reach the double doors. Thank you.

School Photos Sent Home and Retakes in the New Year

By now you should have received your child's individual school portraits from Photo Retake Day. If not, please talk to your teacher or contact Amanda at x12. Group photos will be arriving after the first of the year. We will be scheduling yet another Photo Retake Day in 2004 for those still missing portraits or wanting retakes. The Starfish group photo will also need to be retaken on that day due to technical difficulties. Stay tuned in 2004.

—Amanda Coggin, Assistant to the Head, x12

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

Book Fair Stirring Success; Thanks to Many

In only three hours our parents, faculty and staff purchased nearly \$11,000-worth of books last Wednesday evening at A Clean Well Lighted Place For Books! Much appreciation to all who attended, enjoyed the company and still had time to shop! About 100 of the books purchased are for our ever-expanding library collection.

In the next four days, the CDS community continued to shop for an additional \$1,300 worth of purchases. The bookstore will be giving us a check for 20% of the total —\$2,460—which we will use to buy books that come pre-barcoded, pre-spine-labeled and pre-covered from our library book distributor!

Thanks to the incredible roster of volunteers who made this happen:

- A special thank you to the Fernald (4th/Leaping Lizard) and Saussy (3rd grade) families who treated us to an absolutely delicious and elegant spread of holiday fare.
- To this year's Book Fair organizing committee: Lisa Eltinge, Kate Moses, Sue Barnett, Joe Becker, Patricia Buse-Ruppert, Tina Corse, Jody Debs, Mary Fernald, Anne Funsten, Tacy Gaede, Debra Levin, Regina Marler, Sally Nielsen, Marilyn Rogers and Robin Wander. Great thanks for your hard work.
- Thank you to the additional parents who staffed the Book Fair: Colleen Bailey, Kathleen Cologne,

Betsy Cordes, Winifred Ehrenburg, Suzanne Hoey, Suzanne Katanic, Hilary Lamar, Joan Livingston, Lucia Marques, Lisa Palmer, Darcy Provo and Haun Saussy.

- To everyone on the administration team who helped in some way, along with extended care teachers Rob Gillespie and Michael Gast, and art teachers Elizabeth McClellan and Karen Slovak.
- And, oh yes, special thanks to the bookstore. Julia Thomas and staff are fantastic!

Please remember to shop at A Clean Well Lighted Place for Books all year long and remember to say "CDS" at the register. We earn 5% on every purchase !

Friday Morning Coffee

Suffering from separation anxiety...from fellow adults?
Schedule a few minutes in your Friday morning to join other parents for hot coffee and grown-up conversation 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?

Help us reduce our paper usage by receiving the *Weekly* via email. Please email us at cdsweekly@cds-sf.org and give us your email address. 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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How to Submit to *The CDS Weekly*.

Submissions are to be received **no later than 8:00 am Wednesday**. Please email them to cdsweekly@cds-sf.org.

