



∞ The CDS Weekly ∞

Catching Up on the Coming Weeks

(415) 861-5432
March 4, 2004

Words From Rick

Freedom to Read

While waiting for my car to be fixed one rainy Saturday, I walked to A Clean Well-Lighted Place for Books, and within the first minute of browsing, Susan Sontag's Regarding the Pain of Others seemed to leap off the table into my hands. The irony of my choice did not escape me as I found a chair and began to read. I'd been told my wait would be long and the bill high. I would have preferred my dentist's office.

Before long I looked up to find a grandmother asking an intelligent looking six-year-old to sit here (right next to me) and read while she looked for books. The girl immediately plunged into her book. A few minutes later, I heard a woman saying: "Don't fold the pages back like that. See how it creases them." The girl stopped right away; the shopkeeper moved on. What nice people, I thought to myself. A nanny with a stroller rolled over and offered the girl another book, which she took happily.

Ninety-nine pages later I looked up. The child, who was now on what looked like her third book, had just said no to the nanny's offer of yet another book, and the nanny was peeved. She pushed the book at our avid little reader, who pouted and hunkered down into the one she was already reading. The nanny slammed the book on the table and rolled away again.

Just as I read, "People are often unable to take in the sufferings of those close to them," the nanny returned with a stack of six books, which the child rejected even more strenuously. "Why you ungrateful little..." the nanny seethed, though she said nothing, and my reading partner buried her face all the more defensively into her book. She and I silently established the kind of bond that only intense parallel play can engender. At least, that is how I felt even though neither of us acknowledged the other's existence.

The nanny's hostility was palpable as she looked to the grandmother as if to say, "See how hopeless this child is?" The other responsible adult looked back with a helpless expression.

In pain I turned back to my book to read: "Compassion is an unstable emotion. It needs to be translated into action or it withers." I could do nothing. To intervene would have been to interfere; I had to leave A Clean Well-Lighted Place for Books.

In January 1941, in his state of the Union speech, FDR posited four freedoms: freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom from want and freedom from fear. Let's add freedom to read. Reading, though harder for some people than others, is something that humans will naturally learn to do. In our culture it is an obvious necessity and should be seen as a right rather than a responsibility. Unfortunately, it is all too often

∞ This Week's Hot Dates ∞



Friday, March 5th
Photo Retake Day

Monday, March 8th
5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Knit & Spin
Faculty Lounge

Thursday, March 11th
Winter Electives End

Friday, March 12th
Professional Day
No School
No Extended Program

****Please see the PTTA Update below for future hot dates and important Ball & Auction and Country Fair information!***

Thank You!

- ▶ To the Gigliolo family for donating a telescope for CDS students to expand their scientific investigations.
- ▶ To Cathy Hazlewood, Tina Corse, Asher Guthertz and the middle schoolers for helping out during the drop-off down pour last week. Also to Kevin Corse for arriving quickly with a chainsaw to clear the tree in our driveway. It was all very exciting!
- ▶ To Tina Corse for many hours and loads of help in designing & assembling the CDS quilts.
- ▶ To CDS art specialists Elizabeth McClellan and Karen Slovak for their presentation to the PTTA meeting regarding "sacred blobs" and other mysteries of art and brain development.
- ▶ To Kathleen DiGrande for tons of plexi-glass and wood donations to the Art Department.

seen as something else. For children today, reading is something you have to do in order to make it in school. It is something you do because your parents want you to. It is often something you do to please a teacher.

Way back in the '50's, when I was a child, my parents read to me. It was wonderful. I still remember some great ones: Katie and the Big Snow, The Little House, Mike Mulligan and Mary Ann. Dr. Seuss was in there with, If I Ran the Zoo (which is probably why I became a headmaster) and McElligot's Pool (which fed my adventurousness). And, of course, Goodnight Moon.

Then there was first grade. I remember my first reading group. I remember struggling with, "See Jane run. Look, look, look," but that was okay. I thought that was the deal, and I didn't expect it to be a breeze. In fact, I always expect to struggle the first time I do something. Besides, I noticed none of my classmates was whipping through this stuff the way my parents did, and Johnny Frankel with whom I compared myself was somewhat halting in his approach to words, too.

The next day, however, I discovered I was in a different group from my buddy Johnny, and I ask the teacher why?

"Because that's the fast reading group."

"But Johnny is in that group, and I am as good as him."

"No, you're not."

I stopped struggling with reading and spent the next four years struggling with the adults who were trying to teach it to me. In fourth grade for book reports I would pick books like Paddle to the Sea, which had great pictures that took up three quarters of the page. I was intimidated by the words. Then the summer I was ten, my mother read The Battle of Britain to me. Halfway through she said it was time for her to go start dinner. I protested, but to no avail. Dinner had to be started. So there I was sitting on the couch with a book I was passionate about finishing, and I did. I finished the whole story before dinner.

Our society is nuts about reading because the educational establishment has convinced the public that success in life is dependent upon reading, and if you're not reading by the time you're out of first grade, your life will be one slippery slope into failure.

Reading is something all humans can learn how to do, just as they learn how to speak. When we begin to speak, we all start out with something as accurate as, "Mama." The adult response is not, "No, that is not how you say my name. The correct pronunciation is, 'Mommy.'" It is natural for children, when they are ready, to notice letters and words as they are driving in the car or walking around shopping areas. Letters are as important a part of their environment as animals—more prevalent, actually. In some ways, writing precedes reading. With writing children get a chance to use an ability they already have (representing something with a crayon or a marker) to learn the letters. Coaching by adults in teachable moments is at least as effective as a reading group—with some kids more so.

But the most important thing is to read to children. For as long as humans have been human, storytelling has been the foundation of education. Reading to children is, of course, worth doing for the relationship alone. When you add to that the modeling, the vocabulary development, the insights, the pleasure, and all that can be learned through books, it is a wonder that parents aren't doing it constantly. Read to your children, and it will be impossible for them not to learn to read.

To be sure, reading must be taught, but how it is taught is critical. There are some children who pick it up as if by osmosis by the age of four. There are others for whom it is a mystery on into third grade. Brains are different, and good teaching includes a variety of different approaches. Phonics is necessary for some kids and unnecessary for others.

In order for kids to exercise this freedom to read, they need it

not to be imposed upon them. The disciplines of reading can be taught in teachable moments: e.g. "Don't crease the pages like that," or they can be taught systematically, but the system needs to be flexible so that it never takes away the child's freedom to read.

Children's interests are not something to be thwarted, but worked with. Imposing books on children is not just a bad strategy, it is a violation of their soul. I don't know anything about those three individuals who worked their way into my consciousness at A Clean Well-Lighted Place for Books. I don't know how willful or stubborn the girl is. I don't know her relationship to the two adults. I do not know their history, or even which side of the bed any of them got up on that morning. I do know it was not a good idea for the nanny to assault that little girl with books. It was a violation of a basic human right.

By the way, March 2nd was the hundredth birthday of Theodor Geisel, also known as Dr Seuss.

The Dirt

Student Leadership

Last Wednesday, Eddie, Nick, and I went through the school collecting recycling from each of the classrooms. Eddie was fairly vocal about his lack of desire to participate that day but realized he had a job to do. The boys had collected and weighed the recycling of a few classrooms when they came to the first grade room. They went in and brought the blue bin into the hallway to be weighed and emptied into the large collection bag. When Eddie dumped the recycling into the bag, he and Nick noticed a juice box, which as Eddie immediately pointed out is non-recyclable. Eddie took it upon himself to write the first grade class a "recycling ticket" since they were in violation of the recycling laws. He used a piece of scrap paper and wrote, "Recycling Ticket: The first grade class put a juice box in their recycling container. Juice boxes cannot be recycled. Please be more careful next time." He and Nick signed the ticket. He handed the ticket to Ms. Nicola who promptly called on the class to give Eddie and Nick their attention. Eddie stated with no prompting from me, "I found a juice box in the recycling bin. Juice boxes are not recyclable because they are made of a mixture of materials; paper, wax, foil and plastic. Please be more careful next time." None of the first graders made a sound. They gave him their full attention. —Morgan Taggart

Drop-In Care Reminder

If you call after 10:00 a.m. on the day you need your child to stay in the PM program, it is considered a **late sign up**. You will need to sign up on a separate sheet to the right of the receptionist's desk and will be charged extra for the late notice. Our relaxed policy of late has made it difficult for PM teachers to plan their afternoons and we appreciate your understanding as we re-implement the old model.

Photo Retake Day, Friday, March 5th

If you would like your child/ren's photo retaken, please have them dressed nicely this Friday. **The Leaping Lizard and Starfish class photos didn't turn out, so we will be retaking those group class photos on Friday.** If you are unhappy with your child's individual class photo **or you still have not received it, I would recommend having their photo retaken Friday.** Those of you who've not received your child's group class photo, it's on its way from the lab. Contact me at extension 12 with any questions.

—Amanda Coggin, Assistant to the Head

Extended Program News

Spring Break Camp

The next camp will be held during spring break, from April 12th– 16th, and the theme is Urban Wildlife! Both preschool and elementary camps were full on several days during the February Break camp so **please make sure you sign up in advance** if you need camp care during that week. Drop-ins are hard to accommodate with such a small teaching staff, so we appreciate you diligence with meeting the registration deadlines.

Winter Electives

Winter Electives end on March 5th. **However**, the make-up week runs from March 8th–12th. Also, the cartooning and TV news show electives will have some extra classes and a final screening in late March. Please check the extended program bulletin board for specific information regarding which electives are holding make-up classes and the screening dates.

Spring Electives

Spring electives packets were sent home in backpacks last week. Spring electives start on Monday, March 29th and run through Friday, May 21st. The registration deadline for spring electives is Wednesday, March 24th.

Summer Camp

Packets with a just-published extended program brochure, plus CDS summer information and registration materials have been mailed out. Please let Jenna know if you need any additional copies.

PM Partnership with the Boys and Girls Club

Last week was the first week elementary students spent a day at the Boys and Girls club. Students and teachers had fun and learned a lot. The following schedule will continue through June: 1st Graders are scheduled to attend with Mike on Wednesdays, 2nd graders will go on Thursdays with Josh, and on Friday, 3rd–6th graders will attend with Rob and Amanda. This is a great opportunity for community building, exciting new experiences and fun for CDS students. Please call Jenna if you have any questions.

—Jenna Stephens, Extended Program Coordinator

It's Time to Check the Lost & Found Again

Our Lost and Found is bursting with winter cloths: sweaters, jackets, rain gear, even a stray shoe or two. Please make a

regular point of checking the cupboard at the end of the first floor hall by the kids' bathrooms. You'll be surprised what you find!

Winter Wear and Morning Drop-Off

We know you're in a rush to get out the door in the morning and don't always have time to make sure your kids are swaddled in their winter clothes. But, particularly on rainy days, the process of dressing kids as they leave their cars really slows down the drop-off line and finds your drop-off team a little more rain soaked. Please take the extra minute to prepare your kids for the weather before you drop them at school. We really, really appreciate it!

Hola Familias!

The 2nd grade has almost earned their piñata party. Each of my classes earn tickets when they, *solo hablo español*, only speak Spanish. When each child has earned 5 tickets, we celebrate with a piñata party. Help cheer your 2nd graders on. They're almost there!

Here are *la frase de la semana*:

Cual es tu color favorito? Which is your favorite color?

Mi color favorito es... My favorite color is...

roja red

verde green

azul blue

See if your child knows any other colors in Spanish.

Gracias y hasta pronto!

—Consuelo Aparicio-Cercos, Spanish Department

Knit and Spin, Monday Evenings

The Knitters and Spinners continue to meet every Monday evening from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the faculty lounge to share our projects, offer one another help and learn new skills. You're invited! Hope to see you there!

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

Personal or Business Advertising

Space Still Available in the Black & White

Spring Ball & Auction Program

This week's featured opportunity to support the fabulous and fast-approaching *Black & White Spring Ball and Auction* is personal ad sales in the auction program. Have you ever wanted to share with the CDS world your appreciation for a teacher, staff member or favorite chicken? Are you tired of the same old greeting cards to celebrate a birthday or special event? Do you think your child's artwork is deserving of wider distribution than your refrigerator door? For a small, tax deductible fee, you can realize these goals AND find yourself in the good graces of the hard-working auction planning team. Act now, since the deadline for submitting artwork and materials has been extended only through this Monday, March 8th. Cost is \$100 for a full page ad (7 ½" x 10"), \$50 for a half-page (7 ½" x 5") or \$25 for a quarter page (3 ½" x 5"). Ads can be placed in the envelope at

Martha's desk or e-mailed to Beth Ditlefsen at bethd@cds-sf.org. If you have questions, please contact Lydia Yaffe at (415) 305-8881 or Robin Wander at (415) 587-3859.

Auction Tickets

Look for Stephanie Scarpulla and Patricia Buse-Ruppert selling auction tickets at this week's Friday Morning Coffee. And next week, Stephanie, Patricia and friends will be selling tickets at morning drop-off beginning Monday, March 8th. Drive-by ticket purchases can be made via credit card or check, and buyers will receive a fresh spring flower as a thank you. This year, we will be sponsoring tickets for each teacher and a guest, so please consider buying a ticket or two to share. Thank you for your support!

Childcare for Spring Ball & Auction

Calling all parents who have not yet lined up a sitter for the night of March 20th. . . Childcare during this year's Black & White Spring Ball & Auction will be available at CDS, courtesy of Rob Gillespie, elementary Extended Program Teacher. Kids can be dropped off at CDS starting at 6:00 p.m. (doors to the Ball open at 6:30 p.m.) and picked up as late as midnight. Kids can wear pajamas or comfy play clothes. Food, fun and movies will be provided. The cost is \$5 per hour per child. Spaces can be reserved by leaving a message for Mr. Rob at CDS (extension 26), emailing him at robg@cds-sf.org, or by signing up with Martha at the front desk. Please contact Rob with any questions.

The Country Fair Needs Your Talent!

The Country Fair Committee is seeking talent for our Country Fair celebration on May 1st. Are you a musician? A juggler? A balloon sculptor? Do you have a magnificent talent you'd like to share with the CDS community? Don't hide your talent from your potentially adoring peers! Contact Sally Nielson at sn@hausrath.com to get involved.

Community Thrift Donations

Your donations to Community Thrift continue to benefit the school. Clean clothing and linens, unbroken toys, kitchen items, hi-fi equipment, CDs, books and knick-knacks are all in demand. Please do not donate computer software or hardware, mattresses, car seats, strollers or exercise equipment. Donations can be made at the Community Thrift Store at 625 Valencia Street, between 17th and 18th. The drop-off point is on Sycamore, a one-way alley accessible from Mission Street, open every day from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Please make sure to tell them you are donating on behalf of Children's Day School, and give them account code 83. For more information contact Linda Glover at (415) 255-6885.

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 (415) 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



Monday – Friday, March 15th – March 19th
Winter Electives Make-Up Week

Saturday, March 20th

6:30 p.m. – Midnight

Black and White Ball and Auction
Annunciation Cathedral

Wednesday, March 24th

Registration Deadline for Spring Electives

Monday, March 29th

Spring Electives Begin

Wednesday, March 31st

Cesar Chavez Birthday

Last Day to Sign Up for Spring Break Camp

Monday, April 12th – Friday, April 16th

Spring Break

Spring Break Camp Available

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.

