TOPS COMMUNITY FIGHTS RELOCATION TO THURGOOD MARSHALL

By Jamie Flaxman

On May 17, the Community Advisory Committee on School Facilities and Programs (CAC) released its “Preliminary Recommendation on School Closure and Consolidation.” Among their many recommendations for school closures and moves, TOPS was slated for relocation to Thurgood Marshall Elementary School.

There was no clear reasoning for this relocation in their recommendations—the only reason listed was for the Seward building to become the new home for Montlake Elementary School.

TOPS parents, as well as many members of the greater community, were dismayed and confused by this move. On May 30 (before you receive this newsletter), the CAC will issue its final recommendations.

Whether TOPS will remain on the list for relocation is unknown, so this article focuses on what you can do in June to maintain TOPS at Seward.

PARENT COMMENTS VIA THE TOPS INFO LIST SERVE

“TOPS is an alternative school with a unique history and philosophy. TOPS is also a COMMUNITY; one comprised of several generations of dedicated students, families, neighbors, teachers and administrators. These upcoming bureaucratic decisions will determine the fate of that TOPS community, and the immediate future of our children’s lives. Maybe a little bit of outrage is appropriate.”

Continued on page 3
ABOUT THE OUTRAGEOUS PUBLISHING SERVICE

Welcome to the ninth newsletter of the 2005-06 school year. Jamie Flaxman and Ann Simonson edit, Cindy Suzumura handles photos, design, and layout, and Toby Harris gets it mailed off to you. Don Zemke provides many of our photos. G & H Printing prints the newsletter.

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 by email to topsnewsletter@gmail.com or to the newsletter box in the main office. The deadline for the September issue is August 7. Would you like to edit or otherwise help with our newsletter? Newcomers welcome. Please contact Jamie and Ann at topsnewsletter@gmail.com.

FAVORITE MEMORIES

From the editors:

We asked you what your favorite memories of the school year are, and you will find the responses scattered throughout this edition of the newsletter. We find the responses especially poignant as we face the unknown ahead of us in the school closure process. Thank you to all who responded.

MY FAVORITE MEMORY IS MY TEACHER JULIE AND WHEN SHE TAUGHT US EXPANDED NOTATION.

~Cathy, Grade 2

A BOOK FOR DESSERT

My daughter Julia’s most treasured second grade memory involves a silver platter and our golden librarian, Steve Haines. One morning Gooseberry Park, by Cynthia Rylant, was the object of Julia’s library search. She couldn’t find the book on the shelf, so she consulted her favorite reading buddy, Steve the Librarian. His computer search uncovered what to Julia was an amazing fact: TOPS did not own a copy of this animal chapter book by well-known Oregon author Cynthia Rylant (remember Poppleton, Mr. Putter and Tabby, and Henry and Mudge?). Julia was aghast. How could TOPS not own all of the books written by Cynthia Rylant, whose former boyfriend is Dav Pilkey of Captain Underpants fame? Steve was quick with a solution. “Don’t worry, Julia,” he said. “I’ll get that book and bring it to you.”

A couple of days later, in the middle of a math test (a practice of addition facts, no doubt), Steve burst into the room balancing what looked to Julia like a silver platter (it was actually an aluminum cake pan). While the whole class looked on, Steve walked to Julia’s desk and presented the book to her with a flourish. It was on the “platter.” “Here’s your book, Julia,” he said. He had made a special trip to the book store to buy Gooseberry Park. The book was already checked out in Julia’s name. She devoured it in two days.

According to Julia, the book lived up to its promise—it was a delectable treat of words about lovable animals, served to her personally by our epicure of books, Steve the Librarian. Bon Appetit!

~Shelly Haverkamp, Mom of Julia Robaidek, Grade 2

On a beautiful sunny day, I stood on the stone step overlooking Roger’s Field and watched as Eric managed to corral dozens of second graders, encouraging many of them as they scrambled past him up the steps, and still call up to me about the great day and the rambunctious 7 year-olds. When everyone was up the steps except for two straggling boys -- boys having far too much fun bending the rules -- Eric yelled at them to run, to get going, and as they finally approached, said something “stern” to them about being on time, or listening. They stopped jumping and making excuses, got serious and put their heads down as they headed for the steps. Then Eric called them back and said something like, “go long.” He threw each of them a high pop fly and the boys had to turn and run backwards to catch them. The look on their faces was incredible. It was just one more example of the gift Eric and Don give to every kid at TOPS. I’ve seen it too many times to count, but I’m struck by it every time. Eric and Don help kids understand rules (including rules of play), but they also let kids know that they can see who they are, each step of the way.

And in this case, being late might be less about being disrespectful and more about how hard it is to leave a sunny open field on a beautiful day when you’ve got so much energy. Those boys got the message that they need to come when called, but they also got the message that they’re still okay. And all because Eric suddenly turned and threw those balls high up into the sky.

~An Anonymous Parent

OUR FAVORITE MEMORY IS MEETING GOOD FRIENDS.

~Victoria and Helen, Grade 2
One parent wrote that the relocation of TOPS is much more than the loss of a facility. “We stand to lose much more:

- Our capability to provide a K-8 environment, which we find one of the most unique and important aspects of the TOPS program.
- Our middle school teachers; some of the best in the city and state.
- Our ability to attract and retain a diverse and academically successful student body.
- Our ability to attract and retain good teachers and dedicated parents. (After all, where will TOPS be driven to next?)
- The performance space that Todd Jamieson worked so hard to create for us (and all of the other physical reminders of our past efforts together).
- Most importantly, we risk losing our children’s sense of community, security, and trust. Including their trust in their parents’ ability to exert some control in helping them to shape their own lives and destiny.”

TOPS PARENTS TAKE ACTION

TOPS parents have been expressing their views publicly. Many parents had letters published in the newspaper and were interviewed in print and broadcast media. On May 21, over 150 people attended a rally at the corner of E. Louisa and Franklin St., followed by a parent meeting in the lunchroom. KIRO Television provided news coverage of the rally, including an interview with parent Linda Adams and coverage of Sam Heft-Luthy speaking to the crowd. Over 500 signatures were collected on the petitions at the elementary school play. TOPS parents have attended town halls, coffees with School Board members, and School Board member community meetings. Letters have been written to CAC members and elected officials. TOPS parents are not taking this recommendation lying down.

At the May 23 town hall at Meany Middle School, TOPS was represented by at least 300 individuals—parents, grandparents, alumni, students, teachers, staff, Ms. Scott, and community members. The sea of orange TOPS t-shirts emblazed with TOPS K-8, Delivering on the Dream @ Seward, The Option Program @ Seward, was incredible. We were joined at the town hall by hundreds of people representing Thurgood Marshall, MLK, Sacajawea, Summit K-12, Montlake, and others. We all were in unison that closing and moving schools is not the solution. TOPS parents Glen Tamura, Karen Stuhl Dreher, and Keith Toussaint, along with 6th grader Shelby Goff, all spoke eloquently and emotionally about why TOPS needs to remain at Seward.

KAREN STUHL DREHER’S COMMENTS AT THE MAY 23 TOWN HALL

(Johnny Calzagno wrote a good part of this and he and Karen drew from writing and research done by Bonnie Cech, Elizabeth Dickinson, Lynn Miller, and others)

I live six blocks from Thurgood Marshall and my child is a second grade student at TOPS. I might welcome this plan to move TOPS to Thurgood Marshall were it not for two very important concerns—both of which clearly demonstrate that this recommendation does not address the evaluation criteria laid out by the Seattle School District.

The first is the dissolution of an innovative, forward thinking, predominantly African American school in the heart of Seattle’s historically Black neighborhood. I can’t see how this set of moves of Montlake to Seward and TOPS to Thurgood Marshall can possibly decrease racial and economic disparity.

Second, uprooting and dividing the TOPS community does not meet the criteria of academic effectiveness and success. TOPS is a K-8 alternative school with an integrated curriculum that nurtures children’s intellectual, social, and emotional growth over nine years in a close-knit and diverse community.

Here are some facts:

- TOPS has been the first choice of incoming kindergarten families for many years.
- TOPS has had the highest average WASL scores in the city for 7th grade reading, writing, and math from 2002 through 2005.
- It had the second highest scores for 8th grade Science.

These FACTS testify to the proven track record of academic success that should be replicated, not decimated through relocation.

But we all know that test scores don’t measure the true effectiveness of any school’s success—learning.

We have and will continue to send supporting data about our many successes, but I think that the Committee knows what a great school TOPS is and why. What is missing in its recommendation is an understanding that we are not just a program, but a school community. Part of what makes TOPS outstanding is the community that created it. TOPS @ Seward did not “just happen.” The TOPS community has invested many years of hard work, volunteer hours, and money into the program and into its home. The Seward building was chosen by the School District in 1997 because of its central location to the 5 clusters it draws from and its access to I-5 ramps. The building was designed and remodeled specifically for the TOPS K-8 alternative program. It has taken nearly seven years of hard work since the remodel for the TOPS community to finally finish the building to its current state. Today, the building has space to support its integrated arts program, a definitive science program, and a library large enough to meet the needs of a wide age range of students. The TOPS community worked with the neighborhood to design and fund the lower playground and also created an upper playground to keep our Kindergartners close and safe. Our Stewardship Committee has worked to integrate the grounds into the neighborhood. Most recently the TOPS community funded and installed a sound system for the auditorium/gymnasium. (We could finally hear our children sing and speak in the school play for the first time this spring.)

TOPS should not be severed from its home which it has invested so
A GRATEFUL THANK YOU

As the year winds down I am overwhelmed by the huge amount of time that has been given by so many. Scores of volunteers who have changed our TOPS community for the better have donated thousands of hours in a multitude of different ways. I’m very proud and very lucky to be the Volunteer Coordinator for such a dedicated group of people. Your response to requests throughout the school year has been extraordinary and I sincerely thank you for your commitment.

I would especially like to thank all the Room Reps who do so much for each classroom and grade. I’ve said it many times before and I’ll say it again...I couldn’t do my job without them. They are without a doubt an invaluable resource to all of us with kids here at TOPS and I appreciate their dependability and stamina. Please take the time before the school year is over to thank each of your students’ Room Reps.

A huge thanks to all 8th grade families who are departing TOPS after many years of service. We will miss your support and assistance.

To everyone who has volunteered in some way or another, thank you. Our kids have truly been the beneficiaries of your generosity and willing spirit.

~Randi Niemer, Volunteer Coordinator

TOPS Community Fights Relocation continued from page 3

much in, or its neighborhood. And most importantly the community itself should not be divided which this move to a smaller facility depends upon.

With all due respect--and I DO RESPECT and APPRECIATE the work of committed citizens to try and solve these huge problems for our schools—this is not the way to do it. We need a comprehensive plan with significant planning and vision. Just as there was a renaissance vision and a comprehensive plan for the Seattle Public Library System encompassing the entire city, we need a renaissance vision for Seattle Public Schools that encompasses the entire city.

In the absence of such a comprehensive vision from the District, we strongly suggest that your committee ask the School Board to allow you to look at more options than you are currently able to consider, including all high schools and middle schools as well as moth-balled sites. We think this is a vital missing piece to this current process. The TOPS community is willing to work with the CAC and the Board to come up with a clearer vision, a more comprehensive plan and some better ideas that won’t tear communities apart and that allow you to truly honor the admirable principles of equity and academic effectiveness that are so important for all of our schools. These principles are sadly not being honored in the recommendation to move TOPS.

TIMELINE FOR THE FINAL DECISION ON CLOSURES AND RELOCATIONS

May 17..............Preliminary Recommendation of CAC Due
May 20-25 ...........Community Town Halls
May 30..............Final CAC Recommendations to Superintendent
June 2..................Superintendent’s Preliminary Recommendations
June 26-28 ..........Site Hearings for Schools Recommended for Closure
July 3 .................Superintendent’s Final Closure Recommendation Announced
July 19 ...............Public Hearing
July 26 ...............Board Meeting with Action

TAKE ACTION

Your voice can be heard! Make sure you are expressing your views. For more information on how to get involved, go to www.keeptopstogether.org and join the TOPS list serve at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TOPS_Info.

As we move into June, it’s important to contact the Superintendent and all members of the School Board to share your thoughts. Superintendent Manhas can be reached via email at rsmanhas@seattleschools.org and you can find email addresses for all School Board members at http://www.seattleschools.org/area/main/contact.xml.

I enjoyed seeing the 2nd graders spread mulch on the hill of Rogers Playground. They worked hard and everyone participated. The kids were enthusiastic and worked for a solid hour without any issues...they were focused on the job and the parents were THEIR assistants.

~Melissa Leonard...Mother of Owen, Grade 2

OUR FAVORITE MEMORY IS THE FIRST DAY OF FIRST GRADE AND THE ICE CREAM PARTY.

~Mei, Edel, Julia, and Alissa, Grade 1
WHOA, WHAT AN OUTSTANDING AUCTION

By Kathy Wickward for the Auction Committee

WHOA! stands for What an Outstanding Auction! This year’s committee, headed by Tammy Luthy and Janet Morrison, put together a party that netted over $100,000 for TOPS! And it was fun, too! How about a few more exclamation marks for emphasis?!!!!

The spring auction earnings not only sailed well over the 100K line, but we were also able to include in that over $26,000 to start a “Teacher Excellence” fund, which will provide grants to teachers to continue their education. Now kindergarten teacher Joby Moore can go back to school to learn more effective techniques to help her persuade her fellow teachers that the earth is indeed flat. She was unable to do so on the night of the auction. This was okay, since we think it helped inspire generous donations to the fund.

Other items that sold particularly well this year were the class baskets (well done classes!), the desserts (which raked in over $7,400), anything offered by second grade teacher Julie Gillett, and the T-shirts designed by parent Doug Manelski.

The Golden Raffle sold out, the winner choosing an Orcas Island getaway, and the Cannon Beach Raffle sold 263 tickets! TOPICS for Grown-Ups continues to be a popular, community building option as well.

Last month, the site council convened to decide how to spend the money raised by our fabulous community. The results will be available on-line soon. As usual, it would not be possible without the hard work and generosity of the auction committee, the volunteers on the night of the auction, the teachers, families, and classrooms that donated and procured auction items, and those who spent their hard-earned dollars to benefit our school. Thank you to all who made it happen. It was a tremendous success!

My favorite memories are of my teachers at TOPS. My teacher, Adrienne, teaches me math. Liz teaches me how to obey. Another favorite memory is of my teacher Jessica. I really like school because they teach me everything. I will thank Steve. I will thank the PE teachers too. My teachers are nice. I want to thank the TOPS school. Another favorite memory is of playing soccer. I like playing baseball more than soccer.

~Hanna, Grade 3 – DHH

MY FAVORITE MEMORY WAS WHEN WE HAD THE WRITERS IN THE SCHOOLS PROGRAM AND GOT TO WRITE SHORT STORIES.

~Hannah, Grade 7

I LIKED MAKING KITES.

~Joshua, Kindergarten – DHH
FUNDRAISING

Tammy Luthy reported that the auction was a huge success, raising in excess of $95,000 with $26,500 of this going towards the Teacher Excellence Fund. The Site Council thanked Tammy and the auction committee for all their hard work.

TOPS t-shirts will be on sale at the ArtFest on May 19.

PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

Clara Scott expressed her appreciation to the auction committee for the wonderful job with the auction. Ms. Scott reported that new 1st and 4th grade teachers have been hired. Additionally, 1st grade teacher Sarah Marks, who is currently in a temporary position, has been hired into a permanent position for next year.

Recently, TOPS students have been recognized for their work in a number of venues. Ms. Scott reviewed some of these accomplishments, which include students being recognized in the Narramore Art Contest and the National History Day Regional Contest.

BUILDING LEADERSHIP TEAM

Gerritt Kischner noted that the Building Leadership Team’s new challenge is to develop a process that will ensure the $26,500 raised for the Teacher Excellence Fund is administered in a fair and effective manner.

COALITION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Suzanne Oelke reported that the CSJ held a retreat on April 6 to discuss ideas for speakers and films for next year. At the May 4 meeting, the film “People Like Us” was reviewed. The final meeting of the year will be held on Thursday, June 1.

DRAMA

Linda Korbus reviewed preparations for the elementary school play 101 Dalmations. There are 128 children participating and the costumes are going to be great. An extra performance will be held on Monday, May 22 at 10:30 a.m. Invitations to attend have been extended to students at a number of area schools. The Site Council thanked Linda for all her behind the scenes efforts.

TREASURER REPORT

Year to date details of income and expenses for the Friends of TOPS budget were distributed.

SITE COUNCIL RECRUITING

A total of 9 parents serve on the Site Council, three from each of the following grade bands: grades K-2, grades 3-5, and grades 6-8. There are four positions open for next year. Two of the open positions are for the K-2 grade-band. Because several of the continuing Site Council members have several children at TOPS and are eligible to represent more than one grade-band, there was discussion as to how to distribute the remaining two open positions. It was decided that there will be one 3-5 position and one 6-8 position.

Judith Lee and Maureen Germani reported that five parents have been nominated to join the Site Council. Two of the parents are eligible for the two K-2 positions and will run unopposed for these positions. One parent is eligible for the 6-8 position. The final two parents will run for the single 3-5 position.

FRIENDS OF TOPS 2006-2007 BUDGET

Money raised by Friends of TOPS helps to fund curriculum enhancements and community building efforts. In 2006-2007, approximately $150,000 will be spent in support of TOPS. The deadline for the annual requests for proposals was April 7.

Maureen Germani distributed a preliminary summary of proposals totaling slightly over $200,000. There will be a special Site Council meeting at 5 pm on Wednesday, May 24 to review the proposals in more detail. Those who have submitted proposals are invited to attend. The Site Council will review and approve the final budget at the June 14 meeting.

More details on the budgeting process along with a link to the 2005-2006 Friends of Tops budget are available at the following web site: http://www.seattleschools.org/schools/ tops/sitecouncil/budget.html.

My favorite memories are of playing tag and freeze tag with my friends because it is fun. My teacher Adrienne gave me homework every day. I like homework because I do not have to clean at home when I have homework. I also like to go to school because my teacher Liz helps me study China.

~Aurora, DHH

My favorite memory is my TOPICS class on engineering.

~Isaiah, Grade 1
STEWARDSHIP IN ACTION

By Will McDonald, Grade 2

Q: What drinks 50 to 100 gallons of water each hour?
A: Trees!

On April 28th, Julie and Carla’s 2nd grade classes shoveled mulch (wood chips) into wheelbarrows. Parents wheeled the wheelbarrows over to the hill next to Rogers Playground. Then the parents dumped the mulch onto the hill. Some of the kids were waiting on the hill. The kids spread out the mulch with their hands or with rakes.

We spread mulch so the trees on the hills could have more water. The mulch helps the trees because it holds water and it helps water soak down into the soil. If there isn’t mulch, the water would just go down the hill and the soil would wash away. That is called erosion and we don’t want that to happen.

Please don’t run up and down the hill so the mulch stays put and the trees can stay healthy!
SUMMER ACTIVITIES

by Jamie Flaxman

Summer is just weeks away. If you’re still looking for summer programs for your children, here are some ideas.

KIDS COMPANY, on-site at TOPS, offers a summer program that will provide lifelong memories of friendships, fun and excitement. Their caring and well-trained staff develops a curriculum that inspires curiosity, creativity and critical thinking. The program runs June 26 through August 31, and is open to children ages 5-12. www.kidscompany.org or 709-8487

BASKETBALL CAMP with PE Teacher Eric Herndon focuses on basketball fundamentals, passing, shooting and dribbling, as well as team offensive and defensive techniques. Three sessions are available at TOPS, June 26-30, July 10-14, and July 17-21. Kindergarten through 5th grade runs from 9 a.m.-noon and 6th-8th grade is from 1:00-4:00 p.m. http://www.seattleschools.org/schools/tops/pe/basketballcamp.html.

ART CAMP with Luzita is a time to explore a variety of art forms together in small groups. Creativity in balance with skill development leads to confidence, depth of expression, fun and great art! The goal is to guide students to a positive, successful experience. Open to children ages 6-15 and located at TOPS and at Greenlake, there are weekly sessions from June 26 through July 17. http://www.art4kidsnw.com

ART CAMP with Cynthia is another opportunity to explore art over the summer. There are two sessions, June 26-30 and August 14-19. Brochures are available in the TOPS office or contact Cynthia at cynthialivak@msn.com.

SARI BREZNAU’S SINGIN’ IN THE RAIN SUMMER MUSICAL THEATER CAMP runs from June 26-July 6 at Epiphany Church in Madrona. The camp is open to children entering grades 3-9. This camp is limited to ten kids with a love of musical theater. They spend half of each day enjoying the summer and the city—last year they went swimming in the lake, visited the Seattle Center fountain, picked blueberries, took a behind the scenes tour of the Fifth Avenue Theater, designed and printed T-shirts, and had a trapeze lesson! They spend the other half of each day rehearsing with their accompanist, learning choreography and harmonies, culminating in a performance on the final day of camp for friends and family. To register contact Jackie Hubenet at jhubenet@msn.com or 206-860-6074.

TUTORING with FORMER TOPS TEACHER MARGIE BUTCHER is available for children needing a little extra help. Margie will be working 1-on-1 with children at her Wallingford home. If you would like your child to be more challenged or to strengthen some skills in reading, writing, or math, or if you would like Margie to create a custom area of focus (community service/service learning, science project), please contact Margie at Margie@drizzle.com or 547-4293.

ORLOV CHESS CAMP has held a one-week camp for many years at TOPS. This summer’s dates are the week of July 24-28, from 8:30-3:30 p.m. at TOPS. There are registration forms in the TOPS office or you may register on-line at www.chessplayer.com/camps.htm. There are also camps held at Northgate and North Seattle Christian Schools.

SUMMER DANCE AND SELF-DEFENSE WORKSHOP is designed to incorporate exercise and movement into the student’s everyday lives as well as promoting a healthy physical lifestyle. Do you like to dance? Do you want to learn the art of hip-hop and jazz dance? Do you want to have a good time? Do you want to learn how to defend yourself from harmful situations? If so this workshop is just for you! Come and join us June 26-July 14 from 9:00 to 3:00 pm in the TOPS cafeteria. For students in grades 3-7, and is open to all who’d like to participate, not just TOPS students. The workshop will consist of the students preparing for the dance session by exercising and utilizing stretching movements that will enhance their ability to move and dance. The students will then participate in a two-hour hip-hop jazz dance class by The Ewajo Dance Co. The summer workshop will be held for three weeks with the first two weeks focusing on dance and the last week a self-defense workshop facilitated by The Home Alive Women’s Self Defense Group! The last day of workshop will be followed by the finale dance performance. If interested please call Catrice Dennis at 252-3510 to reserve your spot.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF KING COUNTY offers weekly summer camps and drop-in activity programs for kids throughout the City. Sites include Greenwood, Ballard, Wallingford, Central District, and Rainier Vista. www.positiveplace.org

SUMMER FUN AT LAKEFEST

By Christina Hughes, Lakefest Volunteer Coordinator

LakeFest, in its fourth year as Lake Union’s premier art and music festival, takes place right on the grounds of the Seward School on August 26. LakeFest includes kid’s activities, pet parade, yoga, adult kickball, food booths, local vendor booths, music, beer garden, and general overall fun!

LakeFest started out as a festival for the Eastlake neighborhood, as a way to introduce neighbors and have some summer fun. Over the years, our goals have gotten bigger and better. We changed our name to LakeFest in an effort to include all the neighborhoods around Lake Union. Profits from fundraising and events will be put into creating a sustainable ongoing festival and foundation for financial and arts education.

We would like your input. After all, it’s happening right here, at your school. Why not display your child’s art at one of our artist’s booths, or enter your pet in the pet parade? Know a great licensed daycare? We’d love to find a way to make childcare feasible so that parents can take a break, play kickball, check out vendor booths, and enjoy any part of the festival without worrying about their children.

We can’t build a community without help from those who already belong. We need your input and ideas. We want LakeFest to be not only the festival to attend this summer, but to be an opportunity for businesses, residents, musicians, artists, and people who love the Lake Union neighborhoods to meet, share, and build community. So join us for the music, the arts and the activities, but also join us for your community, your neighbors, and yourselves. We welcome all volunteers, inquiries, and input. If you have any questions or would like to help out, please contact Christina Hughes at volunteer@lake-fest.com

A MONTHLY CALENDAR OF HOLIDAYS
WHAT TOPS FAMILIES ARE CELEBRATING

Compiled by Lynne Goodrich, CSJ member

JUNE IS GAY/LESBIAN PRIDE MONTH

Cities all over the world hold Gay Pride festivities on different dates in the month of June. Many cities choose the weekend closest to June 27-29 so that the celebration will coincide with the anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising (see below).

JUNE 2006 HOLIDAYS

June 2: Shavuot (Jewish) Celebrates the Ten Commandments, the foundation of Jewish law. It is customary to read from the Book of Ruth and study the Torah.

June 2: Native American Citizenship Day (United States) Congress enacted a law in 1924 permitting Native Americans to become citizens of their own country.

June 6: D-Day (United States) On this day in 1944 during World War II, allied forces invaded France, an action long awaited and hoped for by occupied Europe. Intense fighting in Normandy lasted many weeks.

June 11: King Kamehameha Day (Hawaii) Kamehameha was the name of the first five monarchs of the Hawaiian Islands.

June 14: Flag Day (United States) First observed in 1877 on the 100th anniversary of the Continental Congress’ adoption of the Stars and Stripes as the official flag of the United States.

June 18: Father’s Day (United States) First celebrated in Spokane, Washington, on June 19, 1910. Sonora Smart Dodd originally thought of the idea while listening to a Mother’s Day sermon the previous year. Their father raised Dodd and her five siblings after her mother died in childbirth. It was not until 1966 that a presidential proclamation declared the third Sunday of June as Father’s Day. President Richard Nixon made this proclamation by President Lyndon Johnson permanent in 1972.

June 19: Juneteenth (United States) Celebrates the freedom of over 250,000 slaves at the close of the Civil War. The holiday is based on events that occurred mainly in Texas but is now celebrated nationwide. The celebration takes its name from June 19, 1865, the day federal troops finally arrived in Galveston to enforce the Emancipation Proclamation.

June 21: Summer Solstice Longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere, and shortest day of the year in the Southern Hemisphere.

June 21: Last day of the school year at TOPS!

June 28: Stonewall Rebellion Day (United States) The Stonewall Inn was a gay bar in New York City where spontaneous resistance to police harassment inflicted on the homosexual community occurred in 1969. It sparked a new and visible phase of political organization for gay rights.

BON VOYAGE! SPRING BREAK IN PARIS IS BACK!

Marianne Trangen will be taking another group of TOPS parents and students to Paris over spring break in April of 2007. This has been a great experience for French students, their families, and friends.

Everyone is welcome to join us. Please contact Marianne at mtrangen@raincity.com for details. You can save money by signing up early.

MY FAVORITE MEMORY IS OF MAKING PAPER SCULPTURES IN ART.
~David, Grade 1

MY FAVORITE MEMORY IS THE TEACHERS – THEY ALWAYS HELP THE STUDENTS.
~An Anonymous student
101 Dalmations At TOPS

Photos provided by Peter Simonson
**Why We Like Chinese Class**

By Margot Maraghe, Tessa LaPatra, and Qingyu Onouye, Grade 3

We like Chinese class because we learn a different language and we have fun learning it (with lots of snacks)! Our teachers are the best! They make everything fun. Tessa says, “Whenever I come home my Mom says ‘What did you learn in Chinese today?’ Then I say a word in Chinese. My sister says that’s not good!” Qingyu says, “I love the songs that we sing, and the games that we play make us laugh a lot!”

We said it before, we’ll say it again...we love the snacks! We love Chinese!

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**5th Grade Science at Thornton Creek**

TOPS 5th grade students visited Thornton Creek, in the Meadowbrook neighborhood, as part of a program sponsored by Seattle Public Schools, Seattle Public Utilities, Seattle Parks Department, and Homewaters Project. Students participated in real world activities, exploring the relationship between moving water and soils, runoff, human impacts on urban streams, salmon, and wildlife habitat.

Photos provided by Cindy Suzumura & Judith Lee
NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY AND BEYOND

By Steve Haines, Librarian

“The best effect of any book is that it excites the reader to self activity.” ~Thomas Carlyle

REMEMBER TO RETURN YOUR LIBRARY BOOKS

I was interested in a recent Seattle Times article regarding some public libraries, including Seattle Public Libraries, use of collection agencies to help recover overdue library books and late fees. Many librarians don’t think it fits their idea of public service, yet the problem remains that many patrons ignore polite requests to return materials. A missing book may not seem like such a big deal, but in the U.S. last year it amounted to $64 million worth of library materials and fines. Well, at TOPS and at most school libraries, we don’t have the luxury of a collection agency. That doesn’t mean we don’t coax the books back to the library at the end of the year. Those pesky books get placed everywhere. Please be on the lookout for any library books that you might find around and under things. Remember when books are out for too long it denies someone else access, and oh, the cost of lost books! If you return it to the public library by mistake it will usually get back to us. Thanks for the diligence during these final weeks of school.

PETER ABRAHAMS PAYS TOPS A VISIT

On Tuesday, May 2, the Middle School students were treated to a visit by a well known mystery writer, Peter Abrahams, who has written over 17 adult mystery novels. Now he is trying his hand at mysteries aimed at the younger reader. I asked him why the transition, and he told me that he had four grown children with all that material just waiting to come out. He is a prolific writer with two books a year being published. His first book, in his new Echo Falls series, is entitled Down the Rabbit Hole. Ingrid, a 13 year old sleuth, solves mysteries that surface in her small town of Echo Falls, Connecticut. The second book in the series, Behind the Curtain, deals with a kidnapping. These are fast-paced books. I felt like I was right there with Ingrid getting in and out of her difficulties and yelling at her if she missed a clue. After an entertaining book talk and Q&A, Peter signed his books for students and staff. This was all made possible by the sponsorship of the bookstore “All for Kids Books”.

OUR VOLUNTEER EXTRAORDINAIRE

“Bob, here is the situation. The board that the sculpture is on is warping. Can you fix it?” “No problem,” he replied. Next time I looked (same day) he had it fixed and looking beautiful. That was between taking care of the salmon tank and watching over the kindergarteners at recess. I am of course talking about our omnipresent volunteer, Bob Morrison (Alex, 6th and Katie, 4th). We have many wonderful volunteers at TOPS who spend many hours helping to make this a wonderful place to be. Through a series of fortunate events, Bob has been able to spend most of his waking hours at TOPS. Did you see the middle school play? The car was his design. How about 101 Dalmatians? Yep, Bob’s sets again. Visit Mary’s class on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday at 10 for a lesson on bulbs and batteries. The list goes on and on. I told Dan Bloedel (science teacher) that I was writing an article about Bob for the newsletter and he said, “Write two.” That’s how visible he is, all of this with a smile and a can-do attitude. He is one of those gifted people that can do just about anything. Thanks Bob! Now, where did I put that screwdriver?

SUMMER READING, SUMMER NOT!

Have you been to a bookstore lately? “My, oh, my!” The choices are overwhelming. It’s like, “I’ll have one of each please.” I’m working on a new wish list that should be ready by press time. It takes some research to find the books for our students. If any of you have suggestions you know where to find me. Carol from the Henry Branch will be here June 13 to tell the students about the public library’s summer reading program. I think the public library is the best place to visit on a regular basis in the summer, especially now that most of them are remodeled. Have a great summer and remember to practice your reading.

FOUND IN THE LIBRARY

Believe it or not, a Nintendo Game Boy Advance. One of Henry’s favorite memories was the last day of Mandarin Chinese Club. This was a special day because they were able to see the older kids singing and speaking in Chinese. He thought they did a great job.

~Karen Gruen, Mom to Henry, Kindergarten
PE Reflections

By Megan Flood, Grade 8

Every year I have been at TOPS, PE has always been a highlight in my day. Every day we do something new, ranging from bowling to skating to soccer. PE is one of the only times you can interact and have fun with everyone else during the day.

I have enjoyed doing so many different activities and having so many opportunities to do fun stuff. For example, every year we get to skate in the gym, which is so awesome, because skating is fun and we only get to do it once a year. Another thing we get to do is have a Ping-Pong tournament. Everyone who wants to gets to participate, even if they stink. There are also so many opportunities like soccer, track, volleyball, and sailing. I have enjoyed my time in PE very much and I will be sad to leave all these opportunities behind.

During the day there are hardly any chances to talk openly to your friends about anything, but during PE you can talk all you want while playing games. I have spent many a PE chatting away with my friends while playing Frisbee or soccer. PE is where you don’t have to arrange a game and then collect people to play. Don and Eric just have to create a game and everybody plays, so you have plenty of people to have a good time. Every year I have enjoyed playing many games ranging from spot to capture-the-bag and I will miss playing all these unique games.

I have enjoyed my time in PE these last eight years and I will miss doing the many activities unique to this school. I have many happy memories of PE, ones of fun and laughter, and I remember all those games that were so fun to play and all the activities that I could do in the past and how fun they were.

Message from the Principal continued from page 1

New Staff
We welcome three new teachers to the TOPS Staff.

1st Grade:
Sarah Marks is currently in a long-term substitute in first grade at TOPS. She has done an outstanding job and she will return in the fall in a permanent position.

Kristina Stoneberg will be teaching 1st grade, replacing Leslie, who will move to 3rd grade. Kristina has been teaching for the last six years in Minneapolis, San Francisco, and Hong Kong. She is currently teaching at Thurgood Marshall.

4th Grade:
Leslie Hazelwood-Spurr will replace Mary Chao who is moving to 5th grade. Leslie has taught for 13 years. She is currently teaching a 4/5th grade combination at Olympic Hills where she has been for 9 years.

Sarah, Kristina and Leslie have begun meeting with their grade level partners to plan new curriculum for next year. Please join us in welcoming them to the TOPS family!

TOPS Student Awards
Congratulations to the Narramore Art Winners, sponsored by the Seattle Parent/Teachers’ Association to recognize the outstanding artwork of Middle School students. TOPS winners are: 1) Henry Luke – 1st place overall; 2) Isabella Fabens – 1st place creative; and 3) Peadar Kavanagh - 3rd place overall.

Seattle Readers’ Award for 5th Graders: Kathy Le; Corey Greengage; Maya Suzumura; and Zaryn Armstead.

Links’ Award Winners: 5th Grade, Kylin Sandstrom and Tere Calloway; 8th Grade, Sinclaire Manning and Malik Waller.

Congratulations to the 8th grade class as they move on to high school. Our good wishes are with you as you continue your educational journey. Have a great summer. I will see you in the fall!

Cheers!
~Clara
**Bowling**

By Nora Masler and Simone Framson, Grade 4

One of TOPS school’s many great aspects is its PE program. PE is one of our favorite periods especially because of bowling. Bowling works on many skills that most other things do not help with. It’s also fun because you can socialize while you’re doing it and also still be able to concentrate on what you’re doing. Bowling is also a fun sport because you can tell when you’re improving. For example one day I might get quite a few gutter balls, but if I don’t get discouraged and keep practicing the next day I might get a strike. Maybe after reading this you will want to go bowling.
SAILING DURING SIXTH PERIOD

By Isabella Fabens, Grade 7

“Tacking!” “Jibe Ho!” “Turn the tiller away from you! No, the other way!” In sailing, we speak gibberish. It was very confusing for me at first, but since then I have gotten the hang of it. Once on the water, all the gibberish starts to make sense, and I can finally apply all these terms to what I am doing. It’s almost as if I am driving, but on water. The amazing thing about this is that we are the ones controlling what we do, when we do it, and where we want to go. It’s all about playing with the wind. If one isn’t doing the right thing, they won’t go anywhere, and worse, might be bonked in the head.

And this is why we all enjoy sailing; for the pure pleasure and satisfaction of being able to accomplish something. It creates self-esteem for students, helping them in school and in life. It can be frustrating, but after a while, it becomes leisure time. When the wind is strong, and the weather is right, all this learning pays off.

The bright sun burns my face, turning it a pink tinge that can only tell me summer is coming. The water sparkles, blue and silver. The smell of sunscreen wafts through the air. Everything contributes to the coming of warmer weather. This is just the right time to be sailing; the weather is hot, but still, a light wind snakes through the air, balancing out the heat, even just a little.

The boats we sail in are called El Toros or the bull in Spanish. These are relatively small sailboats compared to large boats made out of fiberglass. For beginners, these boats aren’t much to keep track of, so they make a great start. Also, el Toros don’t go very fast unless sailed in high wind, so if one is a beginner, they can get the hang of sailing quickly without being too worried about what’s happening around them.

To sail, one must expect the worst, and be ready to face whatever can happen. Being on the water is more dangerous than land, because there is always the risk of falling in. Second, one must be on the water ready to learn, because, even though sailing can be such a pleasurable sport, it requires much education. In order to catch the wind, one has to know how to do it.

Being on the water with these two suggestions handy can make for a great day, and a fun time. Sailing at the Center for Wooden Boats is something to look forward to - for beginners, experts and everyone in between. Good luck!

My favorite memory was on the day of ski bus, and Mr. Bloedel took away people’s ski passes and hung them up over the garbage can until they could answer a question about science. Some people even got their “imaginary” ski passes taken away.

~An Anonymous Middle Schooler

I REALLY LIKE ART. MY FAVORITE MEMORY IS MAKING PUPPETS.

~Jesse, Grade 1

My favorite memory is having a good time with my teacher!

~Henrietta, Grade 2
2005-06 TOPS Calendar

June

1 (Th)........ CSJ meeting, 6:30-8 p.m.
5 (M) ......... Kindergarten Orientation, 6:30 p.m., lunchroom
6 (T) .......... K-2 and DHH to Camp Long
6-9 (T-F) ..... 8th grade to Deception Pass
8-9 (Th-F) ... DHH, Judy's and 3rd-4th grade to Camp Arnold
9 (F).......... Middle School dance, 6:30-9 p.m.
13 (T) ........ Middle School Orientation, 6-7 p.m.,
               Guest Speaker, 7:15-9 p.m.
13 (T) ....... BLT meeting, 4 p.m.
14 (W) ....... 1st and 2nd grade to Golden Gardens Beach
14 (W) ....... Kindergarten Puppet Show, 6-9 p.m., lunchroom
16 (F) ....... 8th grade Passage, 6 p.m., lunchroom
19 (M) ....... 5th grade Graduation, 1:45-3:20 p.m.
20 (T) ....... Middle school to Wild Waves
20 (T) ....... Field Day
21 (W) ....... Last student day, early dismissal, 2:20 p.m.

September

6 (W) ......... First day of school

Thanks to G & H Printing, 2370 Eastlake E. 329-9888

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Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against in any of the District’s employment or educational activities can file an internal discrimination complaint with the District’s Affirmative Action Office.