Auction Procurement Deadline is April 14!

By the auction committee

There are only a few more weeks left to procure for the 12th annual TOPS spring auction. If you haven’t already found your three items, here’s some inspiration. The top five most successful offerings, besides class art projects and teacher events, are restaurant gift certificates, sports tickets, gardening-related supplies and activities, home-cooked dinners, and hotels/getaways.

Be creative. Auction items don’t always have to be “things.” Are you a good cook? Get together with a friend and donate a dinner. Do you have a green thumb? How about a couple hours of consultation or work in someone’s garden. Are you a great golfer? Know how to knit? Play an instrument? Can you share your technical expertise and help someone set up a new computer? There are so many possibilities.

Here’s a few of the first items we’ve gotten in so far: a weekend at a Mazama riverfront cabin, an autographed baseball and photograph from Mariner Dan Wilson, a Sony Playstation, a photography session with Nancy Medwell, admission and dinner for four at Jazz Alley, and a Peter Fewing soccer camp.

As usual, our wonderful teachers and staff have already come forward with quite a few fun activities to bid on — Assistant Principal Chris Drape will fill up his truck with your offerings for the transfer station, volunteer coordinator Stacie Ford-Bonneille is donating a meditation packet, our fabulous PE teachers, Don Zemke and Eric Herndon, will take your kids boating, middle school special ed teacher Doug Frazier will give you a guitar lesson, Steve Haines will take you to a Mariners game and teach you how to keep score, and artist-in-residence Cynthia Livak is planning an art activity. And this is just the start!

Additional auction donation forms are available in the office. Please fill out your forms completely — it really saves time for the volunteers who enter the information into the computer and write up descriptions. Items can be delivered to the TOPS office up until April 28, or to the auction site the morning of May 8.

This year we’ll be raffling off a fantastic weekend at the Rosario Resort on Orcas Island! Tickets will be for sale Friday afternoons throughout April and May, up until the lucky ticket gets pulled on stage on auction night. You don’t have to be present to win. Tickets are $5 each or 5 for $20.

Be sure to look for your invitation in the mail. It will feature some great artwork from several seventh grade students, part of the impressive “Looking Beyond” project done this fall in Luzita Roll’s class. Please send in your RSVP as soon as possible. If you can’t attend, please consider sending in a check to support the auction. Teachers and staff are always invited as our guests, so by adding a few dollars to your total you enable us to easily cover this cost. You will also be able to indicate a dinner choice and reserve a whole table — no more dashing in to find a place to sit with your friends! This year you can also pay for your ticket by credit card.

If you’re interested in volunteering to set up on auction day, please call auction volunteer coordinator Tammy Luthy at 322-3784.

THANK YOU to all the volunteers who are joining in the TOPS AUCTION 2004. We have had a terrific response and are looking forward to a true group effort. We believe “the more the merrier,” so if you would like to lend a hand, contact Tammy Luthy at 322-3784 or jheft@seanet.com.

HELP WANTED:
Banking / Check out night of auction
Raffle sales

TOPS at Seward
2500 Franklin Avenue East
Seattle, WA 98102
Phone: (206) 252-3510
Fax: (206) 252-3511

Principal: Clara Scott
Assistant Principal: Chris Drape
Site Council Chair: Dave Sarju

NEWSLETTER ONLINE
The TOPS newsletters are available online in PDF format, usually before the printed copy arrives in your mailbox! From the TOPS home page (http://www.seattleschools.org/schools/tops), click on Latest Newsletter in the Quick Links section.
ABOUT THE OUTRAGEOUS PUBLISHING SERVICE

Welcome to the eighth newsletter of the 2003-04 school year. Teresa Nemeth is the editor, Cindy Suzumura handles photos, design, and layout, and Toby Harris and Peggy Riehle get it mailed off to you. Don Zemke provides many of our photos.

We need your submissions: calendar additions, classroom news and news from the larger community, faculty notes, committee reports, opinions, profiles, compliments, congratualtions, children’s art, photos, and anything else significant to the TOPS community.

Submit your contributions to the newsletter box in the main office or, preferably, by Word file or email to Teresa at zongora2@cs.com. Please send photos to csuzumura@mindspring.com.

Deadlines for 2003-04 are April 14, and May 12. If newsletters are to arrive the first week of the month, there can be no exceptions to these deadlines.

WHAT’S WRONG WITH NICKEL-BEE?

GEORGE BUSH’S NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND (NCLB) ACT IS A BAD IDEA

A commentary by Amy Hagopian (TOPS parent of 12 years and former school board member)

An introduction, written by Dana Twight, to NCLB and other recent education legislation appears in the March newsletter. Dana invited commentary.

Many people have written eloquently about what’s wrong with the “No Child Left Behind Bill,” whose acronym can be pronounced Nickel-Bee. Molly Ivins, for example, in her bestseller Bushwhacked: Life in George W. Bush’s America skewers this George Bush education “reform” policy.

Another group to do a good job on NCLB analysis is one of my favorite education reform organizations, Rethinking Schools, a radical 18-year-old Milwaukee group. They say, “Classrooms can be places of hope, where students and teachers gain glimpses of the kind of society we could live in and where students learn the academic and critical skills needed to make that vision a reality.”

Anyway, when I’m confused about a matter of education policy, I turn to them. Here’s what they say about NCLB, more formally known as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001, an 1100-page bill passed in the wake of 9/11: “It may well be the worst education bill ever passed by the federal government. There are so many things wrong with this law, so many things that are educationally inappropriate and hostile to the welfare of public education that we can only talk about some of them here.”

A quick primer on the bill: NCLB is interested in only reading and math. It wants every sub-population in a school to achieve “annual yearly progress” in those two subjects (as measured by standardized tests selected at the state level), or else the school is labeled a failure. Once a school “fails,” parents are eventually entitled to move their children to other schools or get tutoring for their children, either or both at the expense of the school district. By the year 2014, all students must be at grade level.

Here are my top ten things wrong with NCLB:

1. The focus on testing dulls down the teaching environment;
2. The funding doesn’t come close to what would be required to achieve the goal;
3. No other social institution has been required to eliminate the disparities in outcomes as schools are now required to do. Just like busing was supposed to solve lots of problems in a context where few other changes were made to create social and economic justice, NCLB won’t succeed in isolation;
4. Economically disadvantaged schools and communities will be hurt most by the sanctions in the bill;
5. Low-income parents won’t gain any more power in schools than they gained over supermarkets by being given food stamps; giving parents transfer rights will create chaos and school enrollment instability;
6. Control over curriculum is moved from teachers to bureaucracies;
7. NCLB is another attempt to replace local control of institutions with marketplace “reforms” that turn parents into consumers instead of citizens;
8. Neil Bush’s Austin-based Ignite! Educational software company (and other private test-prep industry firms) are making a fortune on selling test-prep packages to public schools that need to boost scores; and
9. Provisions of NCLB advance right-wing ideology, vouchers, and military recruitment in schools while pushing out multiculturalism, teacher innovation, and creative curriculum reform.

Go read Molly Ivins or Rethinking Schools materials for more explanation. An administration that labels the National Education Association a “terrorist organization” (Secretary of Education Rod Paige, 2/23/04) is obviously having trouble relating to teachers and the magnitude of the task they’ve taken on. While it would be terrific if all kids in all schools could read and do math at grade level, the way to get there is to move kids out of poverty and fully fund education, not to label schools as failures.

* See http://www.rethinkingschools.org/
**STAFF APPRECIATION**

*By Janet Moore and Sandy Green*

The staff appreciation committee has hosted two more events for the staff at TOPS. The third grade families provided snacks after school on March 3. The eighth grade families provided soup, salad, rolls, and great chocolate desserts for the staff on the professional development day March 19. Our staff makes TOPS great! Our teachers are supertalented and very dedicated, the office staff always love our kids and go the extra mile for them, and our custodial and kitchen staff are invaluable and enjoy interacting with the kids. Thanks, parents, for all the help!

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**WASL SURVEY: YOUR INPUT WANTED**

*By Dana Twight, Washington State Board of Education*

How well should students have to score on the state test to be eligible to graduate from high school? The A+ Commission wants your help! Access to the survey is at the following web site: http://www.k12.wa.us/Communications/presentations.aspx. Surveys must be submitted electronically by April 4, 2004.

“Earning a certificate of academic achievement (formerly known as the “certificate of mastery”) will be a graduation requirement for most students by 2008. The Commission plans to decide on May 10, 2004 how well students will need to score on the Washington assessment of student learning (WASL) to earn a certificate.” The survey includes the six models (reduced from nine) that the Commission is considering. Some do not have the current score of 400 and earning that minimum score on all tests as the standard to meet to be eligible to graduate. Percentages of students achieving at “standard” are included in the survey questions.

Source: Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction web site

Phone numbers for education agencies and resources (web addresses appeared in March TOPS News)

State Board of Education 1-360-725-6025

Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission (A+ Commission) 1-360-725-6034 to reach Executive Assistant Debra Crawford. Seattle Urban League’s James Kelly is a member of the Board (jkelly@urbanleague.org), 206-461-3792

Washington State PTA 1-800-562-3804 or 1-253-565-2153

*Please note: the State PTA has a 90-minute interactive presentation for parents on our state’s education reform system, call the toll-free number above to schedule*

Seattle PTA 206-364-7430 with 24-hour voice mail, and office hours Tuesday - Thursday, 10 a.m.- 1 p.m. when school is in session; located at the John Stanford Center (Seattle School District Headquarters)

Washington State School Board Directors Association (WSSDA) 1-360-493-9231

Association of Washington State Principals (AWSP) 1-360-357-7951

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) 1-360-725-6000

Washington Roundtable 206-623-0180 in Seattle

Partnership for Learning 206-625-9655 in Seattle

Washington Education Association (WEA) inadvertently left out of previous list. Seattle number 206-246-2002 or www.wspa.org on the web

Next month: more from Dana on No Child Left Behind…

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**NEWSLETTER EDITOR WANTED!**

It’s been a grand adventure. Really, this has to be the rockiest, most spirited, interesting collection of people anywhere. I’m thinking it’s time for someone else to take on this job now, though I might be willing to help. Takers? Respond to me, Teresa Nemeth (325-8320 or zongora2@hotmail.com), or to our volunteer coordinator Stacie Bonnelle (topsvltr@aol.com).
Chris Drape read the principal’s report in Clara Scott’s absence. Ms. Scott wanted to thank the TOPS parents for their incredible support regarding Mr. J’s illness. Mr. J has now taken a medical leave for the remainder of the school year to focus on resting and his recovery. Eric Peterson will be the full-time substitute for the rest of the year.

Ms. Scott recently sent a letter to the Eastlake Community Council about TOPS participation in the Eastlake community. TOPS has put together an advisory team (parents Marlies van Bergeijk, Gretchen Chambers, and Jay Pickering) to serve on the team addressing issues such as traffic, safety, and plant restoration. TOPS has also contacted the King County Election Division in hopes that all of the voters in the Eastlake community can use the TOPS building to vote.

The TOPS 2004-05 budget was presented. The district funds this year will pay for the K-8 teaching staff, class size reduction in grades K-2, science program K-8, art program 5-8, full-time librarian, two full-time PE teachers, half-time counselor, middle school program, “fully” funded office, bilingual, special ed, and LAP instruction, and some supplies and stipends.

Chris noted that in a perfect world, schools would fund themselves. However, the rest of the costs associated with the unique and powerful learning community at TOPS need to be supported by additional funds (money raised from parents at the No-Bake Sale and the auction), or the programs will have to be cut. Our school has a rich curriculum and Friends of TOPS is a partner that helps craft TOPS programs. The rest of the 2004-05 budget falls under the category of “requested support from Friends of TOPS,” which is the body (our site council) that approves spending the money raised at the auction and the No-Bake. The site council approved total program support of $64,600 for the 2004-05 school year, which includes art supplies, teacher supplies and learning materials, science materials, library resources, technical and curriculum integration, translations for ESL parents, literacy block for grades 1 and 2, and half-time counselor salary.

Steve Havas, site council treasurer, presented an early budget view for 2004-05 for Friends of TOPS. The available funds for 2004-05 are based on the No-Bake proceeds of this year ($70,004) and projected auction proceeds of $83,445. With the exception of $5,400 left over from the No-Bake money raised this year that was not spent tonight, the remainder of the Friends of TOPS budget is relying on the auction being a great success.

In an appropriate segue, the auction committee spoke next. Given the heavy reliance on the auction for the rest of our programs to be funded (music, drama, directory, newsletters, arts enrichment, multicultural resources, and all the other great ideas that will be uncovered during the RFP process), it’s important for everyone to participate in whatever way they can at the auction – volunteer, procure, come have fun and maybe even spend some money!
YOU ARE INVITED…

…TO AN OPEN DISCUSSION ABOUT RACE AND CULTURE IN A SCHOOL SETTING

How are we affected at TOPS?

Why do we sometimes find ourselves at odds working on seemingly common goals?

What can we learn about each other’s perspectives?

How might we better understand each other’s perceptions?

How does undoing racism fit into the larger context of multicultural education?

Where is the productive intersection of ideology and personal relationships?

THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 6-8 P.M., IN THE TOPS LIBRARY

Childcare provided. Please call the office 24 hours in advance, 252-3510.

Please join Teresa Nemeth, Sheri Toussaint, and Beth Wheeler as they respectfully share differing responses to a recent Undoing Racism workshop*. A discussion will follow, facilitated by Lisa Love, Seattle Public Schools Health Education Specialist, about the issues we confront as we consider race and culture in a school setting:

*The Undoing Racism workshop (12-03-03) was presented by The People’s Institute, sponsored by the Washington State Association for Multicultural Education (WSAME), and held at Antioch University.

2003-04 TOPS CALENDAR

Please check Wednesday Go-Homes and the web site for updates.

APRIL

1 (Th)......... Poetry festival
1 (Th)......... CSJ meeting, 6-8 p.m., library
2 (F)......... End of third quarter
4 (Su) ......... Daylight Savings Time begins
5-9 (M-F) .... Spring Break; chess camp at TOPS
13 (T) ......... Middle school forum, 7-8:30 p.m.
14 (W) ........ Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m., library
14 (W) ........ Deadline for RFP submission; auction procurement form deadline
15 (Th) ....... Grades K-4 to SCT, Mrs. Piggle Wiggle
21 (W) ........ Class pictures
22 (Th) ....... TOPICS, 2:30
23 (F) ......... TOPICS, 2:30
21 (W) ......... Volunteer orientation, 3-4 and 6-7 p.m., library
28 (W) ......... Site Council budget meeting, 5 p.m.
29 (Th) ....... TOPICS, 2:30
29 (Th) ....... Site Council budget meeting, 5 p.m.
30 (F) ......... TOPICS, 2:30

MAY

4 (T) ......... Middle school forum, 7-8:30 p.m.
6 (Th) ......... TOPICS, 2:30
6 (Th) ......... CSJ meeting, 6-8 p.m., library
7 (F) ......... TOPICS, 2:30
8 (Sa) ......... TOPS auction
11 (T) ......... Spring music concert, 2 and 7 p.m.
12 (W) ......... Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m., library
12 (W) ......... Communications committee, 7-8:30 p.m.
13 (Th) ......... TOPICS, 2:30
14 (F) ......... TOPICS, 2:30
14 (F) ......... Elementary play, 7 p.m.
15 (Sa) ......... Elementary play, 2 and 7 p.m.
19 (W) ......... 2-hour early dismissal
19 (W) ......... Volunteer orientation, 3-4 and 6-7 p.m., library
19-21 (W-F) .. Grade 7 to camp
21 (F) ......... Art Walk
28 (F) ......... Grade 4 science fair
31 (M) ......... Memorial Day—no school

JUNE

1 (T) ......... Grades K-2 and DHH to Camp Long
1 (T) ......... Middle school forum, 7-8:30 p.m.
1-4 (T-F) .... Grade 8 to Deception Pass
2-4 (W-F) .. Grade 5 to Camp Kirby
3 (Th) ....... Kindergarten puppet show
3 (Th) ....... CSJ meeting, 6-8 p.m., library
3-4 (Th-F) . Grades 3 and 4 to Camp Arnold
9 (W) ......... Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m., library
10 (Th) ....... Kindergarten play
11 (F) ......... Eighth grade passage
15 (T) ......... Fifth grade passage
17 (Th) ....... Last student day, one hour early dismissal
18 (F) ......... Professional development day for teachers
A MESSAGE FROM ILSA GOVAN, FIFTH GRADE TEACHER

Dear TOPS Community,

About a month ago, as I was pondering my future, I decided that common sense is overrated and passion should take priority in my life. As many of you know, I have been working on my master’s degree for the past two years. During this time, I’ve fallen in love with writing and decided I need to devote more time to it. Conveniently enough, I am scheduled to research and write my thesis next year. So I thought, why not take a year off and just focus on this project? Sure, teaching actually provides me with a steady income, but maybe I’ll get lucky and someone will agree to publish my brilliant ideas!

It is with a mixture of trepidation and excitement that I tell you my plans. The district has agreed to give me a one-year study leave, so I can return to TOPS. My thesis project will focus on observing teachers who are effective in working for social justice. I’m sure this experience will bring me a wealth of new ideas for my own life and classroom. My biggest regret is that I will miss some of the fourth grade families who I know and adore.

Thank you for all of the support you’ve given me to pursue my passions. I will still be around for middle school dances and other important events. Oh, and if you know of any publishers….

Sincerely,
Ilsa

A MESSAGE FROM JILL REIFSCHEIDER, FIFTH GRADE TEACHER

Dear TOPS Community,

My family and I have decided to spend next year traveling around the world. In the spirit of the TOPS mission, my husband and I will be providing an education for our sons (ages 10 and 13 this summer) as we experience life in a diversity of cultures. Obviously, this is a huge decision that affects each member of my family and will continue to have an influence on my family for years to come.

The most difficult part of this whole decision is that I must give up the best teaching job I could possibly ever hope for. My experience at TOPS has been completely positive and truly inspiring. The students at TOPS participate in learning experiences that others can only dream of, and every single member of the TOPS staff is a skilled, dedicated professional whom I truly respect. It has been an absolute pleasure to work in a school that sets its standards high and provides the support necessary for all of us to succeed.

In order to grow, I must leave the familiar behind and embrace the unknown. I send out a huge hug of appreciation and love to all the parents, staff members, and children who have made me savor this year. I am SO fortunate! This year’s experiences have given me a boost in morale needed to continue in this profession upon my return. Continue your good work! Thank you, and a very difficult good-bye.

Jill
By Steve Haines, librarian

“What a school thinks about its library is a measure of what it thinks about education.” ~Harold Howe

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE LIBRARY AT TOPS

It’s budget time. Words that nowadays send “number crunchers” into a flurry of activity. This year the funds from the FOT (Friends of TOPS) have helped maintain the library collection with a budget of $3,000, which is used for supplies, periodicals, and library materials. So what’s the process?

SUPPLIES

Book processing supplies are purchased yearly for cataloging new materials purchased locally, or for books that have been donated. Also obtained this year was an overhead projector. On the wish list is a high-quality projector screen to be used with the library’s projector.

PERIODICALS

At one time we subscribed to a number of magazines, but we have cut back due to the shrinking budget. Now we subscribe to a few popular children and teen periodicals.

MATERIALS

This is the largest chunk of the budget. In looking at collection development I first take into consideration lost and missing books taken from the previous year’s inventory. We had approximately 86 books missing from the library in 2003. These are books that have left the library without being checked out and that never made their way back to the shelves. We can add to that another 70 still missing from the previous year. I like to refer to this as random weeding. These numbers seem high but they are the realities of running a library. Fortunately, not all of the books need to be replaced. Some are no longer in print, and some were duplicate copies. A fair percentage of current popular books will be replaced due to demand.

The library’s main function in the school is to support the curriculum, thus the largest portion goes toward fulfilling teacher requests to support classroom projects. For example, the district has mandated that mathematics be a major focus, so we will be ordering literature from the bibliographies in the TERC math adoption, K-5. More than one copy will be ordered for some of the more popular titles. Both teachers and students can use these resources to supplement their studies. Other ongoing projects for which materials are purchased. For example, this year the seventh graders were able to listen to Peter Sís speak when he came to Seattle to talk about his new book entitled Tree of Life. The library purchased this book plus several other titles from this talented author/illustrator for the students to read. Another example of purchases comes when our students attend a play at the Seattle Children’s Theatre. If the play is from a book, the library will procure several copies for the students to read. And every January the American Library Association announces the award winning titles, which we will then order.

In March of each year the School Library Journal publishes the average prices for all children’s and young adult titles. As you might expect, prices are creeping up every year. In 2003 the average was $19.18. With that in mind it becomes increasingly important for us to take care of our library while we create a diverse and relevant collection that is closely tied to the curriculum and critical for bolstering all of our students’ learning. We may have a small collection (8,000 titles), but it continues to reflect our community of learners.

ANCIENT EGYPT DISPLAY IN LIBRARY

Come to the library to see how mummification works, or learn about pyramids, hieroglyphics, and Egyptian medicine. Play a game while discovering archaeology. Do a jigsaw puzzle while learning about the gods and goddesses of ancient Egypt. These are just a few of the incredible projects that are on temporary loan to the library from the students in Marianne’s sixth grade social studies class. They spend a good part of the year studying different ancient civilizations. The students have put forth a great effort on these projects. Don’t miss it.

THE SHAPE OF A GIRL

Bullying. What does it mean to you? What can you do about it? These and many more questions and ideas were explored as the fifth through eighth grade classes visited the Seattle Children’s Theater on March 16 to see the play The Shape of a Girl. Taken after a tragic bullying incident in Vancouver in 1997, this play — presented as a monologue — examines the sensitive issues surrounding being bullied, and the consequences for everyone involved. After the play the students had the opportunity to participate in some discussions at the theater. In addition, when the students returned to school they broke up into small groups for more discussion. I think this is a great first step in looking at this insidious problem in our society.
TOPS STUDENT RECEIVES MAYOR’S SCHOLAR AWARD

By Teresa Nemeth

Congratulations to Adlai Pappy, TOPS eighth grader, who was one of 25 outstanding Seattle middle school students to receive the Mayor’s Scholar award this year.

The Mayor’s Scholar program, coordinated by Seattle’s Office for Education, Department of Neighborhoods, and the Alliance for Education, recognizes students in good standing who are “unsung heroes,” have overcome obstacles or met challenges, and demonstrated commitment to the community through service.

Adlai was nominated by a longtime family friend whose daughter was a Mayor’s Scholar three years ago, and who thought Adlai fit the profile. Principal Clara Scott and teacher Karen Hart wrote glowing letters of recommendation, the school submitted transcripts, and Adlai answered essay questions about the meaning of education in his life and his vision for giving back to the community.

The Scholars were recognized at an awards ceremony at City Hall on February 23. The mayor presented certificates and shook each recipient’s hand. Several city council members, school board members, and other community leaders attended, as did Mrs. Scott. School board president Mary Bass particularly charmed Adlai and his family, with her hug and warm encouragement to Adlai to break out of his seriousness a little and “smile!” Each Scholar also received a leather letterman’s jacket and $500 to put toward education or to donate to a nonprofit organization. Adlai is considering donating his to his nonprofit swim club, Central Area Aquatics, or to Africa for AIDS work.

In addition to his active participation at TOPS, including serving in student government (and we remember him as Johnny the King!), Adlai is active in his church, the cultural and civic organization Jack and Jill, has assisted his mom in tutoring, and is an avid swimmer with national-level qualifying times. He swims six days a week for two hours, and has been active in promoting swimming among African Americans. His ideas about the future include continuing to swim, possibly for a scholarship (Stanford?), and then pursuing medicine, newscasting or other public speaking, or journalism.

Adlai and his mother, Cheryl Pappy (our kindergarten PEAK teacher this year), express great appreciation for the very personal support and attention they have received at TOPS. Adlai says that at a small school like ours, the teachers “know who you are, and they push you.” Cheryl added that it meant a lot that Mrs. Scott attended the awards ceremony, and she has appreciated Karen Hart’s caring presence. Cheryl would like to encourage other TOPS students to apply for the award next year.

Photos provided by Cheryl Pappy

NOTAS AND NOTICIAS

By Maestra Rabbitt

Estimados lectores:

Esta será la última Notas y Noticias para este año escolar, ya que se acaban las clases de Español.

Gracias muchas por toda la ayuda que me han dado, en particular la ayuda de la directora Scott, de Helen, de Maestro J., de Sharon y los Friends of Tops y de Teresa.

Estoy muy satisfecha con el trabajo que han hecho mis estudiantes, por su participación, su alegría, su energía y su afán de aprender y conocer sobre otras culturas y otro lenguaje.

Gracias a sus padres por darles esa oportunidad.

Hasta el próximo año.

Dear readers:

My classes are ending for this year, so this will be the last Notas and Noticias until next year.

Many thanks to Principal Scott, Helen, Maestro J, Sharon and the Friends of TOPS, Teresa, and everyone else who helped make our classes a success.

I am very happy with the work my students have done, with their participation, their joy and energy, and their desire to learn about and understand other cultures and another language.

My thanks to their parents for giving them that opportunity.

Hasta el próximo año.
FORMER TOPS STUDENT SPEAKS OUT ON STEREOTYPING AND PREJUDICE

The following article, reprinted with permission, appeared in the January 23, 2004 issue of the Seattle Jewish Transcript. It was written by Kari Lombard, now a junior at Garfield High School.

In the last week of December, I encountered something that I believe deserves more attention than it seems to be getting. I feel that someone should spread the news before it passes by, ignored.

My friends and I were shopping at the downtown Seattle Urban Outfitters store, an activity we usually enjoy. Looking around, my friend noticed, in a group of t-shirts, one that read: “Everyone Loves a Jewish Girl.” I thought it was great— I am Jewish, and proud of it. At my high school, I have a number of Jewish friends, and I knew that many of them would think it was fantastic. However, as I picked up the shirt, I became repulsed and stuffed it back onto the shelf. Why?

Unlike the “Everyone Loves an Irish Girl” tee, which is sparkling with clovers, or the “Everyone Loves an Italian Girl” tee, with slices of pizza (both shallow but harmless symbols), the “Everyone Loves a Jewish Girl” t-shirt had money symbols and coins surrounding the text.

I was disgusted, as any Jew with an ounce of self-respect would be. We have all heard the “greedy Jew” jokes, and I have actually had some people at school assume that I was rich or penny-pinching simply because I’m Jewish. When a young person makes these jokes, I take it as ignorance and confront them — they may mean it harmlessly, but there are people in the world who actually believe these stereotypes. However, when a large, popular chain store sells t-shirts that will be seen by a great number of young people, including my peers? That is not ignorance. That is tastelessness. The Jewish religion has nothing to do with money, and never will. My family is Jewish but not wealthy or selfish. Money is not an obsession with my family or any other Jewish family I know — and yet by the looks of this t-shirt, some Urban Outfitters merchandiser believes that money is a huge part of our culture. I find this incredibly offensive.

This is not the first time Urban Outfitters has carried merchandise using offensive stereotypes. In October of 2003, they sold a game similar to Monopoly by the name of “Ghettopoly.” The game used inappropriate stereotypes of African-Americans. A friend of mine was incredibly offended by the contents of the board game, and I didn’t truly understand how she felt until I walked into that store and saw that t-shirt. Urban Outfitters never responded to the letters sent to them by offended parties, but “Ghettopoly” was taken off the shelves and is no longer being sold — hopefully the same will happen to these “Everyone Loves a Jewish Girl” tee’s.

I have phoned the Urban Outfitters corporate office but could not get through to any senior employees. I have emailed the Urban Outfitters founder and president, director of retail, and board of directors with no response after over a week. At this point, I am slightly discouraged about receiving feedback from the company about my individual protests. What we need now is more people who care, to show the company that we will not stand for mindless stereotypes being spread about our people.

The creator of “Ghettopoly” told the press that his game used stereotypes to bring people together by getting them to laugh at themselves. I am quite able to laugh at myself — I don’t worry about the Jewish people who will see this t-shirt. It’s the rest of the world, especially those who take these stereotypes seriously. No one wants to be discriminated against. All I ask is for people with power to be a little more careful with the messages they send out into the world.

Links to two Susan Paynter columns about reactions to the T-shirt:

http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/paynter/158602_paynter30.html
(February 3, 2004. Seattle Post-Intelligencer. “Reaction to ‘Jewish girls’ T-shirt is divided.”)
FIRST GRADERS REPORT ON ZOO VISIT

Minimal editing provided by Leslie Nilan, first grade teacher

We went to the Woodland Park Zoo. (Moshea Cox) We rode the bus. (Jeffrey Nguyen) We saw a lot of animals. (Hoai-My Nguyen) I had six kids in my group. (Zaelin Johnson) I had a blast! (Cielle Carlton) It was freezing cold, but really fun! (Isabella Fuentes) I liked it. (Tierney Mackey) My dad asked, “Do gorillas live in the rainforest?” (Abby Takahashi) My favorite thing was when the gorilla stuck his bottom at me! It was so rude to do that because we were visitors! (Max Weinberger) An orangutan saw my friend and fell in love with her. He put his hand on his cheek. (Carmelita Palagi) In the night room, I saw a three-toed sloth. (Andy Johnston) In the Day and Night exhibit, I tried to talk to snakes. I thought of Harry Potter. If he could do it I could. Maybe. (Noah Forslund) When we got out of the night house, everything was very bright. (Riley Butler) I had lunch in the café. (Wallis Lapsley) I saw a jaguar. It is my favorite animal. (Maria Perla) We went inside the Tropical Rainforest exhibit. (Jason Beverly) When my group saw the toucan, it was dive-bombing. (Margot Maraghe) I saw a toucan with a pretty beak. (Zoe Gluck) My favorite part was when we saw the leaf-cutter ants. (Henry Chapman) We saw poison dart frogs. There were different kinds of colors. (Qingyu Onouye) I learned how to greet a macaque monkey. (Bay Loovis) The rainforest is cool! (Linh Huynh)

IN THE SHADOWS OF THE SPORTS WORLD

By Adlai Pappy, special assignment reporter, grade 8

Throughout America there are many different sports that people play and devote a large part of their life to. Many of these people usually play sports like basketball, baseball, and football. These are many of the sports the world sees and plays as well. All of us never seem to realize other parts of the world have their own pastimes in sports. In the West African country of Morocco a new sport called Korat Yed, which means “hand ball,” is a game with skills from basketball, baseball, and soccer.

The game has seven players on each team, one goalie and six other players assigned to defense or offense. The ball is about six inches in diameter, and to move with it you must bounce it like a basketball. After you stop bouncing the ball you can take three steps, then you must pass to a teammate or throw the ball and try to score on the opponents’ goal. Opponents can steal or knock the ball loose from anyone with the ball, but if they make contact with that player it is a foul and he gets a free pass. Another important rule in this game is that there is a goalie box about five yards wide and fifteen yards long. The only person who can be in this box is the goalie; even the goalie’s teammates cannot be in the box. All shoots on the goalie must be from outside this box; if the other team scores, but they took the ball inside the box to score, the goal doesn’t count and it is the other team’s ball.

This fast-paced game is very exciting with a lot of scoring. This game reminds me of a less brutal type of rugby. Learning about a different sport from a whole other culture and country got me thinking more about how there are so many other sports in the world besides these three or four we see every day.

MY FAVORITE THING ABOUT PE

By Lachlan Huck, Grade 8

I’m a soccer player, anyone can tell you that, for it’s literally written across my forehead. Before this year, if you had asked me to play baseball I would have gone screaming from the room, that is how much I detested anything and everything but soccer.

For the most part that has stayed the same. I still consider baseball the devil’s game, but I am starting to branch out. I play football, and I play it well, without wincing at the suggestion.
The following is a student-generated list of heart-healthy snack ideas: fruit, including blueberries, strawberries, apples, bananas, grapes, pears, and lemons; vegetables, including carrots, red peppers, cucumbers, broccoli, and celery (vegetables can be dipped in low-fat dressing); an apple cored and then filled with peanut butter; granola bars; spiders (balls of peanut butter with pretzels for legs and raisins for eyes); ants on a log (celery filled with peanut butter and raisins); rice with seaweed; kimchee; trail mix; Cheerios (can be mixed with raisins and oats); pickles and croissants; apples with cheese, peanut butter, or honey; noodles; peanut butter and jelly and bananas; crackers with peanut butter; and grapes.

By Don Zemke and Eric Herndon, PE teachers

This February, TOPS PE students participated in the American Heart Association’s Jump Rope For Heart program. During the course of the month, students learned about the importance of a heart-healthy lifestyle.

The jump rope component required students to set a jump rope goal, practice the skill periodically, and then demonstrate their new skill on the stage at our Jump Rope For Heart celebration. The celebration was a lot of fun with Eric as the M.C. and the students performing some great jump rope routines!

Thanks to all of the students and parents who chose to participate in the optional American Heart Association fundraiser.
SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ANNUAL ASBESTOS NOTIFICATION - 2004

In accordance with the federal Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) regulations, the Seattle Public Schools (SPS) is required to notify parents, teachers, and other employees each year of the availability the Asbestos Management Plans and actions SPS is taking to maintain asbestos containing materials in its buildings.

SPS conducted an initial inspection of all school buildings for the purpose of identifying asbestos containing building materials (ACBM) in 1988. A management plan detailing the findings of the inspection was developed for each building. Since then appropriate response actions have been taken to ensure that ACBM is maintained in good condition.

A periodic surveillance of each school building has occurred every six months since the original inspection.

The next periodic surveillance is scheduled for March/April. Additionally, a complete reinspection of each school building is required every three years. The next reinspection will occur during the summer of 2004.

The Asbestos Management Plans include the results of each periodic surveillance and the most recent reinspection as well as documentation of asbestos related activities. The Asbestos Management Plans are maintained and available for review in the administrative office of each school or at the John Stanford Center for Educational Excellence located at 2445 3rd Ave South.

If you would like additional information regarding the asbestos program or ACBM in a specific building contact Troy White at 206-252-0528.

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