



March 29, 2007

# THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

## Words from Rick

### Celebrate CDS

This Saturday we treat ourselves to one of the great all-school events of the year, Fiesta 2007! Preparing for the Fiesta was itself a community-building event as students, teachers and parents worked on quilts and art projects that will be auctioned off, and parents, teachers and administrators thought about what they could give to the auction. Often thought of and spoken of as “the auction,” the committee each year has worked to find ways of making it more of a community happening and party, and at the same time raise significant money for sliding scale tuition.

Led by dedicated and enthusiastic co-chairs Robin McClarren and Leslie Edelman, dozens of parents have worked together to bring all of the many dimensions of the event together. So much of who we are is reflected in this event: teamwork (you should have seen the color-coded organizational chart that was on the table at the first meeting of the Fiesta Committee), cooperation and conflict resolution, a communal effort to make sure everyone feels included, and people reaching out to other people to continue to build a culture of giving. The preparation for this event, year after year, is a reflection of our learning community—it keeps getting better as people learn from the past, solve problems and work to make it more fun and more CDS.

Be sure to join the celebration this Saturday and notice all the work that went into making a great party. A special thanks to Robin and Leslie and all of the terrific volunteers who have made Fiesta 2007 possible.

### Open Endings...

*This week's article is guest written by Terry Ashkinos, middle school humanities teacher.*

For two years in a row, the seventh grade humanities class has participated in a short story project in which they write several stories over the course of the third quarter. In the beginning, I provide a lot of guidance, with respect to character and plot development, voice, conflict and resolution, etc. I also provide them with outlines and a framework to use, as well as examples of other stories (JD Salinger's “A Perfect Day for a Banana Fish” was a big hit this year). But their final story at the end of the project is written with little or no direction from me.

One afternoon in January, the students walked around the Mission District armed with disposable cameras and took pictures of anything that seemed interesting to them. They developed the pictures and chose seven of their favorite images to guide them through a narrative and serve as short story prompts. Outside the image prompt, the possibilities were entirely open to them. They could tell the story from one character's point of view, use an

### Hot Dates

Friday, March 30  
8:30 a.m.

Friday assembly  
Tadpole class presenting

Saturday, March 31

6:30 p.m. – 12 a.m.

Fiesta 2007

Event Center at St. Mary's  
1111 Gough St (at Geary)

Dates also posted on CDS website  
[www.cds-sf.org/news/calendar.html](http://www.cds-sf.org/news/calendar.html)



## Thank You!

- To John Kraus for taking the fabulous class photos this year!
- To Edwina Paschal for donating paint supplies to the art department.
- To the McKinnon family for their donation of sorely needed bike helmets for the yard.

omniscient narrator, use a first or third person perspective; whatever they felt would best serve the story. When the stories were complete, students work-shopped them with Bay Area writers who came to our classroom from 826 Valencia, a non-profit organization that works with schools and emerging young writers. This year seven stories were chosen to be published in 826 Valencia's *Quarterly*, a bound collection of stories with national distribution.

During the past two years, the students, without any direction from me, came up with a common theme that I like to call "The Shaggy Dog Story." My father introduced this term to me in reference to a joke that he would tell that starts out about a shaggy dog and then goes somewhere else entirely. It ends without any punch line or satisfactory ending and therein is the joke (funny?). Both years, almost every student wrote a short story that started somewhere in the middle, gave the reader a glimpse (or a snapshot, rather) of some drama unfolding, and ended without any resolution or tidy ending. I think the titles for the collection of stories the class chose this year and last also reflect this aesthetic: *Exit Strategy* and *Imagine, Dream, Leave*.

As we approach the end of the year, students are working on culminating projects in which they choose a topic, argue both sides of the controversy or central theme that surrounds the topic, and then choose one side and prove why it is the better viewpoint. More than half the class is struggling with choosing a side. They tell me they like both sides of the argument. It's as if they want to have an open-ended or "Shaggy Dog" argument that does not presuppose a clean and tidy conclusion. It's not that their research papers lack conviction. On the contrary, they feel very passionate about their topics and feel that there should be more than just two choices; that a moderate opinion that takes both points of view into account and comes up with a third alternative is more agreeable to their sensibilities.

Some of the arguments in their research papers are that the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus has a more preferable view of "change in the world" than Parmenides; that Descartes' philosophy of dualism is the same issue that Holden Caulfield from *The Catcher in the Rye* deals with; or arguing both the pros and cons of Communism, Socialism and Capitalism. Other topics include stem cell research, gun control, capital punishment, the moral responsibility of advertisers, rights of endangered species, the Homeland Security Act, or whether the *SF Chronicle* reporters should be forced by the Supreme Court to give up their sources in the Balco case, and many others.

These students simply feel that each topic is too complicated to be broken down into two points of view; they want the argument to continue after the research paper is finished. I think this is a testament to how well these students know how to relate to each other and the world around them. They can think for themselves as well as empathize for the other. They are not quick to judge. They aspire to understand the opposing point of view. They understand that although they may not reach "the last word" on any given topic, they can still voice their opinion today and possibly change their mind tomorrow. Their thinking is both critical and open-ended. We learn from "Shaggy Dog Stories" because we live them.

Keep your eye out for stories from CDS seventh graders in 826 Valencia's *Quarterly* later this year!

## Transforming St. Joseph's Hall

### Update

Last week, we held several meetings with CDS neighbors to share our architects' plans with them, and we have received their enthusiastic support for the project. Seven neighborhood institutions – Notre Dame Plaza, St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Holy Family Day Home, Mission High School, Grace Fellowship Community Church, Grace Urban Ministries and Dolores Park Church – submitted letters of support along with the school's application to the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, and we have been reminded, once again, how fortunate we are to be part of this vibrant, active and friendly neighborhood.

## School Wish List

- The Extended Program is looking for temporary or long term donations of any type of skateboarding gear including elbow and knee pads, wrist guards, skateboards, trucks, wheels and helmets. If you have any of these items and would be willing to loan them to the Extended Program for the week of April 9-13, please contact Michael ([michaelg@cds-sf.org](mailto:michaelg@cds-sf.org)) or Charlie ([charlies@cds-sf.org](mailto:charlies@cds-sf.org)), or drop any items by the school.

We also learned last week that next week's hearing before the Landmarks Board, which will take place at City Hall on Wednesday, April 4 at 12:30 p.m., will not include discussion of the solar curtain. The hearing was initially scheduled to include a review of all exterior work planned for St. Joseph's Hall—removal of the metal fire escape, construction of a raised porch and stadium seating area, installation of solar cells on the porch canopy and the planned solar curtain. City planners have decided, however, that the solar curtain warrants additional environmental review before this element is presented to the Landmarks Board, so it will not be part of next week's hearing. This change will not affect construction plans for this summer because all of this summer's work is interior. In addition, the architects anticipate that the hearing will be more straightforward without consideration of the solar curtain.

## From the Classrooms

### Donate Your Paint

Did you know that the average household in San Francisco stores approximately 10 gallons of open and unused paint? Disposing of paint properly is a hassle; why not donate it to CDS for children to work on the Kindness Mural Project!

Children around the world are working on a Children's Mile of Murals for the UNESCO decade of peace, to be unveiled at the pyramids in 2010. Murals will then travel as part of an art exhibit to museums around the world. Your old paint can travel to Egypt and be displayed at the Smithsonian—think of the possibilities! Questions? Call Vanessa Lyons 861-5432 x394.

## From the Office

### Class Pictures

Class pictures were a great success! Thanks to John Kraus, each class has several photo options available to view and order through the CDS smugmug website ([www.cds.smugmug.com](http://www.cds.smugmug.com)). 8x10 color photos cost \$8 and can be ordered online only—many other sizes and options are also available. Smugmug will mail your order directly to your home. Please contact Ryan Gordon at [ryang@cds-sf.org](mailto:ryang@cds-sf.org) if you have any questions.

### Lost and Found

This Thursday and Friday, lost and found items will be put out on the yard. Please look for and collect your student's belongings. All leftover items on Friday afternoon will be donated to Community Thrift. Please remember to label all belongings that go to school—this will help items get back home to you.

## Events

### Fiesta 2007

The Fiesta celebration is this Saturday, March 31! The party will be held at St. Mary's Cathedral (the downstairs Event Center) at 1111 Gough Street from 6:30 p.m. until midnight. We look forward to seeing you all there. It will be a great party and chance to socialize with friends and teachers. Please remember that the ticket price is suggested; pay only what you can. We would love to see each and every one of you there.

Be sure to do one last check of the online catalog and remember to print out your wish list; bring it to the auction so that you don't miss out on any of the fabulous auction items. To access the catalog: <http://www.galaxygoo.org/Members/Fiesta>.

To get started, click on "Need to Register" and provide the information requested. The special CDS key is "Poppy." Don't forget to click the "over 18" box.

### Instant Wine Cellar Raffle

There are still a few tickets left. Be sure to buy one before the big night for your 1 in 100 chance to win the INSTANT WINE CELLAR. The odds are fabulous! Crafted with generosity by the CDS community, this 5 case (and growing) wine cellar is valued at almost \$5,000. Some of the cellar's notable labels include a 1996 Chateau Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande,

a 2001 Joseph Phellps - Insignia, a 1995 Silver Oak - Napa Valley and so much more! In addition, the winner will receive a one hour phone consultation by Ronn Wiegand, Master of Wine, Master Sommelier (<http://www.ronnwiegand.com/about.php>). See the attached Instant Wine Cellar details and buy a ticket today!

## Featured Donation of the Week

### Row BBB = Barry Bonds Butt!

Two tickets to the April 4, 2007 Giants vs. San Diego game are waiting for a winning bidder. This is fireworks night and these are unbelievable seats in the Premium Field Club, just a few feet away from the Giants dugout and close enough to talk to the players. Donors Matt & Diane Larrabee say row BBB stands for "Barry Bonds Butt" because you are just that close.

## Reminders

**Please remember to bring cash for the bar.** And if you can, bring a little extra and buy a teacher a drink.

If you've rsvp'd and purchased tickets and have not received a ticket confirmation letter, have no fear! We've recorded your name and ticket information and will have bidder numbers ready for you when you check in on Saturday night. Simply provide your name and we'll give you a bidder number and program for the evening. Though morning drop-off ticket sales will end on Friday, you can still show up on Saturday evening and purchase tickets then; drop-ins are welcome.

## Childcare

Thank you for using CDS childcare. The teachers providing childcare are Rosalie Roberts, Molly Meng, Jeanne Macabe, Judy Thatcher and Sierra Simpson.

Childcare will be provided from 6 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Please return on time to pick up your child(ren). There will be movies, pizza and popcorn; remember to bring PJ's and sleeping bags.

All children must be signed in by an adult and parent contact information at the event must be provided.

No one will be sitting at the front desk to answer the doorbell or main telephone. Teachers can be reached by calling 595-1965. To access the school from the front gate, dial "0000" on the key pad.

Preschoolers will be in the bungalows and students in grades 1-7 will be in the second floor classrooms. The night's schedule is as follows:

- 6-7: Yard play/free choice
- 7-7:45: Pizza/drinks and reading
- 7:45-8:30: Art activities (pudding painting, watercolors, silly hats and fimo beads)
- 8:30-9:30: Movies, board games and sleeping
- 9:30-12:30: Movies and sleeping

Unfortunately, the deadline for childcare registration has passed. See Ryan Gordon if you need other options.

## Volunteers

If you feel that last minute itch to help out, please contact Leslie Edelman at (415) 271-4732 or Robin McClarren at (415) 241-0669. There are still plenty of day-of or day-after opportunities to volunteer.

And last but not least...an enormous thank you to all of the parent volunteers that have committed time and energy to make Fiesta 2007 a true community celebration.

## Country Fair—Hay Hay Hay!

Planning is underway for the *other* most anticipated CDS event this spring...the Country Fair! This fun, homespun community gathering in our own CDS yard will be held on Saturday, May 5. In addition to the many favorite Country Fair activities—sheep shearing, pie-eating contest, grand BBQ, farmer's market—we're stepping up the excitement with an old-fashioned hoe-down!

The entire CDS community—students, parents, teachers, staff—take part in running the events on the day of the Country Fair and everyone is invited to participate in the planning and organization of this event. If you would like to learn more about the Country Fair, lend a hand or offer some ideas, grab your partner and promenade over to our first Country Fair planning meeting on Wednesday, April 4, at 4:30 p.m. in the third floor art space. All are welcome.

For more information on the Country Fair or the Fair Planning Committee, contact Tanja Beck ([tbeck@zephyrsf.com](mailto:tbeck@zephyrsf.com)), Jon Gilmour ([jongilmour@zephyrsf.com](mailto:jongilmour@zephyrsf.com)), Diana Hunt ([samanddi@pacbell.net](mailto:samanddi@pacbell.net)) or Amy Muller ([amymuller@gmail.com](mailto:amymuller@gmail.com)).

## Extended Program News

### April Vacation Camp

April Vacation Camp packets have been distributed. If you did not receive a packet, please pick one up at the front desk. The themes are Farm and Garden, and Skateboarding and Urban Art, depending on the age group. The camp will run from 8 a.m.-6 p.m., April 9-13 and the cost is \$50/day. The final day to sign up is **tomorrow**.

### PTTA Corner

#### Friday Morning Coffee

Come join other parents for coffee and doughnuts in the yard after Friday drop-off, 8-9 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.

#### PTTA Questions or Ideas?

- Ray Baxter, PTTA President, (415) 902-0765 or [ray@warmroom.com](mailto:ray@warmroom.com)
- Patrick Everett, VP, Coordinator of Classroom Liaisons, (415) 609-4055 or [patrick@everettnilsson.com](mailto:patrick@everettnilsson.com)
- Laura Pliska, VP, Coordinator of Welcoming Initiatives, (415) 641-5116 or [laura@sfbabyworks.com](mailto:laura@sfbabyworks.com)
- Michael Silver, VP, Coordinator of Diversity Initiatives, (415) 518-1803 or [silvermas@aol.com](mailto:silvermas@aol.com)
- Ann Van Gelder, VP, Parent Volunteer Coordinator, (415) 647-8561 or [anndirkgv@hotmail.com](mailto:anndirkgv@hotmail.com)
- Tanja Beck, VP, Coordinator of Events, (415) 377-8756 or [tbeck@zephyrsf.com](mailto:tbeck@zephyrsf.com)
- Edwina Paschal, VP, Middle School Coordinator, (510) 499-7739 or [edwinapaschal@earthlink.net](mailto:edwinapaschal@earthlink.net)

### Upcoming Dates

Friday, April 6  
8:30 a.m.

Cesar Chavez celebration  
Led by sixth grade class  
during Friday assembly

**Monday, April 9 – Friday, April 13**

Spring vacation  
No school  
Extended program available

**Tuesday, April 17**  
Parent Education Night

Dates also posted on CDS website  
[www.cds-sf.org/news/calendar.html](http://www.cds-sf.org/news/calendar.html)

#### Children's Day School

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**[www.cds-sf.org](http://www.cds-sf.org)**

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