



October 13, 2005

THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

Words from Rick

On the Road to Greatness

This week's column is guest-written by Emilie Robrbach, music and drama teacher.

We've been back from Ashland about a week now, and my right shoulder is still a bit sore from the World Championship Arm Wrestling Competition that occurred one rainy Sunday afternoon in Lithia Fountain and Grill, a place where you can still get a decent root beer float and play pinball for free. I thought I knew these seventh graders well, but now I know them even better. For example: Gilli will stop talking, no matter what, if someone points out to her through the car window, "Look, Gilli, COWS." Charlie is a veerry sneaky Capture the Flag player. Evan has quite a complicated imaginary friend named Joe. Jessica always likes to know what time it is. Nikki, if you let her, will listen to the same song by Natalie over and over again. I admit that we actually had five "personalities" in our hotel room if you count Kate's beloved stuffed animal, Greg. Wes and Henry are excellent at improvisation, whether their characters are male or female. Jacky really likes Cheetos and has a hard time keeping a straight face when he's on stage improvising with, well, *anyone*. Maggie proved herself to be quite a persuasive debater during our "Apples to Apples" game. If there's going to be a dramatic moment in a play it's probably best to seat Nancy by herself, lest she frighten the unsuspecting theatergoers around her with her cries of shock, which – and, having sat next to Nancy at a play on two occasions, I can vouch for this – can be quite ear-splitting. Since our return, Reese has written an entire musical including a cast of authentic Shakespearian characters and several milkmaids, with song lyrics written in iambic pentameter. As for the teachers, I can tell you this: Doug enjoys dancing on the sidewalk while there's live Elizabethan music playing across the street, and I think Terry, though he tried to play it cool, really liked falling in the mud during our Capture the Flag game. I, as the author, get to remain anonymous.

Our group got closer not just during the downtime, but also by sharing the plays together. Our weekend at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival started Friday night with the most extraordinary production of *Richard III* I have ever seen. Most of the students had watched Ian McClellan's version a few nights before our travels, and I was amazed at how much they understood. The teachers told them before the play started that they could talk during the show only to ask us questions; I was impressed to see not only that those directions were followed, but also by the quality of their questions, such as, "If Margaret isn't a ghost, why does she keep showing up right before someone dies?" Saturday morning, after a lengthy discussion of the play, we heartily entertained each other by improvising scenes from the play in our own modern manner of speaking and with the occasional altering of the "Where" of the scene. Try as I

Hot Dates

Friday, October 14

10-10:15 a.m.

Friday assembly

Third grade presenting

Tuesday, October 18 &

Wednesday, October 19

6-9 p.m.

Annual Fund Phonathon

Tuesday, October 18 & Wednesday,

October 19

Picture Day

Thursday, October 20

7-9 p.m.

Parent education night

Faculty lounge



Thank You!

- To Linda Glover and Ray Baxter for taking leftover lost and found clothing to Community Thrift.
- To all of the second grade families for providing an incredible faculty appreciation breakfast.
- To Katherine Whitney, Elizabeth Seirmarco, Ann Van Gelder, Kara Schleunes and Kristen Wurz for being super tour guides on the admission tours.
- To Cindy and David Wilson for co-chairing the parent Annual Fund campaign.

may, I will never forget Charlie, Gilli and Evan's version of Act I, Scene Two, where Richard reveals to Lady Anne that he is responsible for killing her husband, as it transpired in Macy's department store.

Saturday, we were privileged to see August Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, the same weekend that August Wilson passed away. *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* is an incredibly insightful and well-written play about race relations based on the true experience of Madame Rainey, who was a jazz singer during the late 1920's. Most of us cried as we were taken off guard by the tragic ending. Later in the afternoon, we were able to converse about the complex dynamics of the play, especially how the play represented the intense struggle of relationships within an oppressed group as the group wrestles with its experience of being treated as "less than" and its desire to break free of oppression.

Saturday night we braved the cold weather to enjoy *Twelfth Night* in the Elizabethan Theatre, which is an exact replica of the outdoor theatre of Shakespeare's time and the first of its kind in the United States. The seventh graders were excited to see this play because they had been reading it in their Humanities class, and they were looking forward to comparing their own characterizations with the choices of the professional actors. At the end of the play (or, two hot chocolates later, depending on how you look at it), some students were satisfied and others disappointed, saying that it wasn't the way they had imagined it in their heads. This suited the teachers just fine, as one of our most cherished goals at CDS is the support and nourishment of independent thinking and the ability to articulate one's point-of-view while being open to gaining knowledge by the viewpoints of others. I felt inspired by the clarity of vision of those students who would have produced *Twelfth Night* differently. Perhaps you'll see their vision on stage at our production of Shakespeare in the spring.

After a long, rainy Sunday filled with hiking, riding on the carousel and pinball-playing, we went to see *Room Service* by Murray and Boretz. (We were supposed to see *Dr. Faustus* in the Elizabethan Theatre, but our experience the night before taught us that no amount of hot chocolate could keep us warm enough through the smattering of rain still falling from the sky. We offer deep gratitude to Betsy Cordes for taking the lead and exchanging the tickets.) *Room Service* was a slapstick farce about a conniving playwright and a dilapidated hotel and a great way to end the weekend.

This is the second year I've been fortunate enough to travel to Ashland for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and again I am struck by the beauty of the experience. Shakespeare's themes of love and war, morality and tragedy, humor and mayhem are timeless, as are the memories the seventh grade class creates together as we prepare for the school year ahead. As Shakespeare wrote in *Twelfth Night*, and the seventh graders loved to repeat over the course of our weekend, "Some people are born great, some people achieve greatness, and some people have greatness thrust upon them." Being a part of this weekend, as an audience and as participants, reminds us all of the infinite possibilities of who we are and who we can become, and that greatness is always available to us.

And all right, I'll reveal two things about this author, as it's only fair: I really shouldn't have eaten so much of that unbelievably delicious peanut butter cup pie at Munchie's on Sunday night, but it was just soooooo good. And if you ask me about being defeated at arm wrestling, I'll deny it completely.

The Dirt

Autumn in the Farm & Garden

If you haven't noticed yet, there are a bunch of seasonal changes happening in our schoolyard. The most obvious one is that the leaves on the trees are changing colors and dropping. Some of the more subtle ones that you may not have noticed are happening in the farm. JoJo and Lucky have lost the baby lamb look that they hold onto for awhile after being sheared and already have at least four inches of wool on them. They are also spending most of their mornings running around the barnyard scavenging for leaves that have dropped during the night (don't worry, the leaves aren't toxic to sheep and I have them on a diet). Also, a few of the hens are molting right now so we are only getting about one egg a day. Some of Pio's new feathers are already growing back. You can actually see the tips of the feathers

popping out from the shaft of the feather. It's amazing to watch the process of the feather first appearing out of the shaft and then growing into a full feather (the process looks really similar to a seed sprouting). I am currently looking forward to the return of the rainy season which will bring back to the garden, among other things, salamanders and the sour grass that the children love to chew on.

From the Office

Operators Are Standing By...

In preparation for the upcoming phonathon next Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, all parents should have recently received a letter from Cindy and David Wilson asking for a donation to the CDS Annual Fund. New parents also received a booklet written by the National Association of Independent Schools, "Gifts That Give Back," which answers questions about fundraising and volunteering at independent schools such as CDS. Please take a few minutes to read these materials and be prepared to support CDS, as well as our all-volunteer corps of parent and Trustee callers, when your phone rings next week. Each year, the CDS Annual Fund is our most important fundraising effort, and it supports the many outstanding people and programs that make CDS special. If you have any questions about the Annual Fund or fundraising at CDS, please contact Marion Quinones at marionq@cds-sf.org or 861-5432 x323. Thank you for your support.

Picture Day

Mugshots will take student pictures on Tuesday, October 18 and Wednesday, October 19. The following schedule will be followed:

- Tuesday: 9:00- 9:45, Leaping Lizards
- Tuesday: 9:50- 10:30, Starfish
- Tuesday: 10:30-11:15, Kindergarten
- Tuesday: 11:20-11:50, 1st Grade
- Tuesday: 11:50- 12:15, 2nd Grade
- Wednesday: 9:00-9:45, Tadpoles
- Wednesday: 9:45 -10:20, 3rd Grade
- Wednesday: 10:20-11:00, 4th Grade
- Wednesday: 11:00-11:35, 5th and 6th Grade
- Wednesday: 11:35-12:15 7th and 8th Grade

From the Classrooms

Visiting Teacher

Diana Weill, a teacher from Switzerland, is visiting CDS through October 21. As part of her training, she is here studying the school and the use of English, as English has become the second language taught in Swiss schools. While being here, she has noticed a strong sense of community, visible in the closeness and warmth between teachers and students, and the strong presence of parents at events like Friday morning coffee and Friday assembly. She is impressed by the strategies used to keep students' attention, evidenced in the elementary grades she is observing, and wants to take these strategies back with her. She is thoroughly enjoying her time at CDS, getting to know the teachers and the community. Feel free to stop by and say hello to Diana; she will be in the 2nd and 3rd grade classrooms until October 21.

Events

Fiesta 2006

Interested in volunteering to make our annual community celebration and auction a success? Fiesta 2006 will be held on the evening of Saturday, April 1, and its not too soon to begin planning. The list below outlines some of the ways you can help. Look it over, think of how you'd best be put to work and join us in the library on Thursday, November 3 from 4:30-5:30 p.m. to begin planning for this great event.

- Dessert or beer/wine donation
- Ticket sales
- Decorations
- Signage/Program/Promotion/Graphics
- Photography
- Music
- Soliciting donations
- Advertising sales
- Volunteers for day/night of sound/lighting
- Database entry
- Printing & copying
- Accounting during the event

Contact Stephanie Scarpulla (sascarpulla@sbcglobal.net) or Robin McClarren (robin.mcclarren@wellsfargo.com) with any question, comment or ideas.

Parent Education Night

Parent education night will take place on Thursday, October 20 from 7-9 p.m. Topics for the night are grade specific:

- Preschool Understanding your preschooler: A day in the life of our CDS class.
- Elementary The CDS Social Curriculum: Responsive Classroom and how it can apply at home.
- Middle School (5th-7th only) Navigating Adolescence: A forum for questions and idea sharing.
- A separate evening for 8th grade parents will be held at a later date, tbd.

Parents will meet in the faculty lounge for light snacks and drinks at 7 p.m. and then disperse to respective classrooms. Childcare for CDS students will be provided; please call Ryan at 861-5432 x310 to sign up so we know how many kids will be attending.

Extended Program News

Social Justice Camp

The social justice camp was a great success! Please check out the bulletin board display of pictures, art and ideas from the day's events on the first floor. Below is a student-written song that really exemplified the day. Thanks to all who participated!

CDS Indigenous Peoples Song

We the people of the earth
Honor those of this land
Come on friend, let's take a stand
Put your hand in my hand

You shared with us many things,
Like language, food and arts
So today we must bow
And thank you from our hearts

You've been here for thousands of years
Close to the land and in the city
There will be no more need for tears
There's no more room for pity

Chorus: 'Cause we're the people of the earth
We'll not sit and watch you suffer
We'll take a stand for this world
And together we'll be tougher

PTTA Update

October Meeting

The subject of Tuesday's PTTA meeting was the Annual Fund and the upcoming Phonathon. Kit Land, CDS Board Member and Head of the Development Committee and Bill Gaede, CDS Board Member, Chair of the Finance Committee and Treasurer, described to parents and staff the purposes of the Annual Fund and the significance of parent involvement. The goals for this year's Annual Fund are to raise \$350,000, including \$115,000 from CDS parents and to have 100% of CDS families make some contribution to the Annual Fund. Full parent participation is very significant when seeking additional contributions from foundations, corporations

PTTA Corner

Friday Morning Coffee

Come join other parents for coffee and doughnuts in the yard after Friday drop-off, 8:30-9 a.m. This is your chance to meet other families, have a few minutes of grown-up conversation and grab sustenance and caffeine before you start your day.

In addition, we need volunteers on occasion to help set up and bring doughnuts. To volunteer, contact Michael Silver at 415-518-1803 or michael.silver@barclaysglobal.com or sign up on the sheet posted in the first floor entryway. Nothing gets the kids out of bed in the morning like the knowledge that they will stop off for doughnuts during the drive to school!

PTTA Questions or Ideas?

- Marianne Evans, PTTA President, (415) 648-1731 or goevansgo@yahoo.com
- Amanda Richard, VP, Classroom Liaison Coordinator, (415) 695-0657 or amanda.richard@sbcglobal.net
- Laura Pliska, VP, Community Building Coordinator, (415) 641-5116 or laura@sfbabyworks.com
- Ray Baxter, VP, Secretary, (415) 902-0765 or ray@warmroom.com
- Michael Silver, VP, Parent Volunteer Coordinator, (415) 597-2413 or michael.silver@barclaysglobal.com

and the community. Full minutes of the PTTA meeting will be published later this week through the liaisons.

Upcoming Events

- Wraps & Greens sale: Purchase high quality holiday wrappings and green through CDS. Almost half of every dollar spent goes to provide holiday bonuses to CDS faculty and staff.
- Community Building Committee Meeting: Monday, October 24, 5-6 p.m. For information about the Community Building Committee please contact Laura Pliska at 415-641-5116 or laura@sfbabyworks.com.
- General PTTA Meeting: Tuesday, November 1 or 8, TBD, 4:30–5:45 p.m. in the faculty lounge. The topic will include elements of the CDS curriculum. Watch this space for details.
- Faculty Holiday Party (December 9): The PTTA throws the faculty and staff a party to celebrate the holidays.

All parents are welcome at PTTA meetings. CDS is committed to parent participation and provides free childcare while parents are in meetings. Sign up at the front desk before 10 a.m. the day of the meeting.

If you have any comments, questions about the PTTA Updates, or items you would like included on the PTTA calendar, contact Ray Baxter (415-902-0765, ray@warmroom.com).

CDS Stories

Friday Coffee

About a year ago, I was a new parent at CDS, overwhelmed with the transition and having “buyer’s remorse” on occasion. My CDS experience was maintaining a cheerful demeanor with my son for drop off, then glancing about as I marveled to myself how these parents had time to hang around. One morning, I decided to hang around as well for a Friday coffee and food event put on by PTTA members (I thought two T’s in PTTA seemed strange - one more CDS adjustment). Some of the parents were quite friendly and welcomed me, and to my surprise these were the most “involved” parents. One parent I met was a slightly shy but cheerful fellow named Bill Littmann. I discovered that in the beginning of the school year, completely unsolicited, he stepped forward and offered to take over coordinating Friday coffees from the PTTA officers,

saying, “It’s something I can and would like to do.” I asked whether anyone else helped and learned that different people chipped in. I felt bad for this kind, generous man, and thought that bringing breakfast might be a good way to meet other parents and CDS staff, so I asked Bill to sign me up for once a month.

My partner, Carlos, and I made a fun event out of Friday coffee and food, sometimes getting up early and going to Krispy Kreme for a few boxes of fresh glazed donuts. That became an exciting event for our family to look forward to. Almost a year later, I’m now coordinating the event (with help from returning and new families) and gratefully include anyone who might contribute. It motivated me to help coordinate other parents to volunteer for activities they might find fun. I learned that many of the people I assumed I had nothing in common with would become fast friends and had a diversity of experience and outlooks that I would have missed out on had I persevered in my stereotyping of them. My son saw me at CDS more and asked if I was a “teacher”. I saw a new confidence in his discussions about school and perhaps a bit more of a strut at CDS and a sense that CDS was his turf. Most of all I learned (or re-learned) lessons on taking risks, opening up to new experiences and new people and discarding my own stereotypes.
Michael Silver, parent of Julian Vasquez-Silver, Starfish

“CDS Stories” is open to the entire CDS community. Please send your ideas for stories and storytellers to [cgs-stories@warmroom.com](mailto:cds-stories@warmroom.com), or call Ray Baxter at 415-902-0765.

Go Bulldogs!

Co-ed Volleyball Calendar

Friday, October 14, 4 p.m.

Chinese American International School,
150 Oak Street

Monday, October 17, 4 p.m.

Lycee Francais, 755 Ashbury Street

Please come out and cheer on your awesome Bulldogs!

School Wish List

Music Program

Kyoko Kimura, our new middle school music teacher, is in need of instrument donations for the new after school music lessons:

- Violins
- Woodwind instruments (flute, clarinet and sax)
- Small electronic keyboards

If you have a used instrument you would be willing to share with a CDS student, please contact Kyoko at 86I-5432 x379.

Woodshop

CDS is working on developing a new woodshop for students to build construction skills. If you have any of the following materials gathering dust in your basement, garage or closet, we would be happy to put them to good use:

- Used tools in good shape (screwdrivers, hammers, saws, electric drills)
- Old hardware (nuts, bolts, nails and screws)
- Wood scraps (three feet long or smaller)
- 5 gallon plastic buckets

Please deliver donations to the front desk. If you have any questions, ask Mr. John, at 86I-5432 x373.

Upcoming Dates

Monday, October 31

Professional development day

No school

No extended program

Thursday, November 3

4:30-5:30 p.m.

Fiesta 2006 planning meeting

Library

Children's Day School

333 Dolores Street

San Francisco, CA 94110

415-861-5432 (ph)

415-861-5419 (fax)

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Contact Mary to receive the *Weekly* via email