A Message From The Principal

I hope all of our families had a fun and restful spring break. At this time of year we begin to gear up for our year-end activities, but it is important to remember that there is still much to be done in the classrooms. We still have one-quarter of our academic year to go!

We are all mourning the loss of our beloved former 5th grade teacher, Venise Jones-Poole. Her service was on Monday, April 25, at Mt. Zion Baptist Church.

The TOPS auction is just a few weeks away. The committee promises great food, fun, and fantastic items for bid. The date is Saturday, May 14. This is a major fundraising event for TOPS. We need your help! It is always well attended and we thank all the families and staff who contribute their time, talent, and money to this fantastic event!

Summer school information will be sent out soon for those students the district recommends for summer school. These forms need to be returned as soon as possible to TOPS office.

Jennifer Murray, Mark Ellis, and I went on an educational trip to Beijing, China, over spring break, led by Bobo Davenport’s mother and father, Xue-Qia Zhao and Gordon Davenport. Five 8th grade students and twenty staff members from Mercer Island High School also went. The highlight of the trip was visiting Fen Dou Elementary in Beijing. The students had laptop computers and were very advanced in technology.

Thank You, TOPS Staff!

No matter how lovely the building, a school is a community of people rather than a place. When we were first looking for a school, TOPS was in the McDonald building -- hardly a swanky location. But there was something about the teachers and staff, the way they talked with the kids and the way they talked about them, that made us think it would be a good fit for our family. When school started, we all moved into the newly remodeled Seward School together, but the surroundings were just a nice bonus – the important part was what we brought with us, a group of people intent on creating a place where our kids would be able to learn. It’s been a thrill to watch so many different worlds open up to Izaak, and to the other kids in his classes over the years, and it’s been a privilege to help that process from time to time. But the biggest treat has been to join the community of people that we first met back then, the community of TOPS School.

~ Sandi Kurtz
ABOUT THE OUTRAGEOUS PUBLISHING SERVICE

Welcome to the eighth newsletter of the 2004-05 school year. Teresa Nemeth edits, 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. Thanks to Tammy Luthy for help this issue with staff appreciation.

We need your submissions: calendar additions, classroom news and news from the larger community, faculty notes, committee reports, opinions, profiles, compliments, congratulations, 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 zongora@gmail.com. Please send photos to csuzumura@mindspring.com.

Deadlines are the Friday after each Site Council meeting. The deadline for the June issue is May 20.

Would you like to edit or otherwise help with our newsletter? Newcomers welcome. Please contact Teresa at the above address.

WHAT MAKES TOPS ALTERNATIVE OR UNIQUE?

A STAFF FOLLOW-UP TO THE MARCH 16 COMMUNITY FORUM (SEE MARCH NEWSLETTER)

Submitted by Gerrit Kischner

The TOPS faculty met on April 6 to provide an initial response to the discussion in the school and the district about the role of alternative schools and the alternative nature of our own program. What follows is a “first take” brainstorm list to the same questions that parents tackled at the Site Council forum in March. The Building Leadership Team has centered its own discussions on identifying within this conversation the central themes that define our core educational philosophy and should guide further discussion of these questions. This is a beginning of a conversation.

WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES TOPS ALTERNATIVE?

Curriculum and Academics
• Camps/environmental education: every grade participates in either day or overnight camp
• High parent involvement in learning activities
• Aligned K-8 writing and math programs
• Rigorous art and science program considered part of core curriculum
• Physical education: daily, non-traditional, “success-oriented,” integrated with core curriculum and centered on helping kids find a lifelong sport.
• Speech tournament
• Drama/SCT
• Choir/music
• Visiting writers/Seattle Arts and Lectures

Community
• Close-knit community/deliberate community by choice
• Parent involvement – choice to be at TOPS
• Culminating activity: 8th grade passage
• Stewardship: build sense of citizenship/responsibility
• 9-year family/community atmosphere
• Taste of TOPS

Structural and demographics
• K-8
• Cross-grade/multi-age groupings -- TOPICS, 8th grade TAs, cross-grade buddies
• Day starts later for middle school
• Professional academic freedom
• Multicultural draw/ESL set-aside seats
• High academic rigor among staff

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO ENSURE THAT TOPS CONTINUES TO BE INNOVATIVE, CREATIVE, AND ALTERNATIVE?

• Small as a middle school
• Site Council and CSJ: parent-staff guardians of school mission
• Experimental

WHAT ARE THE MAIN REASONS PARENTS CHOOSE TOPS?

• K-8 – solves the middle school question
• Stability – community where everyone knows each other
• Small middle school
• Tradition of parent involvement
• High test scores
• Reputation is that we are more welcoming of non-traditional families
• Diversity of student population: compared to many other schools
• Appeal of all-city draw
• Art program
• Extracurricular activities
• General buzz that TOPS is the best public school
• Hard-working, motivated staff
• Safety in small size
• Word of mouth

WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO PRESERVE ABOUT TOPS?

• Keep diverse populations, including racial diversity, ELL, DHH, etc. (but we need to do a better job of supporting these students academically and of bringing them into the community)
• Strong art and science
• Cross-grade connections
• Sense of community
• TOPICS
• City School roots
• Involvement of interns: student teachers, administrators
• Project learning
• Camps

JOE DRUMMOND, GRADE 4

Joe helped me to be less shy.
I really appreciate Joe’s fun spirit. Joe makes learning fun.
I am grateful to Joe for always being there for me. Joe helped me and my family by handling any problem.
**THE IMPACT ON TOPS OF BUDGET CUTS FOR 2005-06**

By Steve Havas, treasurer, with support from Gerrit Kischner

**WHERE TOPS BUDGET COMES FROM**

Each building’s budget in Seattle is derived from a variety of funding sources. The “baseline” funds constitute the district’s allocation of basic education funds from the state. Seattle uses a “weighted student formula,” which calculates funding per student assigned to a building based on a number of characteristics: $2,893 ($3,430 including administrative expenses) for every student, plus additional funds for students who are qualified as special education, bilingual, and/or free/reduced lunch (spending of these additional funds, however, is mostly proscribed by legal and contractual guidelines.) In addition, each building gets a portion of funding from two other state-funded programs: 1) the Learning Assistance Program (LAP), which is intended to provide compensatory education for students who are working below grade level but are not qualified as special education students, and 2) I-728 money that is intended to be used for class-size reduction, and that TOPS has used for years to provide full-day kindergarten for all our students.

**WHAT’S EXTRA IN THE TOPS CORE CURRICULUM**

We’re are pleased at TOPS that we have been able to utilize our baseline funding to provide a complete “whole-child”-oriented program that is as costly as it is valuable. Because of our role as an alternative program required by the district to provide a determined number of seats, we have not had the flexibility that some neighborhood schools have had to use their funds to “buy-down” their class size. Instead, our rich “whole-child” program means that we are able to provide many elements considered beyond the funding of “basic education.” These include daily physical education (PE) for all students (7th and 8th graders alternate PE with two quarters of health education, and kindergarteners get PE once of week in a small group), a half-hour “library lesson” once per week for all K-5 students, science units taught by our middle school science specialist for all K-5 students, an art-integration period for middle school students that has been at the core of our project-oriented curriculum, and a full-time counselor, who is so important to making sure to address the human, social needs of all of our students.

**WHY WE HAVE LESS MONEY THIS YEAR**

The budget-tightening we have experienced this year at TOPS has resulted from tightening of state funding and from long-overdue increases in teacher salaries gained during the new five-year teacher contract aimed at bringing Seattle teacher salaries on par with neighboring districts. First, our budget was reduced by about $8,000 for the LAP program as the district shifted its allocation in favor of middle school needs, resulting in a 21% cut in these funds because of our smaller percentage of middle school students Next, the state budget reduced I-728 funding to our building by about $3,000. Finally, the cost of full-time teachers in the building (calculated on an average, without respect to experience levels) increased beyond this year’s weighted student formula by a little more than $10,000.

**FRIENDS OF TOPS AND YOUR CHILD’S EDUCATION**

Friends of TOPS is the fundraising entity authorized to raise and expend money to “enhance the education of children at TOPS” consistent with the priorities laid out by the TOPS Site Council. Through the generosity of the community, Friends of TOPS raised over $150,000 in 2004, and we expect to raise approximately the same amount this year.

While there is a great deal of community awareness and pride in the educational enrichment programs supported by these funds, including drama, music, and art, it is important to realize just how critical the community’s contributions are to the core curriculum and infrastructure of TOPS. For example, in the 2004-05 school year, Friends of TOPS money was allocated to the following areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
<th>TYPES OF PROGRAMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core curriculum ..........</td>
<td>$70,175</td>
<td>Ensuring the school can sustain the core curriculum as described above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community support ..</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
<td>Volunteer coordinator, child care for community meetings, school newsletter and directory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural ..........</td>
<td>$4,300</td>
<td>Cultural assemblies for students, Taste of TOPS, program support library books supporting multicultural awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrichment ..........</td>
<td>$37,833</td>
<td>Music, art, drama, math enrichment, Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overhead ..........</td>
<td>$19,716</td>
<td>Fundraising costs, bank fees, insurance, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gym sound ..........</td>
<td>$18,760</td>
<td>Quieting the level of ambient noise in the gym and improvements providing sound equipment for events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total ..........</td>
<td>$165,784</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The amount of money contributed by the TOPS community over the past few years as increased significantly. However, the amount of money required to support the core curriculum has also continued to increase over the last few years as funding from the state, district, and other sources has been reduced. It is a hard reality of today’s public education environment in Seattle that only the most basic curriculum is funded by public sources.

**FRIENDS OF TOPS FINANCIAL SITUATION FOR 2005-06**

The cutbacks in funding described above put the core TOPS curriculum at risk for 2005-06. In order to preserve the current TOPS program, Friends of TOPS agreed to increase the funding to TOPS, for core curriculum by approximately $18,000 next year. While this preserves the integrity and insures consistency from year to year of the core pieces at TOPS and gives the teachers the resources...
THE COMPLETE IDIOT’S GUIDE TO DOING AN AUCTION PROJECT

By Laura Henry

Nothing can be more intimidating than taking responsibility for an auction project on behalf of your class. When I did it for the first time this year in my sixth year at TOPS, the weight of the community on my shoulders to design and produce a project that would bring in money at the TOPS auction felt like thirteen tons. To my surprise, I discovered you do not have to be a genius or a professional artist, nor do you have to own a studio or a garage full of power tools to manage a project—you just need a few good friends. These are the lessons I derived.

1. Start early. We decided on our project by the beginning of the year and began actually working on mock-ups over winter break. I began soliciting adult volunteers and setting in-class times to work on it in March.

2. Get several parents involved. Avoid burn-out by delegating parts to different parents. With one solid partner, and three or four other parents who put in an hour here or there, I felt far less pressure and far more enthusiasm about taking on the volunteer work.

3. Set aside enough class time. It’s a shame to take time over winter break. I began soliciting adult volunteers and setting in-class times to work on it in March.

4. Budget for at least a three-by markup. Don’t do a project if you don’t think it will bring a healthy take, say, at least three times the cost of the materials. You can also ask for the materials as donations. Obtain enough materials for a certain amount of screw-ups. In recent years, successful projects have brought as much as six or seven times the cost of materials.

5. Research. Google, the Seattle Public Library, and the art section of the University Book Store are all invaluable resources, as well as the experiences of anyone you know who has done a similar project. If the TOPS art supplies or art stores don’t have what you need, don’t forget the local Dollar Store and the Internet. Some stores, such as Dunn Lumber, give discounts for children’s projects.

6. Have a balance of spontaneous design and controlled design. We all love children’s creative contributions, but parents tend to treasure the scribbles and inadvertent dabs of the kindergartners much more than those of the older kids. Therefore, hold the older children to a higher aesthetic standard in order to achieve a more attractive product. You can do this by providing prototypes for them to copy, editing and revising their work (which requires a bit more time and expertise), and/or controlling the colors and themes. Our project for 5th graders was a string of lights, with each child contributing a tissue-decorated lantern with a poem underneath. The poem style (Haiku) was given as a guide and the themes chosen were “nature” and “compassion.” The lanterns were slightly more controlled. After the children first constructed traditional-prototype lanterns to our design and got used to working with the sticky medium in class, we provided materials in kits for the children who wanted to design their own at home. The lanterns designed by kids could be any flower or a composition of pressed real flowers, but we placed some limits on the colors. This way we achieved a minimum 75% success rate for the lanterns before risking the rest of our materials for experimentation. Using this risk-minimizing approach, we were able to use materials we had set aside for screw-ups for a whole new string of lanterns, so that about half of the lanterns in the end were designed by the children alone.

7. Recruit extra adult hands for in-class time if you need it. You can save parents a lot of hassle and avoid losing tools and materials by getting it done in class in an organized way. Keep participating adults informed on their roles about a week ahead of time. If necessary, bring into class specific instructions, on paper or on an overhead, to save time.

With a little planning, you might find the auction project can be fun and rewarding.

The Boat Street Kitchen will be catering the TOPS auction on May 14! Co-owners Renee Erickson and Susan Kaplan have put together a delicious menu that will include oven-grilled herb chicken breast skewers or vegetarian frittata with Provencal green sauce, stuffed peppers, zucchini and tomatoes with cous cous, marinated chickpea salad, and spinach salad.

Come enjoy a flavorful French Moroccan meal by Chef Renee, who was named as one of the Chefs to Watch by Seattle Magazine in its Annual Best Restaurant Awards (April 2005).

The Boat Street Kitchen/Sophie’s Donuts caters events and offers a variety of sandwiches, box lunches, and kid sack lunches (that can be pre-ordered and picked up on the way to school). Help support our neighbor The Boat Street Kitchen at 2238 Eastlake Ave East – stop by for a pastry or lunch bite and check out their website at www.boatstreetkitchen.com. And watch for the re-opening of the Boat Street Kitchen sometime this summer!
REPORT FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD

By Kathy Wickward

The superintendent proposed sweeping changes affecting every corner of the district in his preliminary recommendation to the Board April 20. The full plan is available at www.seattleschools.org. Under this proposal:

1. TOPS would remain an alternative option, but only for students in the Central Cluster. However, it is possible under the current proposal that middle school students could choose TOPS with Metro bus transportation.

2. TOPS students in kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades in 2005-06 would be reassigned to their neighborhood school for September 2006. Students in grades 3-8 may remain until they graduate.

3. Yellow bus transportation would be provided to those students until 2008.

4. Assignments would be made on a space-available basis. If there are more students applying to TOPS than there is space, the only two tiebreakers for elementary students are siblings and then a lottery. For middle school students, socioeconomic status will be considered after siblings.

5. Montlake would close and the students dispersed to Stevens, McGilvra, or to seats that would open up in Lowell when the APP program splits. Students from the Eastlake community are currently considered to be in Montlake’s reference area.

As complex as the consolidation plan looks, it is actually a model of elegance and simplicity – at least from the point of view of those not disrupted by the changes. The staff divided the school district into six planning regions, combining several clusters. Within four of those regions they chose to close two school buildings that were in the worst condition and on the smallest sites. If those buildings housed alternative programs, the programs were moved to newer buildings within the cluster that housed less popular programs.

Two regions need to add capacity to meet expected demand, however: Queen Anne/Magnolia and Northeast. The decision to close Summit was based on the need for additional capacity in the Northeast and the feeling that Summit was limited in its academic offerings by its small size. Queen Anne/Magnolia high school students are expected to benefit by a redrawing of boundaries.

The final vote on the plan will be July 13. Meanwhile, there will be many opportunities to comment. The calendar will be posted on the district web site and here at school. Those who would like to give public testimony need to contact Joan Dingfield at 252-0041. The 20 slots are given out on a first-come-first-served basis, and they fill quickly – usually by the day after the most recent meeting. Meetings are held on the first and third Wednesdays of the month. Testimony is limited to 3 minutes.

OTHER MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

Superintendent’s reports: Steve Wilson (chief academic officer): The district has started interviewing for principal assignments; so far all candidates will be interviewed on site rather than at the central office. A new middle school director will be hired. Mr. Wilson congratulated Aki Kurose Middle School on its Math Olympiad win.

Mark Green (chief operating officer): Mr. Green is struggling with the Small Works Roster; he noted that just getting contractors on the list doesn’t ensure that minority contractors will be represented, which was the intent of the Board in creating the roster. Shelise Montgomery, who represents minority-owned contracting businesses, commented that there are still barriers to minority businesses, and that they are working with Mr. Green to recognize and remove those barriers.

Consent agenda: Items on this agenda are usually approved as a group, as they have been previously discussed or are routine. The Board may remove items from this agenda if members feel further discussion is needed. The Board has been politely revolting at the inclusion of the personnel report in this agenda, regularly removing it. While it continues to be approved (and no one knows what would happen if it were not approved), at least two Board members each session vote against the report. Their concern is that it does not contain enough information about efforts to recruit and retain minority staff.

Action items: The Board passed a resolution to enroll the district in the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association for participation in extracurricular activities. ASB (Associated Student Body) fees and the athletics department budget cover the $21,000 fee. This delegates governing authority to the association. They also agreed to delay adopting the 5-year plan until May 18 in order for the district to include the input from community meetings and to strengthen the literacy component. Finally, they adopted a transportation services contract that utilizes 324 buses.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT STAFF:

To our academic support staff—Mike Anderson, Nicole Titus, Patty Moffit, John Daugherty, Katy Rohr-Smith, Manuel Bermudez, Anna West, Jessica Morrissey, Shannon McCormick, Carey Goldberg, and Shareen Eberle: you work so hard behind the scenes, often unseen, but we know you are there giving necessary support, being the glue that holds us all together, and we appreciate you tremendously!

CARLA FETTERLEY, GRADE 2

Carla Fetterley helped me and my family by teaching us stuff about Japan.

Carla, I like you. Carla you helped me.

What I like about Carla is that she is funny, kind, and caring.

DAVID BREESE, MS SPECIAL ED

David Breese is such a fine addition to TOPS! His high expectations for his special ed students are reflected in the wonderful progress each child has made. David’s classroom is filled with needed structure, enthusiasm, variety, and he continually tries to challenge each child to their full potential.

Thank goodness there are fine men like Mr. Breese who step up for our kids to give them all the extras in education they desire and deserve. Thanks for being there!

You are nice, cool, and funny. We are happy you are getting married.

You are a good teacher. You teach every single kid so they can learn.
A study by the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences will measure in-vehicle and personal exposure to diesel bus exhaust, and any associated respiratory health conditions. This study will investigate whether upgrading the diesel school bus fleets with new engines or new exhaust control technologies will result in lower exposure to diesel exhaust and improvements in children’s health. Interested parents of students attending 3rd to 5th grades in fall 2005 should call 543-8087 for more details about the study, or go to www.washington.edu/healthresearch.

Marlies van Bergeijk noted that she very much enjoyed visiting the Marymoor Art Display at the Stanford Center, where some TOPS students’ art work is being shown, and she encouraged parents to view the display.

Site Council members briefly discussed the TOPS music program, noting that the band is currently struggling, with fewer students joining the band than in the past. Members wondered if the 8 a.m. practice time discourages students from signing up.

Kathy Cox-Czosnyka stated that the installation of microphones and sound baffling in the gymnasium is a lengthy process, but is ongoing and getting closer to completion.

Finally, Kathy reported that in order to get bulletin boards ready for use at the Art Walk, parent Phil Czosnyka needs parents to staff painting parties he is organizing. Site Council members suggested he enlist Randi Niemer’s help in recruiting parents.

Maureen Germani gave the volunteer coordinator report, stating that Randi Niemer is currently working on the Washington State Patrol forms for upcoming camps and coordinating volunteers for the upcoming Art Walk. Maureen further reported that all major projects are now staffed.

Clara Scott gave the principal’s report, stating that TOPS has “lots to celebrate.” She mentioned that several TOPS students participated in the Writers in the Schools program, and that four of them were published. She further stated that another TOPS student, Zoe Barker-Aderem, had a play performed at ACT Theater downtown. She reported that TOPS 7th and 8th graders participated in an all-city math competition, with the 7th graders finishing 3rd and the 7th graders finishing 6th overall. Mrs. Scott also reported that the graduating 8th graders will be attending a broader range of secondary schools than usual, including Ballard, Cleveland, Franklin, Garfield, Holy Names, O’Dea, Seattle Prep, Roosevelt, and West Seattle high schools.

Mrs. Scott reported that Venise Jones-Poole, former 5th grade teacher at TOPS, passed away earlier in April, and that services would be held at Mt. Zion Baptist Church on Monday, April 25.

Tammy Luthy, auction co-chair, stated that TOPS has secured a wonderful new and highly thought-of caterer for this year’s auction, Boat Street Caterers, but that as a result of the caterer’s increased cost parents would be asked to bring appetizers. She also reported on a new raffle the auction committee will institute this year: the “golden raffle,” whereby the committee will sell 100 tickets for $50. The winner will win the right to choose any live auction item. Tammy reported that the golden raffle has proven an effective fundraiser at other school auctions.

Marlies van Bergeijk reported that TOPS is making a video featuring TOPS students discussing what they value about their education and experience. Gerrit Kischner will introduce the video directly before the “raise the paddle” portion of the auction. Finally, the Site Council discussed the fact that there are still three fundraising chair seats vacant: two No-Bake Sale chairs and the fund development chair.

Linda Korbus reported that auditions for the elementary school play, “Johnny B King, This is Your Life,” have taken place and that rehearsals are underway. The play is a musical revue of previous TOPS plays, and performances will take place on May 20 and 21.

Galen Goff gave her report, stating that at the April CSJ meeting 2nd grade teacher Carla Fetterley gave an interesting presentation on her trip to Japan. Galen noted that the CSJ is looking for someone to discuss learning differences at the May 5 CSJ meeting or another upcoming meeting, and is planning a community social event for June 2. Finally, Galen reported that next year the CSJ will focus on continuing to support its three main themes from this year: bullying prevention, family differences, and

students, yet very few disciplinary problems. When she asked how they manage classes of 40-48 students with so few problems, the teachers and other staff responded that they had very high expectations of the students, and that when a lot is expected, kids live up to those expectations. Mrs. Scott commented on the high value the Chinese put on education, where parents donate very liberally to the schools in order to fund state-of-the-art science, music, and athletic programs. She stated that the TOPS group and their Chinese hosts noticed differences in learning styles between the cultures: it appeared the Chinese method is more rote, and the TOPS method leans more toward critical thinking.

Finally, Mrs. Scott reported that Venise Jones-Poole, former 5th grade teacher at TOPS, passed away earlier in April, and that services would be held at Mt. Zion Baptist Church on Monday, April 25.

FUNDRAISING

DRAMA

COALITION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE (CSJ)

By Louise Bush Rosen

GENERAL ISSUES

Lianne Sheppard stated that the University of Washington is conducting a study regarding the effect of diesel on children’s health, particularly 3rd through 5th graders who routinely ride the school bus. The UW will be looking for TOPS students who would like to participate in the study, which would involve monthly checks of the students’ lung function. (See announcement this page.)

FINANCIAL ISSUES

By Louise Bush Rosen

By Louise Bush Rosen

What I like best about Ms. Scott is that she is so smart, she can solve any problem.

Ms. Scott helped me and my family by welcoming my lil’ sis.

By Louise Bush Rosen

By Louise Bush Rosen
learning differences. CSJ is also purchasing a copy of the film “Color of Fear,” which Galen urges everyone to view.

BUILDING LEADERSHIP TEAM (BLT) TRANSFORMATION PLAN

Gerrit Kischner gave the BLT/Transformation Plan report, noting that the TOPS community has worked hard to develop its curricular focus on math and writing and has laid deliberate groundwork for new program initiatives to address bullying prevention and support our social justice mission. TOPS’ 2005-06 Transformation Plan, required by the Seattle school district to consist of seven action plans, reflects TOPS’ intent to maintain its focus on the programs above and to strengthen school-wide systems, projects, curriculum continuums, and practices that enhance the K-8 program.

Under the first action plan, math, TOPS’ strategy is to finalize adoption of a K-8 math continuum and provide second-year math coaching to facilitate consistent use of TERC Investigations. The strategy of the second action plan, reading, is to strengthen the literacy block program in 1st and 2nd grades and extend reading group structure through the upper grades. Gerrit stated that one focus of this action plan includes changing the middle school schedule to create extended, teamed periods in language arts and social studies to provide more integrated focus on content-specific reading skills. Under the third action plan, writing, TOPS intends to maintain building-wide use of a K-8 writing continuum using writers workshops and building-wide fall and spring writing samples.

Under the fourth action plan, climate/safety, the strategy is to implement the Olweus bullying prevention program. Gerrit stated that TOPS is now pulling things together for the Olweus kickoff in September. Under the fifth action plan, identity/mission, the school intends to develop school-wide projects that involve the whole community on a regular basis, including designating stewardship zones and strengthening TOPS’ programs to provide more mission-focused learning opportunities for students. Under the sixth action plan, discipline/“disproportionality,” the strategy is to develop a progressive discipline plan, which includes implementing a “re-entry protocol” for students returning from suspension. The seventh action plan, differentiation/“disproportionality,” requires TOPS to strengthen differentiated instruction in the classroom, paying close attention to each individual learner.

Finally, Gerrit stated he was pleased to report that an Americorps worker will be at TOPS next year to help maintain the Olweus bullying prevention program on a daily basis.

The Site Council adjourned its meeting, and the Friends of TOPS (Site Council acting as nonprofit board of directors) meeting was convened.

BUDGET PROCESS

Steve Havas reported on and Site Council discussed the current state of the budget process. (See article p. 3.) The Friends of TOPS meeting was adjourned, and the Site Council reconvened.

COMMUNITY FORUM FOLLOW-UP

Kathy Cox-Czosnyka led a very brief discussion regarding the community forum held at the conclusion of the March 16 Site Council meeting (see detailed article in last month’s newsletter). Kathy stated that she and three other parents from the executive committee intend to initiate a meeting with Brita Butler-Wall, from the Seattle School Board, to discuss the conclusions from the community forum. She also invited Galen Goff or another representative from the Coalition for Social Justice to accompany them to that meeting. Kathy stated her goal is to gather all opinions from the TOPS community regarding what the group’s focus should be at the meeting based on the conclusions reached at the community forum. Kathy encouraged everyone to look through the April newsletter or any other detailed summary of the community forum in order to decide what the group’s focus should be, and email that information to her. Gerrit Kischner reported that the full staff had a discussion on April 6 about the community forum and is now fine-tuning their conclusions.

The Site Council adjourned its meeting.

2004-05 TOPS CALENDAR

Send your events and dates to our webmaster, Jack Lee, at Lee@Oz.net. Please check Wednesday Go-Homes and the web site for updates.

May
2-6 (M-F) ...... Teacher Appreciation Week
5 (Th).......... CSJ meeting; 6:30-8 p.m.
13 (F).......... Middle school dance; 6:30-9 p.m.
14 (Sa)......... TOPS auction, Asian Resource Center
17 (T)........... Class pictures
18 (W)......... Professional development block time; 2-hour early dismissal
18 (W)......... Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
18-20 (W-F) .. Grade 7 to Mt. St. Helens
20 (F)......... Art Walk, 5:30-9 p.m.

20(F)........... Newsletter deadline
20 (F)......... Elementary play, 7 p.m.
21 (Sa)........... Elementary play, 7 p.m.
24 (T).......... Parent math night, Patterns and functions/algebraic thinking, 7-9 p.m.
25-27 (W-F) . Grade 5 to Camp Orkila
26 (Th) Middle school career fair, 9:15-11:45, gym
30 (M)......... Memorial Day; no school

June
1 (W)......... Spring music concert, 2 and 7 p.m.
2 (Th)......... CSJ meeting, 6:30-8 p.m.
3 (F)......... Grades K-2 and DHM to Camp Long
7-10 (T-F)..... Grade 8 to Deception Pass
9-10 (Th-F) .. Grades 3-4 to Camp Arnold
15 (W)......... Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
17 (F)......... 8th Grade Passage
20 (M)......... Grade 5 Moving Up ceremony
20 (M)......... Middle school to Wild Waves; elementary field day
21 (T)......... Last student day
What TOPS Families Are Celebrating

Compiled by Lynne Goodrich, CSJ member. Please send comments, additions, and suggestions to goodrich_yas@msn.com.

May Is Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month

Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month was enacted on October 28, 1992. The purpose of the law was to honor the achievements of Asian/Pacific Americans and to recognize their contributions to the United States.

May 2005 Holidays

May 1: May Day Spring festival celebrating human fertility and the renewal of nature. The festival originated with the celebration of the Roman goddess Flora. May Day was especially popular in England during medieval times.

May 1: Orthodox Easter (Christian) Western Christian and Eastern Orthodox Christian churches celebrate Easter on different dates. The formula for Easter is the same for both – “The first Sunday after the first full moon” – but they use different calendars. Western churches use the Gregorian calendar and Orthodox churches use the Julian calendar.

May 3: National Teacher’s Day An Arkansas teacher, Mattye Whyle Woodbridge, began corresponding with political and educational leaders as early as 1944 about the need for a national day honoring teachers. One of the leaders she wrote to was Eleanor Roosevelt, who persuaded Congress to proclaim a National Teacher’s Day in 1953.

May 5: Cinco de Mayo (Mexico) Commemorates the May 5, 1862, defeat of French colonial forces at the city of Puebla. Cinco de Mayo is celebrated with food, music, and dancing. Sometimes confused with Mexican Independence Day (September 16, 1810).

May 6: Yom Hashoah/Holocaust Memorial Day (Jewish) Commemorates the six million Jews killed by the Nazis during World War II (1933-45). It is about commemorating and learning from the events of the Holocaust, and about relating those lessons to the ever-changing world around us.

May 8: Mother’s Day (United States, Mexico) Festivals honoring mothers can be traced back to the Greek celebration honoring Rhea, the Mother of Gods. In the United States, Julia Ward Howe held Mother’s Day meetings in Boston in 1872 dedicated to peace. Later Anna Jarvis and then her daughter began efforts for a Mother’s Day holiday dedicated to healing families torn by the Civil War. Mother’s Day became an official holiday in 1914.


May 19: Malcolm X Day (United States) Celebrates the birth of Malcolm X on May 19, 1925. He became one of the most outspoken and popular leaders of the black nationalist movement in the 1960s. He established the Organization of Afro-American Unity. Initially a supporter of black separatism, he later modified those views to embrace world unity. He was assassinated in Harlem on February 21, 1965, by members of a rival organization.

May 21: Armed Forces Day A day to salute the men and women in all branches of the military for the service and sacrifices they perform.

May 23: Declaration of the Bab (Baha’i) In 1844 a young Persian merchant named Siyyid Ali-Muhammad shared a divine revelation that spiritual renewal rested on “love and compassion” rather than “force and coercion.” His announcement attracted thousands of followers. He took the name “Bab,” which means “Gate” or “Door” in Arabic. The theme of his major work, the Bayan, was that there would be an appearance of a second messenger from God whose mission was to usher in the age of peace and justice. The largest Baha’i communities are in South Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands.

May 30: Memorial Day First observed in 1868 to honor Civil War dead. Now commemorates all lives lost in war.
4th graders preparing and planting the planter between the gym and the library as part of the TOPS stewardship project, and in celebration of Earth Day, April 22. Mary’s class is creating a butterfly garden, and Joe’s class is planting plants significant to each child’s family heritage.

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**HELEN HUNDLEY, OFFICE/ADMINISTRATIVE**

Here she is, she’s always here
Ever gracious
Lovely to kids and parents
Enthusiastic!
Never harsh or seemingly harried
How helpful she is
Unusually patient
Nice front-office person
Delightful twinkle in her eye
Leaves no doubt that she cares and is competent
Evidently enjoys her job
Yes, we love our Helen!
Thank you, Helen and Colette, for always greeting me with a smile even when things are crazy!
I am grateful to Helen for helping people when they are hurt.

**KATIE WATERS, GRADE 3**

I couldn’t convince my daughter that rock collecting was fun and interesting, but Katie Waters did.
I appreciate so much the never-ending focused energy that comes from Katie towards her students.
What I like best about Katie is her consistent clarity of communication.

**MR. ELLIS**

Mark Ellis’ math courses are well organized and he is careful to keep parents up-to-date with regular emails.
Mr. Ellis does a great job in equipping his students with a strong conceptual foundation.
I am grateful to Mr. Ellis for

**JASON KERBER, GRADE 5**

I am grateful to Jason for teaching all the students at their pace.
I am grateful to Jason for his degree of organization, which allows him to accomplish academic goals as well as fit in fun.
Jason helped me by talking out my problems during lunch when I need help.
NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY AND BEYOND

By Steve Haines, librarian

“Anyone who has a library and a garden wants for nothing.” ~ Cicero

Correction to April newsletter: 2005 speech tournament winner for storytelling was Naomi Schwartz.

It all starts in the primary grades with the poetry festival. As reported last month, TOPS completed its competitive speech tournament for students in grades 3-8. The primary grades (1st and 2nd) celebrate their month-long study of poetry by reciting poems in front of their peers and family members in the lunchroom over a two-day period in early April. This non-judged event has each child present a poem to the audience. The classes are paired so that students in one 1st and one 2nd grade class presents each day. The students are exposed to many different types of poetry from their teachers in the preceding month. Students then select and memorize a poem. We listened to poems ranging from poets Shel Silverstein to Maya Angelou. This is another example of the challenging work displayed by our children and their teachers and is a great segue into the speeches given in the students’ future years at TOPS.

DISCOVER. EXPLORE. EXPERIENCE LIBRARIES OF WASHINGTON STATE!

There is a recently initiated statewide campaign in Washington to increase the awareness, visibility, and use of all types of libraries in our state. The main push is to promote the value of libraries. There are radio and newspaper ads currently on air and in print throughout the state, and KING TV has agreed to be a media partner with libraries, with Jean Enerson as the spokesperson. This seems like a timely project sponsored by the Washington State Library in light of the budget shortfalls that have affected all of us. Come in for a free bookmark celebrating the campaign, and to talk books or discuss how we can make our own library even better. One goal I have for the summer is to make a visit to all of the newly remodeled Seattle Public Libraries using public transportation to get there. Seems fairly lofty. For more information on the library campaign, go to www.secwilibrary/libraries/projects/marketing.

SUBSCRIPTION RESOURCES NOW AVAILABLE TO US ON THE WEB.

Through the Washington State licensing agreement, Seattle Public Schools has made available to our students some incredible resources one can use outside of school. Accessed through the web at www.seattleschools.org/area/library/stuindex.xml, the most important resources include World Book Online Reference Center, Culturegrams Online Database, and elibrary (a great resource for current events). The username and password for these sites are W001CSEATL (username), WELCOME (password). Note: These passwords are case sensitive and must be entered in uppercase. At school we don’t need a password, and I have shown many classes how to access and use these resources. Of course I am partial to books, but this is another way for our students to access information outside of school. The seattleschools.org website is loaded with other useful information for all. Check it out.

COME SEE THE ELEMENTARY PLAY!

“Johnny B. King: This is Your Life”

Friday, May 20, at 7 p.m.
Saturday, May 21, at 7 p.m.
Adults $5, Students $3

MARIANNE TRANGEN

I really appreciate Marianne’s willingness to tell the truth.
I am grateful for Marianne because she is kind and smart.
I appreciate Marianne’s creativity.
Marianne has helped me by giving me advice.

KAREN WONG,
GRADE 1

I really appreciate
Karen Wong’s kindness and caring.
What I like best about Karen is that she’s nice.

ANNIE MEYER, HANNAH CHRISTOPH, LUNCHROOM

I really appreciate Annie Meyer’s skill and patience.
I am grateful to Hannah Christoph for giving me a vegetarian lunch option.
I appreciate Hannah’s good nature.
What I like best about Hannah and Annie is their feeding us lunch with a smile.

TRACY SEEFELD, GRADE 3

I very much appreciate Tracy Seefeld because she makes sure girls get into math and science.
Tracy keeps her class in such good order, and makes sure every student progresses.
Tracy was great at giving kids appropriately challenging work.
impressed with our math programs because kids learn how to solve math problems and they can explain their thinking. Jian says that his students do well academically, but Chinese students are taught to memorize, and do rote learning. He would like them to be ready for the world marketplace. They will need critical thinking skills to compete with their American counterparts.

We are going to set up a sister relationship and learn from each other. Some of our students will be pen pals with Chinese students. Hopefully, we will be able to participate in a teacher exchange. Thanks to Xou-Qiao Zhao and Gordon Davenport for making all of this possible.

Marianne Trangen, Tiffany Ogami, and several students and parents went to Paris, France, over spring break to study more about the country and experience firsthand the food, culture, and beauty of the country.

Marianne, Darin Durand, Dan Bloedel, and several parents took our 6th graders to Moran State Park on Orcas Island for a three-day outdoor education experience. The weather was incredible and our students and staff felt it was a very successful trip. We appreciate the hard work and chaperoning of our parents in making this trip possible.

Thank you to the many parents who worked on the quilt project in honor of Mr. J for First Place, a school for Seattle’s homeless children. This project was done in an elementary TOPIC.

In celebration of Earth Day, our stewardship committee and students began designing and working on our gardens and landscaping at school. They added new soil and mulch and planted many flowers. This was truly a labor of love! (See photos on p.9.)

Students have begun rehearsals for the elementary play, which will be performed for the community and parents on Friday, May 20, at 7 p.m. and Saturday, May 21, at 2 p.m. for a matinee and again at 7 p.m.

Our Art Walk is Friday, May 20, from 5:30-9 p.m. at TOPS. Luzita, Cynthia, and many of our staff and parents work very hard on this fantastic exhibit of art created by TOPS students. We always have a fantastic turnout for this event.

Cheers!

Clara
3RD GRADE CHEMISTRY AT UW

By Marlies van Bergeijk

On April 21 Tracy and Katie took their 3rd grade classes on the bus for a visit to the UW chemistry department. Here TOPS parent and professor Mary Harty and some of her undergraduate students demonstrated how chemistry is done in a laboratory setting by showing some very cool experiments.

The kids saw what happens to a flower when you dip it in liquid nitrogen, how fireworks are made, and what happens to a hydrogen-filled balloon if you hold a candle flame near it.

It was loud!!!!

All students were given a notebook to write their scientific observations in. As a special treat they got to eat ice cream that was made very quickly by, once again, using liquid nitrogen. Afterwards everyone had a picnic lunch in the sun near the fountain, and too soon it was time to return to TOPS.

SARI BREZNAU

We love Sari! Thanks for helping our children sing so beautifully!

What I like best about Sari is the cool songs she knows.

My favorite thing about this year with Sari has been singing songs like the one that goes “inch by inch, row by row, I’m gonna make this garden grow. All you need is a rake and a hoe and piece of fertile ground.”

JUDY HOLBEN,
INTERMEDIATE SPECIAL ED

WILLIAM SMITH,
INTERMEDIATE SPECIAL ED INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT

Judy Holben and Mr. Bill are helpful, accommodating, positive, and patient.

Thank you, Judy and Mr. Bill, for every day.

Judy impresses me. Every time I see her, she is so on top of her game!
MIDDLE SCHOOL TOPIC DAY – SAIL SANDPOINT

By Marcus Morales, Grade 8

For the middle school TOPIC day I went to Sail Sand Point. When we got there we met the sailing director, Morgan. He showed us how to rig the boats and then he let the people with some experience go sailing. We went out and sailed around while the inexperienced people were shown how to control the boat.

After about an hour of sailing we all came back and enjoyed outstanding barbecued hamburgers and hotdogs for lunch. We went back out after lunch for a quick run and then came back in again. On the way back in Miles and I raced against Don and Jessica. It was a close race close but we won. Unfortunately due to someone’s bad steering we were hit on our way to the dock but we made it back without getting hurt.

I had a great time and I would like to thank Morgan Collins, Sail Sand Point’s executive director, for showing us their great facility and letting us sail. Also, thanks to ex-TOPS parent and Sail Sand Point board member Glen Moore for volunteering his time to show us the ropes (I mean lines).

If you would like to go sailing over the summer they have a phone number, 525-8782, and a web site, www.sailsandpoint.org.

DON ZEMKE, PE

I really appreciate the efforts of Eric Herrdon and Don Zemke. We are really lucky to have such a fine PE program at TOPS. The kids are really turned on by the variety of fun activities and skills that Eric and Don provide.

What I like best about Don is that he always lets kids know if they did a good job on something.

I like Don because he is nice and he’s my friend.

Don, I like the way you teach PE. PE is really fun with you around. I like the way you count the stretches.
TOPS VOLLEYBALL 2005

By Camille Shumann, Grade 8

Being part of the TOPS volleyball team has been a great experience. This is the third and final year on the team for me as well as for one other 8th grader, Isabel Sitcov. Our team has greatly increased in size and talent this year, thanks to the enthusiastic players and coaches.

Over the years I have learned many beneficial volleyball and lifelong skills with the help of our coaches Angela and Carolyn, as well as Garfield seniors Amanda Jamieson and Lilly Cohn. With practice twice a week, my teammates and I have improved and grown together and developed into sort of a volleyball family. We practice our serves, ball control, and many other things.

This season has gotten off to a good start. We’ve already won one game, and have come very close in a few others.

I look forward to high school volleyball...BULLDOGS! But I know it will be hard to leave TOPS knowing what a positive effect this team has brought me.

May 11 is Nurse’s Day. Thanks, ANNIE UOMOTO!

“...She lets kids help her. We like how when somebody comes, she trusts us. She shows us how to put on bandages, then she trusts us to help people. And we even invented this funny cheer to make kids smile when they come in.” – Sadie Hirshberg and Sarah Blazevic, Grade 3.

ERIC HERNDON, PE

Eric is a hero in the eyes of the kids!
I really appreciate Eric’s support.
Eric is like family and he keeps you entertained.
I am grateful to Eric every day for his humor and joy.

PE
FUN, HARD
SOCCER, JUMPROPE, BASKETBALL
PLAYING SOCCER EVERY DAY
PE

By Acacia Salisbury, Grade 2
HOST A UW INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND MEET THE WORLD

By Nancy Bacon

Looking for a way to make the world come alive beyond the classroom? FIUTS (Foundation for International Understanding Through Students) is looking for families interested in hosting international students for a week or less as they arrive to this country.

FIUTS is a community nonprofit organization founded in 1948 with the mission of enhancing international understanding through cultural exchanges between UW international students and Americans. Hosts provide a friendly place for an international student to live for the first week they are in Seattle. Students arrive throughout the calendar year, with the majority arriving for the fall quarter in late August and September. For more information, call the FIUTS office at 543-0735 or email info@fiuts.org.

My family has hosted an Afghan and a Taiwanese this year, and it has opened up worlds for our two kids. Feel free to contact me at nbacon@myuw.net or 526-0917.

The Impact on TOPS of Budget Cuts continued from page 3

they need to work with the kids, it reduces the amount of money for discretionary enrichment activities.

Friends of TOPS is currently in the process of establishing our budget for next year. This process will end on June 15, when we approve the final budget recommendation from the executive committee. Presently, we are considering discretionary spending proposals for next year that total $125,000. If we forecast auction revenues similar to last year’s, we will not be able to fund as much as $40,000 from these requests. This is likely to include some de-funding of enrichment programs.

For this reason, the Special Auction Item this year is dedicated to funding the general activities of TOPS, rather than a special item such as last year’s gym sound improvement project.

Please note that TOPS is not alone in this situation. Schools across the district have been making tough decisions over the past two months.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

• The TOPS community is so generous that we hesitate to suggest this, but every dollar that we collect between now and end of year helps preserve existing TOPS programs. Please consider giving whatever you comfortably can at either the TOPS auction in May or directly to Friends of TOPS (2500 Franklin Ave. E. Seattle, WA 98102).

• Review and provide feedback of your priorities and concerns on the project proposals. They are posted on the TOPS web site. Feedback can be provided to shavas@seanet.com or any Site Council member.

• Actively advocate with your public representatives to fix the funding problem in public schools in this state and in Seattle.

DARIN DURAND, GRADE 6
MATH/SCIENCE

Mr. Durand helps me a lot.

I am grateful to be in Mr. Durand’s class because he is nice, funny, and smart.

I am grateful to Mr. Durand for his good teaching skills.

MOLLY KNAPP (PART-TIME DHH INTERPRETER)

I am grateful to Molly for playing kickball with me.

Molly helps me.

Molly, I am grateful for you. I like you!

Molly Knapp

LESLIE NILAN, GRADE 1

Leslie Nilan is unfailiing--she always keeps her cool--and thanks to her, first graders are excited about spelling!

I appreciate the way Leslie welcomes parents into her classroom and uses us.

Leslie cares about us kids. She believes in us: she thinks we can all do well if we work hard. She has a good sense of humor. When kids are sad, she tries to cheer them up.

ADRIENNE YOSHIHARA, ELIZABETH HAYDEN, DHH

I love to do homework with Adrienne.

I really appreciate Adrienne and Liz’s help.

I am grateful to Adrienne for playing with me.

REBECCA MOSLO, GRADE 5

What I like best about Ms. Moslo is that she is self-confident.

I am grateful to Ms. Moslo for helping me learn my decimals.

CYNTHIA LIVAK

Cynthia is so terrific. It’s wonderful how she integrates art with the curriculum. My kids are learning all the art technique I never got, as a child, and I am really thrilled about it.

Dear Cynthia, thanks for teaching me a lot of art stuff, like scruffiti. It is really fun to do art with you and you’re a nice person.

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TOP 10 REASONS TO ATTEND THE TOPS SPRING AUCTION

By the auction committee

10. Billiards with Bob TOPICS FOR GROWN-UPS party.

9. This is your chance to socialize with other TOPS parents at an adult event! With adult foods and beverages.

8. You’ll be the first to know if you’ve won a three-night stay at the Freestone Inn in the Methow Valley (and you can purchase extra raffle tickets to improve your chances).

7. Our beloved Joan O’Connor and Joby Moore’s teacher activity.

6. San Juan Island Youth Adventure Camp - 5 days out of the city for your city kid.

5. Buy GOLDEN RAFFLE TICKETS for a chance at one live auction item of your choice.

4. There’s no entertainment quite like a good bidding war!

3. You said you’d help out on the night of, didn’t you?

2. You can help TOPS “Bridge the UGLY Budget Gap” by raising $85,000!

And the number one reason to attend the TOPS Spring Auction.

1. You’ve already saved the date, hired the sitter, and reserved the tickets.

(You haven’t? Well, there’s still time. Contact Ellen Markman at 329-1205.)

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