MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

SPRING IS A TIME we all look forward to with warmer weather, more daylight, and flowers blooming. Spring Break is right around the corner.

Our Auction Committee is in full swing and we are counting on our families, friends, and community for donations for the TOPS Auction, Saturday, May 5. This has always been a fun and exciting evening for all.

Congratulations to our hard-working No-Bake team. We exceeded our goal of $82,000! Thank you for making the programs at TOPS a priority.

Michaela Koerner did an excellent job directing our Middle School and 3rd grade plays, Twelfth Night. The actors were awesome! Thanks to all the parents, staff, and community for your support and attendance.

We had a fantastic Speech Tournament this year. The students get better and better every year! There were many compliments from our judges. We had grandparents, community members, school personnel from other schools, and teaching interns serving as judges.

Thanks to the Middle School staff and CSJ for coordinating Taste of TOPS. It was a huge success. Everyone appreciated the beautiful artwork displayed in our lunchroom and throughout the school. All enjoyed the Talent Showcase. Thanks to all parents, staff, and students who participated.

This year an educational component was added. Savoy Sing, who was born in London and has ancestors from Punjab, shared Indian culture with our middle school students. Annie Penta from the Folklife Festival taught master classes on the various art forms of India to all of our students.

We’ve already had two of our camps. Fifth grade went to Camp Colman March 21-23 and sixth graders went to Camp Moran on Orcas Island at that same time.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Our 1st and 2nd graders are working on their Poetry Festival, which will be April 3 & 4. Please come and hear

Continued on page 4

Have you been procrastinating? Do you realize that your auction procurement items are due this month? Don’t wait any longer! April 6 is the deadline to turn in your donation forms to the TOPS office. We are looking for new items, gift certificates, getaways – all new and all worth $50 or more. Found that pavement, call in those favors, it’s time to create our auction marketplace.

Do you like to throw theme parties? If so, you already have an auction item! A TOPICS for Grown-ups Party?

Simply decide on a date, theme, and number of people to invite. Design a poster, plan your party and have fun! Special donation forms are available in the Go-Homes, in the office, and through Sandy Green at thetangeloes@hotmail.com or 328-1998.

How much do your kids love P.E. with Don and Eric? To the moon and back? This year’s special auction item is dedicated to P.E. Don and Eric have written a wish list that, if fulfilled, will allow more kids more opportunities to develop physical skills and fitness. It will also help spruce up the gym and the “look” of the program to outside teams – an important confidence booster for our players! Their list includes such items as: replacing the worn out rock wall mat, moving the swing-out

Continued on page 5


**About the Outrageous Publishing Service**

Welcome to the seventh newsletter of the 2006-07 school year. Jamie Flaxman and Ann Simonson edit, Sharon Mentyka does the layout, and Jane Summerfield, Peggy Maraghe and Roxanne Robinson get 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 May issue is April 18. Would you like to edit or otherwise help with our newsletter? Newcomers welcome. Please contact Jamie and Ann at topsnewsletter@gmail.com.

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**P.E. Report**

By Eric Herndon and Don Zemke, P.E. Teachers

February and March were a good time at “Club TOPS P.E.” We had some excellent hard work setting and accomplishing jump rope goals. We learned about the largest muscle in our body (heart) and did some optional community service by raising money for the American Heart Association.

We also managed to find some time for hockey, climbing on the rock wall, playing some ping-pong, discussing CARE issues, juggling, basketball, frisbee, group games, soccer, volleyball, balance activities, wrestling, hackey sack, and unicycling. We also had Pike Street Market Artist and Rhythm Stick expert, Jim Johnson, spend a day with TOPS students helping them with their rhythm stick skills.

We are just getting started with track, girls volleyball, and boys soccer. New this year is Middle School Spring Ultimate Frisbee. For an update on all of our spring sports you can find current information on the TOPS web site.

As you can see, there’s never a dull moment! Thanks for all your support.

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**Juggling**

By Jaime Shure, Grade 8

Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Math, Art.

HELP!

This list keeps piling up on me.

The only time I can relax is in P.E.

I have so much to juggle in my life.

So in P.E. I like to juggle balls.

And sometimes clubs.

The rhythm of the balls falling into my hands.

And the not-so-occasional club hitting me on the head.

Relaxes me.

And I forget about my troubles.

For an hour or so.

Then P.E. is over.

And so is my relaxation.

Hello, troubles.

Nice to see you.

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**Physical Education**

By Sarah K. Voss, Grade 3

Play many fun games.

Have a lot of exercise.

You all get a chance to play and be it.

Sports are loved here.

I love Don and Eric.

Call our name if you want some fun.

All kids love P.E.

Laugh your heart out!

Everyone is welcome.

Don and Eric are athletic and fun.

U should see our lovely gym.

Cool and fun to play.

Are there more days of P.E.?

The kids get lots of exercise.

I like P.E.

Only the best place in the world.

No one is left out!

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Photos by Don Zemke
**WHY WE LOVE P.E.**

*By Max Sitcov, TOPS alumnus, now a senior and class president at Garfield High School*

Every middle schooler in the city will tell you that they like P.E. and that it’s one of their favorite classes. But at TOPS, everyone I knew loved P.E. and that is because Don and Eric made it that way. They have developed a program that is both extremely fun and healthy and that teaches kids more about how to well can do on the V stretch.

When you went into P.E. at TOPS it was both a learning experience physically and a time to socialize within the boundaries of the exercise or game you were playing. We did warm-ups everyday where we would stretch out, and somehow Don and Eric made it fun. Everyone’s least favorite thing was definitely running the mile but I really benefited from it because it helped me improve my stamina. My eighth grade year, I played P2 soccer and I feel I was in the best shape of my life, both because I worked hard at soccer practice, and because I was able to run all practice and not get tired thanks to the work out I got in gym.

P.E. was more than just the time of day to screw off and shoot some basketballs. It was a time when I built some of my strongest friendships, ones that I still carry on to this day, as a senior in high school. Don and Eric created a place where all kids could be successful regardless of their current level of fitness or athletic ability. Each activity was made to fit all levels of fitness. One kid from my class is now a star running back at Kennedy High School, and I know other kids from my class who play no sports and are overweight. But the thing is that all of those kids, although in very different physical shape in middle school and now, benefited the same from the P.E. class.

Don and Eric are the first people I go and see when I go back to TOPS because I see them as my friends. In my opinion they are well regarded teachers because of the bonds they build with their students, and the level of comfort and success all kids at TOPS get out of their P.E. class. And this is why everyone at TOPS loves P.E.

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**JUMP ROPE FOR HEART 2007**

*By Eric Herndon, P.E. Teacher*

Every year, the month of February is TOPS P.E. Healthy Heart and Jump Rope for Heart Month, where students learn how a healthy diet and daily exercise help prevent heart disease and stroke.

Each day, some time was set aside for various healthy heart related activities. Students started the month by being shown a variety of different jump rope tricks. Next, each student set a jump rope goal that they worked on over the course of the month. We had a great time at the end of the month when each student was given the opportunity to demonstrate their new skill on the stage in front of the class.

Another component of our Healthy Heart Month was the opportunity to do community service by raising money for the American Heart Association. We had discussions about helping others and did some sharing about people we know who’ve been affected by heart disease or stroke. The TOPS students that chose to participate in the fundraiser did a great job. Thanks to all of you students, parents, and friends who were so supportive.

*Photos by Don Zemke*
SITE COUNCIL REPORT

FEBRUARY 14, 2007

By Scott Winter

PRINCIPAL’S REPORT
Clara Scott reviewed some of the recent accomplishments of TOPS students and teams including the success of both the boys and girls middle school basketball teams in making it to the playoffs, Rebecca Ehler’s play being performed at ACT, the display of TOPS middle school students’ writing at the Stanford Center, and a TOPS student’s reading of her/his original work at the Nordstrom Recital Hall at Benaroya.

Quite a few students are out sick with the flu. Ms. Scott emphasized the importance of keeping children home until they have recovered.

Finally, Ms. Scott pointed out that based on feedback she has received there are some parents who are not feeling connected to the TOPS community. She encouraged the Council to give this issue some thought.

PRINCIPAL INTERN
Gerrit Kischner introduced Danny Rock, an intern from the University of Washington. Danny will be interning at TOPS through the end of April. He is working closely with the ASB. Danny recently accompanied six TOPS ASB representatives to a middle school leadership conference.

CSJ REPORT
Karen Stuhldreher reported that between 25 and 30 people attended the CSJ movie night held on January 26. The attendees viewed “Just Black: Multi-racial Identity in America.” A good discussion followed the showing. There will be one more CSJ movie night later in the spring.

8TH GRADE MATH ENRICHMENT
Lianne Sheppard reported that there are 23 students working hard studying four to six hours per week for the 8th Grade Math Enrichment program. A larger than expected number of the students will be taking on both algebra and geometry. Lianne is concerned the program may not have enough money to purchase the required geometry books.

BLT REPORT
The Building Leadership Team is in the middle of the Transformation Plan review. The Plan was recently reviewed by representatives of the District, Blaine, and Salmon Bay and received positive feedback for its strong curricular focus.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT
Gerrit Kischner distributed a working document listing nine areas the committee is working on relating to management of the Friends of TOPS budget. Friends of TOPS is the official non-profit organization, managed by the Site Council, that allocates the money raised by the “No Bake” Bake Sale and the school auction. The Committee is working to develop guidelines around these areas and will present initial recommendations at the next Site Council meeting.

PROPOSED BYLAW CHANGE
A proposal to add an additional member to the Site Council was presented by Kathy Wickward. The proposed new position would be designated to represent the deaf and hard of hearing and middle school special education communities at TOPS. It was suggested that rather than amend the bylaws, the Site Council should work to be more inclusive of all our communities. If the bylaws are changed at this time, the Council may need to change them again if the programs are removed from the building. The proposed change was tabled and the Nominations committee will explore ways to include representation from special population programs.

Additionally, an ad hoc Bylaws Review Committee was formed to conduct a comprehensive review of the Site Council Bylaws and to propose changes and updates where appropriate.

SPECIAL AUCTION ITEM
Each year a program, project, or activity is selected as the Special Auction Item. This item is presented at the auction and participants are asked to indicate their donation as the auctioneer calls out the amounts. Lori Eickelberg proposed that the Physical Education department be the focus for this year’s Special Auction Item. She noted that Don and Eric are the two teachers that follow the students all the way through K-8 and that they make invaluable contributions to the students’ growth and development.

The idea was met with enthusiasm. Additional details will be presented at the next Site Council meeting.

Message from the Principal continued from page 1

our primary students share their poetry.

Elementary students will go to Bellevue Skate King on Friday, April 6. This is an event that our students really look forward to each year.

Saturday, April 7, TOPS will host a Chess Tournament here. Michael Adams is organizing the tournament.

WASL Testing begins after Spring Break, April 24, and ends May 10. The testing is for 3rd through 8th grades. It is very important that students have good attendance during testing. Please arrive on time and avoid making dental and medical appointments during these weeks. A good night’s sleep and breakfast helps students feel more prepared and improves their concentration.

Have a great Spring Break!

Cheers, ~ Clara
**SITE COUNCIL REPORT**

**MARCH 14, 2007**

By Scott Winter

The meeting opened with a short report from ASB president Koji Pingry. Koji and 8th grader Zach Simon then shared their personal narratives written for the middle school speech tournament.

**PRINCIPAL’S REPORT**

Clara Scott expressed her thanks to everyone who helped make the production of the middle school play “Twelfth Night” a success. She also congratulated Leslie Nilan and her 3rd grade class for their version of the same play just presented this week.

The school budget was delivered to the District on March 13 and the school Transformation Plan will be delivered on March 30. The Transformation Plan lays out the academic focus the school has refined in order to boost student achievement.

**SPECIAL AUCTION ITEM**

Physical Education teacher Eric Herndon presented a wish list of items for the P.E. program that he and Don Zemke put together. The list included a new mat for under the climbing wall. The current one is “falling apart.” The swing-out basketball hoops were placed on the wrong wall when originally installed which has limited their use. It has long been the goal to move the hoops, but the money hasn’t been available. Other items on the wish list included equipment for circus arts (stilts, juggling clubs, etc.), a universal gym, team sports uniforms, and equipment for integrating music into P.E. Finally, the “locker rooms” off the gym were never finished, left without lights and nothing to cover the insulation in the walls. Don and Eric would like to have lights and sheetrock installed to make these spaces more useable.

The Site Council enthusiastically approved the P.E. program as the Special Auction Item for this year. The Council discussed with Eric strategies for presenting at the auction.

**DRAMA**

Ellen Markman thanked everyone for their help on the production of Twelfth Night, particularly the director, Michaela Koerner. A number of Site Council members commented on how well the sound system worked. The audience was actually able to hear all the dialogue. The outstanding sets were also noted.

The Elementary School play this year will be Jungle Book.

**FRIENDS OF TOPS BUDGET**

Marlies van Bergeijk reported that the total amount raised by the No-Bake Bake Sale has reached the $82,000 goal.

Ivy Teng distributed the budget detailing expenditures for the Friends of TOPS budget through the end of February.

Gerrit Kischner presented a motion for Friends of TOPS to provide $46,904 in funding to be committed as a part of the TOPS 2007-08 building budget just submitted on March 13. The majority of this total is to fund 0.5 FTE of the school counselor position. The District provides funds for a 0.5 FTE counselor position and Friends of TOPS supports the other half of this important staff position. The request also included money for translation services and to support copier expenses. The motion was approved.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

The Finance Committee has been working to develop policies to guide a number of areas of the Friends of TOPS budgeting and allocation processes. Gerrit Kischner noted the importance of this work given the large amount of money involved. The Friends of TOPS budget for the current year is over $190,000. Gerrit presented a proposal laying out guidelines in a number of areas. The guidelines included details on the membership and purpose of the Friends of Tops finance committee. Also included were guidelines on the size and use of contingency and emergency funds. Additionally, the proposal specified a limit on the amount of Friends of TOPS funds that can be allocated for building baseline expenses. After discussion, a motion was made to adopt these guidelines for the upcoming year and then to reassess their effectiveness next year. The motion passed.

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*Auction continued from page 1*

basketball hoops to their proper location, replacing old uniforms, as well as accommodating growth in the sports programs with additional uniforms, finishing the locker rooms, and purchasing more equipment to enhance the circus arts program. Let’s support and enhance our unique physical education program by contributing any amount we can to this special item. (Psst! If you can’t make it to the auction, you can still donate to the special auction item by sending your check to Carolyn Hughes, 3706 32nd Ave. W, Seattle, 98199. Make it out to “Friends of TOPS” and leave a note designating it for the “Special Auction Item.”)

**Do you have money left over from the No-Bake?** Do you have a line on supplies for the auction night party? Help us underwrite expenses! As they say, a penny saved is a penny earned. Help us to earn more from the auction by keeping our costs down. Send contributions to Ellen Markman: 3715 E. Union Street, Seattle, 98122.

**Can you volunteer the night of the auction?** We still need help! This is a great, one-shot way to participate! Contact Tammy Luthy at 322-3784 or email thejeffandtammyshow@comcast.net.

**Would you jump at the chance for an excellent getaway?** Then jump! Take the chance and buy a raffle ticket for $5. Tickets will be on sale on the last two Fridays in April, and on the night of the auction. However, there is one small detail we’re missing…a raffle coordinator. Please, oh please, oh please we beg on bended knees. Will someone take charge of the raffle?

**Will you come to the auction?** Did you save the date? Auction night is May 5, 2007! Save a little extra for the special auction item. Bring friends and family to our party! We hope to see you there!
WANTED: PARENTS WHO WANT TO GET INVOLVED
(NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED!!)
By Glen Tamura, Site Council Chair

Do you want to be involved with the inner workings of TOPS?
Do you want to help decide how we spend our $150,000 budget?
Do you have a contribution to make on issues of curriculum and community?
And No Experience Required – you will learn on the job, and we make it easy!

THEN RUN FOR A POSITION ON SITE COUNCIL OR THE BUILDING LEADERSHIP TEAM!
These are the two governance groups here at TOPS.
The Nominating Committee will be accepting names until April 29.
Do you need to know more before you can commit?
Read on:

FIRST – SITE COUNCIL:

According to our bylaws,
“The Site Council serves as one of the governing bodies of
the school, with responsibilities for leadership, advocacy,
fundraising, financial stewardship, and strategic planning
to assure the highest standards of educational excellence
and an inclusive, supportive school community. We
operate under the current school district policy with
regard to Site Councils. The purpose of the Site Council
at TOPS is to promote students’ intellectual, social,
physical, and emotional growth in collaboration with the
Leadership Team.

THE SITE COUNCIL WILL:
1. Advance the mission of TOPS.
2. Support staff in their efforts to facilitate and enhance
   student learning.
3. Enable families to become informed about and help
   shape the educational and extracurricular programs at
   TOPS.
4. Build community and communication within TOPS,
   and between TOPS and the broader community of Seattle.
5. Provide direction to the Friends of TOPS in allocating
   funds raised by TOPS families, consistent with the school
   mission and the Site Council strategic plan.
6. Evaluate the state of the school and parent-funded
   programs.

7. Advocate for the interests of TOPS with the Seattle
   School District and the City of Seattle.
8. Attend to other issues, such as student safety or facility
   maintenance and improvement, as they arise.

Members of the Site Council represent and are expected
to communicate with their constituency, but they vote in
the best interests of the school as a whole. Members of
the Site Council are not paid for their services to the Site
Council.”

RESPONSIBILITIES:
The Site Council meets one Wednesday a month (from
5 to 7 p.m.), with additional meetings as necessary for
focus groups, committee work, or budget preparation.
Members of the Site Council comprise the board of
directors of the nonprofit Friends of TOPS organization,
and are responsible for the allocation of funds raised by
Friends of TOPS – that budget is set in spring each year
for the coming year.

Membership in Site Council includes parents, guardians,
staff, and administrators; the non-staff membership is
elected by grade band, three representatives per band
(nine total). For 2007-08, there are five open positions.
If you are interested in nominating yourself or a friend,
please contact a member of the Nominating Committee
(see below).

Site Council meetings are open to everyone, so feel free to
come to our April 18 meeting and see what it’s all about.

NEXT UP – BUILDING LEADERSHIP TEAM:
The teacher’s contract explains the role of the BLT
directly:
“The primary function of a Building Leadership Team
is to promote and facilitate the collaborative decision-
making process which affects academic achievement. The
more specific responsibilities of the Building Leadership
Team are to oversee the facilitation and development of:
1. An Academic Achievement Plan (now referred to as
   ‘Transformation Plan’), including the configuration
   and structure of the school’s classes and/or program
   offerings.
2. The development of a school-wide professional
   development plan to support the Academic Achievement
   (Transformation) Plan.
3. The school’s budget.”

The BLT is the steward of the academic program of the
school – the critical support and advisory team for the
principal, who is responsible for the final decisions. The
Transformation Plan lays out the academic focus the

continued on page 7
Have an Idea? Want Money? 
RFP = Request For Proposal

(IT'S TIME TO DO IT AGAIN)
By Maureen Germani (Finance Committee Member)

Budget Season is here! It is time for Friends of TOPS (the Site Council acting as a non-profit organization) to allocate money raised from the TOPS community through the No-Bake and Auction fundraisers. Friends of TOPS money helps fund curriculum enhancements (e.g., science equipment, art, music, drama) and community-building programs like the directory and this newsletter. This year, about $110,000 will be allocated through the RFP process. If you have a new idea you would like to have funded or a current program you'd like continued next year, submit your proposal and it will be considered. Please complete a project proposal form (Request for Proposal, or RFP) and submit it to the Finance Committee. This form is available on the TOPS web site (under Site Council, budget) and in the treasurer’s box at school.

Some of the criteria used to evaluate a proposal are: how well it reflects our mission and supports the goals of our transformation plan; how many children it serves; how economical and sustainable the program is likely to be; and the enrichment value of the program. All proposals must list a program manager who accepts primary responsibility for the project. Anyone submitting RFPs must have the support of at least one staff member.

Here are some key dates for you to remember:
April 6: Deadline for hard copy RFP submission.
April 18th: Deadline for electronic copy RFP submission.
May 9, 5 p.m., Site Council meeting: Those who have submitted a proposal may be requested to come and answer questions. Applicants will be informed of the date of at least one additional special Site Council meeting scheduled during April or May to discuss RFPs.
June 13: Site Council reviews and approves the budget.

Should you have any questions, please email me at maureen@germani.org or call 545-1771.

Responsibilities:
The BLT meets once a month (on Tuesdays this year), from 4 to 5:30 p.m. (sometimes a little longer). You will represent a grade band (K-4 or 5-8), and it will be your responsibility to facilitate communication— from the community in to the BLT, and from the BLT out to the community.

Qualifications:
Communication is key! BLT members must be excellent communicators, concerned and committed to supporting the academic focus of the school. As a BLT member you must be comfortable representing the ideas and opinions of a wide variety of people. You must also be able to honor the staff Code of Conduct, which includes confidentiality as appropriate. You must attend meetings consistently—we need people who will take ownership of this and see it through.

If you are interested in nominating yourself or a friend for Site Council or the BLT, please contact a nominating committee member:

Glen Tamura at gtamura@u.washington.edu, 323-2354, Brad Angell at buso@headveins.com, 726-0948, or Joby Moore at mjmoore@seattleschools.org.

School has refined in order to boost student achievement.
The BLT plans professional development activities to meet the needs of teachers as they work to implement the Transformation Plan. In terms of the budget, each school in the district has control over how it allocates money received from the district. The BLT determines staffing needs for the program to meet the goals of the Transformation Plan, and allocates the budget accordingly. The money Friends of TOPS raises from the No-Bake and the auction is not a part of the budget the BLT works with, and is allocated through the proposal process facilitated by the board of directors (Site Council members) of Friends of TOPS (see related article this issue on RFPs).

TOPS' Building Leadership Team is composed of the two administrators, five staff members elected by the school staff, and three parents/guardians—one from the Site Council executive committee and two elected at-large from the TOPS community. While the contract does not require parent representation on each school’s leadership team, the TOPS staff believes such representation is a critical component for our school community.

Responsibilities:
The BLT meets once a month (on Tuesdays this year), from 4 to 5:30 p.m. (sometimes a little longer). You will represent a grade band (K-4 or 5-8), and it will be your responsibility to facilitate communication—from the community in to the BLT, and from the BLT out to the community.

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Glen Tamura at gtamura@u.washington.edu, 323-2354, Brad Angell at buso@headveins.com, 726-0948, or Joby Moore at mjmoore@seattleschools.org.
Again, the Taste of TOPS was so awesome. Our theme honored India and South Asia. Everybody always looks forward to the TOT because it’s a fun way to share our cultures with one another.

This year the cafeteria had chai tea and a curry tasting table and some tasty potluck dishes. In Julie Gillett’s room the 4th graders taught Rangoli chalk patterns which were made and created in Andhandra Pradesh. In the main office hallway students handed out bindis that you put on your forehead between your eyebrows. In the library there was a scavenger hunt, the 3rd graders presented “Rhythmus of India,” and the 6th graders presented “Rymanana,” a shadow puppet show. A group of children dancers danced and taught others how to dance also. There was also a presentation of “how to put on a sari.” In the hallway behind the library there was a henna tattoo booth, it featured henna artists Annie, Jyoti, and Manasi.

Performing at the Talent Showcase was Joby and Joan’s kindergarten class, Ms. Rebecca Rabbit’s Spanish class, Xia Yu Jackson’s Chinese class, and Don Zemke’s Double Dutch and Circus Arts team. The students who performed in the Talent Showcase were Mack Nishida, Dam Chau Son, Ausust Yu Jackson, Elliot Quasha, Rosa Coad, Anna Ferguson, Cyrus Graham, Isaiah Bishop, Atticus Pennylegion-Hurley, Conor Courtney, Riley Calcagno, Leo Shannon, Ruby Wood, Asha Graves-Dixon, Zaeline Johnson, Jalynn Piper, Itayetzin Govea-Galicia, Rebecca Ehlers, Sylvie Nemeth, and Cooper Phillips.

All photos by Don Zemke
CSJ CORNER

We want to say a huge THANK YOU to the Middle School Staff—who led the way—and to the many elementary school teachers and parent volunteers who helped to make TASTE of TOPS a great success! A special thanks to our visiting artist, Annie Penta, who taught drumming and rangoli drawing, and helped many of us to wear saris Thursday night. Students in classrooms from Kindergarten through 8th grade had the opportunity to learn about the cultures and art of India and South Asia which was an exceptional part of our TASTE of TOPS celebration this year.

PLEASE if you would fill out and return the surveys you took with you, we would really appreciate your feedback and input as we plan next year’s TASTE of TOPS. Surveys are available in the front office and also on line at the TOPS website. Or e-mail your feedback to beech@cechsystems.com.

APRIL 5 PLANNING MEETING—CSJ will be meeting on April 5 at 6:30 pm in the TOPS Library to plan next year’s events. Childcare will be provided through Kids Co. Please come and add your ideas. CSJ is looking for more input and involvement from the TOPS community. You can e-mail beech@cechsystems.com.

APRIL 20—TOPS MOVIE NIGHT—Join us for the last movie in this year’s successful TOPS Movie Night series. Captive Audience is a compelling look at the ways in which classrooms, hallways, cafeterias, and textbooks have become vehicles for advertising. Through interviews with teachers, students, parents, and principals, the movie asks what are the costs when commercialism enters our schools.

“Captive Audience… makes a powerful case that the real danger posed by commercialism (in schools) is that students are principally being made into consumers rather than citizens…An utterly essential resource for those who are concerned about the future of schooling.”

—Kenneth Saltman, Depaul University

Doors open at 6:00 pm and the film will show at 6:30 pm. The movie runs 45 minutes and will be followed by discussion.

Sandwiches, snacks, and drinks will be provided.

There will also be age appropriate movies and pizza for children. Movie titles TBA. Childcare is available from 6:00-8:30 pm. Call 252-3510 to make a reservation for childcare.

Join us for this last night out on TOPS!

CSJ is a group of parents, staff, and administrators who work together in support of the stated mission and vision of TOPS. The purpose of our work is to educate ourselves and the school community about issues of academic equity, cultural diversity, and social justice as they affect our school and the broader community.
CHEERS AND THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS, WE HAVE SURPASSED OUR GOAL, WITH OVER $82,220 DONATED!

FINAL LIST OF NO-BAKE CONTRIBUTORS
As of March 18, 2007

Kraig and Lana Abrams
Tsegareda Adal
Linda and Michael Adams
Andrea Akita and Walter Zisette
Gloria Albetta and Frank Fabens
Rabha Al-Harazi and Samia Salon
Brad and Brigid Anderson
Kari Anderson and Jory Oppenheimer
Sharon Andrews and Pete Carter
Brad and Wilma Angell
Maxine Atlas
Jim and Mary Austin
Michael Aycock and Jennifer Martinez
Bill Badgeley and Lianne Sheppard
Annie Barrett
James Barrett
Jeanne Barrett and Martin Spiegel
Jeanne and Robert Barrett
Jude Barrett
Elissa Benson and Mark Brannon
Craig and Heidi Berry smith
Jeff and Mary Beth Bert
Andre Bilokur and Patricia Bittner
Dana and Eric Blazevic
Marc and Cheri Bloom
Jean Bradbury
Julie Braybrooks and Greg Simon
Liz Bullard
Alyson and Dennis Burns
Thomas Burt
Shelley Butler and Larry Hubbell
Johnny Calcagno and Karen Stuhldreher
Bonnie and Frank Cech
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Carroll Haymon
Jeff Heft and Tammy Luthy
Joan Heggen
If your name is missing from the contributors list or corrections need to be made, please contact Kris Johnston, No-Bake financial coordinator, at 285-0824 or kjohnston@columbiahospitality.com.
By Simon Angell, Grade 3

I am Simon Angell and I was in the Third Grade Play, *Twelfth Night*. It was really fun being in the play because my friends were with me and I got to act for some of my friends in other classes. It was hard to get up to the point of performing the play. The hard part was learning our lines and blocking. Blocking is things that your director tells you like where to stand and how you should say your lines. Our director was Michaela. She was great. I think doing a play is the best thing in the world because it’s fun to act like a star on stage and I liked acting like a different person.

By Emma Simonson, Grade 3

I really liked being in Leslie’s class play. I was sailor 2 and a court lady. The main characters in *Twelfth Night* are Olivia, Viola/Cesario the man, and Duke Orsino. These parts were shared by two people. Sebastian and Viola are twins shipwrecked at sea. They swim to opposite sides of Illyria. They were both still alive and they met again at the end. Sebastian marries Olivia and Viola marries Duke Orsino. I liked our director Michaela. I liked doing blocking on stage.

Photos by Brad Angell
Twelfth Night

By Sam Heft-Luthy, Grade 7

If you can look into the seeds of time
And say which grain will grow and which will not.
— Macbeth, 1.3.57-58.

Oh, dear Banquo. How wonderfully fitting are those words. Why is it, some may ask, that we open this reflection on Twelfth Night with a quote from a different play by the Bard. The reason is that throughout our performances, we had a little “experience” related to the Scottish Play, one that may help to provide some insight into the workings of our ensemble.

“Don’t say that! Haven’t you heard it’s bad luck?” Of course, everyone had heard of the “Cuuuuurse of Macbeth.” (Don’t say Macbeth when you’re in a theatre.) The thing is, no one cared. It was in this way that we began to tease anyone who mentioned the curse. When someone got annoyed, we’d just say “Macbeth” even more, which led to more exasperation. T’was a vicious cycle, one that was always followed by laughter. Fairly and fowly joking around with each other was a thing that defined our group, as of almost any group of people of the middle school age group. Watching us for a few minutes, it’s not hard to see. We’re the most un-professional professionals on the face of the earth, brought into jovial comradery in service of the Bard.

As you may be aware, Leslie’s third grade class also performed Twelfth Night. We both had the same wonderful director, Michaela Koerner. We had very similar scripts, and we all had wonderful actors in our troupes. There could be no telling who would succeed and who would succumb to the pressure. The seven combined performances we gave are proof that neither of our groups succumbed to the curse of the Bard’s Play.

The fact that 55 third graders and middle schoolers could perform Shakespeare and acquire such an amazing experience is a beautiful testament to the type of community we have built here. With the many weeks both groups spent on this production, the fruits of our labor were planted in the form of metaphorical seeds of time. Not only were both groups of seeds successfully cultivated, they thrived. They grew higher and higher, until, like the proverbial beanstalk, they met with the clouds, to socialize with giants.

(We middle schoolers would like to give a shout-out to Michaela Koerner, our magnificent director; Bob Morrison, our amazing set designer; and Linda Korbus, our superlative costume designer. Without you guys, our play would be an unblocked, street-clothed, and barren mess of a reading.)
**2007 TOPS Speech Tournament**

At TOPS there are many opportunities to perform in front of different audiences, from the classroom to the stage. It really starts formally in the 1st and 2nd grade with the poetry festival, which this year will be held on April 4 and 5. Students work hard to memorize poems of their choice, and then they present the poem in front their peers and parents. Upon advancing to the 3rd grade, the student’s range of speech choices increases. Starting in January, students work hard in their classes to put together speeches to present in their classrooms. If they choose, they can compete to get into the Speech Tournament. Each speech category has 16 contestants. Everyone gets a certificate and the top four students (three in 7/8) with the highest number of points receives a trophy that is presented by four judges, who are adults that volunteer their Friday morning to spend time in the library loft listening to each speech. Congratulations to the 80 contestants in this year’s TOPS Speech Tournament, and thank you to all in the TOPS community who make this yearly tradition a success.

**Storytelling**

(3-8 minute memorized speech taken from a published story. Open to 3rd-5th graders.)

- Margot Maraghe, 4th grade  
  *Hooray for Diffendoofer Day*
- Riley Calcagno, 3rd  
  *Click Clack Moo, Cows that Type*
- Isle Raftery, 3rd  
  *Jasper the Terror*
- Sarah Voss, 3rd  
  *The Brand New Kid*

**Expository**

(3-8 minute student written “how to” speech. Open to 3rd-6th graders.)

- Rosie Yasukochi, 5th grade  
  “Making Root beer”
- Leo Shannon, 3rd  
  “Cartooning”
- Nate Kahn, 4th  
  “Yoda Soda”
- Brian Tamura, 3rd  
  “How Boats Float”

**Oral Interpretation**

(3-8 minute memorized speech from a published or original source, i.e. poetry, prose, historical speech. Open to 3rd-6th graders.)

- Bay Loovis, 4th grade  
  “The Walrus and the Carpenter”
- Noah Forslund, 4th  
  “Chitter Chat,”  “A Remarkable Adventure,”  “It’s Hard to be an Elephant,”  “Eggs”
- Joey Hardy, 5th  
  “The Shooting of Dan McGrew”
- Madeleine Imbert, 4th  
  “Jack and the Beanstalk”

*continued on page 15*
Earth Day is Sunday, April 22 this year, and it gives us all an opportunity to stop and consider how our actions affect the environment, both positively and negatively. At TOPS, the Stewardship program has the same goal: encourage students to think about the world around them and the impact they have by caring for the school and surrounding grounds. The idea is simple: you think twice about dropping litter when you’re out there cleaning up. And you may not run through a flower bed if you’ve personally planted a bulb there.

Parents can get in on the Earth Day spirit by leading a TOPICS session on April 19 with an environmental focus. Can’t think of anything to do? Check out the stewardship box of books and project ideas in the library. Or go online and find a fun, hands-on Earth Day-related project by searching such sites as:

http://www.epa.gov/kids
http://ecokids.earthday.ca/pub/index.cfm

If you are ready to sign up, contact 1st grade teacher and TOPICS coordinator Kristina Stoneberg by email at kstoneberg@seattleschools.org.

PARIS 2007
You could not sign up for this year’s trip to Paris and London? No problem! You can follow our progress on the Explorica web site. Go to www.explorica.com and click on TOUR DIARY. Follow the prompts and enter Trangen as the tour leader’s name. Our Tour ID is Trangen-9470. See pictures of the TOPS group and read about our daily adventures in Paris and London.

Bon voyage!
Marianne

COME SEE THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAY, MAY 18 AND 19, BASED ON RUDYARD KIPLING’S THE JUNGLE BOOK
INTERNET SAFETY: TIPS FOR STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND STAFF

By Denise Fitch
School Safety Consultant
dlfitch@earthlink.net

If there is any realm that reminds us parents and educators that our children belong to a world of tomorrow, the Internet feels particularly foreboding. It’s their domain, and its dimensions are constantly shifting. The resources listed in the following article, from a magazine published by the Association of Washington School Principals, caught my eye, and I thought the article was worth sharing with the TOPS community.

Thank you to The Principal News and Denise Fitch for their permission to reprint this.

I invite the TOPS community to explore these resources at home and in school. All students in Seattle Public Schools sign a pledge to adhere to our Internet policy, and the Bess Filter blocks access to most inappropriate content in school. In recent years, Seattle Police detectives have spoken to middle school students and parents about on-line safety. Steve Haines, Mark Ellis, Tom O’Connor, and Jennifer Murray are great resources for kids as concerns arise and they keep close track of students’ on-line activities and concerns. As you check out these resources at home, please let us know about the issues and questions that arise.

Gerrit Kischner
Assistant Principal

The Internet has changed the way that teachers teach and students learn. In most ways, this tool has opened the windows of possibilities in the education of our children. It has also opened our young people up to some very adult issues.

It is vitally important that schools and parents have clear rules and guidelines for use of the Internet by our youth. Schools and parents need to provide students of all ages with information about how to stay safe on the Internet. Many schools spend a day at the beginning of school explaining appropriate use or acceptable use policies. If your district/school does not have such a policy in place, I would recommend that one be adopted as soon as possible.

How big is the issue of Internet safety? Here are just some of the issues our students face online, according to data collected by George Washington University and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children:

• 54 percent were unsure or believed it was safe to meet someone in person after they had been chatting with them for a long time.
• 25 percent were unsure or believed it was safe to post their picture on the Internet.
• 20 percent have told people their real name on the Internet.
• 25 percent were unsure or believed that it was safe to put their address on the Internet.

WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO

Staff should check computers that students have access to periodically to determine what Web sites they are using. Go to www.webwisekids.org to learn how to check your computer’s use history.

There are several age appropriate programs on Internet safety available online. The Faux Paws Internet Safety Program targets grades K-4 and can be accessed at http://www.ikeepsafe.org/. Seattle Public Schools requires their elementary school students to complete the course and sign an Internet safety pledge prior to any use of school computers.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has an extensive Web site that includes interactive games and presentation materials for elementary and middle school students accessible at www.netsmartz.org.

The following are Internet safety detective style games for teens ages 11-16 designed for classroom use, requires teacher or law enforcement supervision, and takes one class period. http://www.webwisekids.org/index.html.

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**TIPS FOR PARENTS**

Keep the family computer in an open area of the home where use can be easily supervised.

Find out what Web sites your children are using (e.g., MySpace, Friendster, Xanga). Explain to them clearly about the importance of not sharing personal information online. Seemingly innocent actions like posting pictures of themselves wearing school t-shirts, talking about their hometown, offering the names of their friends, their ages or the names and ages of their siblings can give an online stalker all the information they need to do harm. Parents should also monitor their home computer periodically to check which Web sites have been accessed. (www.webwisekids.org)

Talk with your children about your expectations about their computer use. About Family Internet provides helpful tips and tools for parents as well as an acronyms guide that shares common abbreviations youth use in their conversations. Available at [http://familyinternet.about.com/](http://familyinternet.about.com/).

**Wired With Wisdom** is designed specifically for parents to provide them with information on current issues and how to manage their family’s Internet use. Visit Web Wise Kids Web site at [http://www.webwisekids.org/index.html](http://www.webwisekids.org/index.html).

Parents may also want to install an Internet filter on their home computer. Visit [http://inter-filter-review.toptenreviews.com/](http://inter-filter-review.toptenreviews.com/) for a review of the top 10 filters.


It is important that families and schools work collaboratively regarding Internet Safety Issues to ensure that all students have a safe and healthy learning-focused environment. Our youth are our most important asset.

Denise Fitch recently retired from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction where she developed the Washington State School Safety Center, and was staff to the Safety Center Advisory Committee. She currently provides consultation and services to schools in Washington state and throughout the country on a broad range of school safety issues.

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**2007 TOPS CALENDAR**

Send your events and dates to our webmaster, Jack Lee, at [webmaster@topsk8.org](mailto:webmaster@topsk8.org). Please check Thursday Go-Homes and the web site for updates.

**APRIL**

3 (T) ..........BLT meeting, 4 p.m.
3-4 (T-W).....Poetry Festival, 1st and 2nd grades
4 (W) ........Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
5 (Th) .......Kindergarten ABC Party
6 (F) .........K-5 to Skate King
7 (Sa) .......TOPS Chess Tournament
9-13 (M-F) ..Spring break; no school
24-30 ........WASL Testing
20 (F) .......End of third quarter

**MAY**

1-10 ...........WASL Testing
5 (Sa) ..........TOPS Auction at the Asian Resource Center
7-11 (M-F) ..Teacher Appreciation Week
8 (T) ..........BLT meeting, 4 p.m.
9 (W) ..........Nurses’ Day
9 (W) .........Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
16-18 (W-F) ..7th grade camp
16 (W) .......Professional development day; 2-hour early dismissal
18-19 (F-S) ..ArtFest
18-19 (F-S) ..Elementary play
28 (M) .......Memorial Day; no school
30 (W) .......Spring Concert, 2 and 7 p.m.

**JUNE**

5-8 (T-F) ....8th grade camp
7-8 (Th-F) ..3rd and 4th grade camp
12 (T) .........6th and 7th grade Orientation
14 (Th) ......K, 1st, 2nd grade to Camp Long
15 (F) ..........8th grade Passage
18 (M) .........5th grade Passage
19 (T) .......Field Day, elementary grades
19 (T) .......Wild Waves, middle school
22 (F) .......Last student day
TOPS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

By Toby Harris

In 1895, Rogers Field, then known as Denny-Fuhrman Playfield, was a 235’ x 355’ undeveloped meadow between the trolley line on Eastlake and the one-room Denny-Fuhrman School. It was purchased from David Denny by the City of Seattle in a Sheriff’s sale in 1896. Alaska Yukon Exposition fever took hold in 1909 and the school building was renamed after William Henry Seward, a visionary and vocal proponent of Pacific expansion. The playfield became Rogers Field, in honor of Governor John R. Rogers, who had passed away in 1901. According to Jules James, TOPS parent and neighborhood historian, it’s likely the honor was bestowed because of his involvement with the Exposition.

In any case, things were spiffed up for the Alaska-Yukon Exposition around these parts! Seward School got a new set of cedar steps leading down the hill to Rogers Field along with a shelter house and an elaborate set of wooden fitness apparatus. The wooden apparatus was replaced in 1910 with metal equipment – swings, teeter-totters, slides, rings, chin-up bars, and ladders. Rogers was among four of the first public parks to be outfitted with play equipment and supervised by fitness instructors. In 1912, the Seward boys baseball team won the city championship with Rogers as their home field. Seattle City Light installed “experimental” lights in 1924, which remained up until 1951.

The 2500 block of Franklin Avenue, now home to a few tetherball courts, has been pedestrian-only dating back to 1918. Temporary chains first kept the traffic out; then came metal posts in 1950; highway guardrails in 1975; and wooden bollards in 1998. And still, according to recent witnesses, we can’t keep the cars off of Franklin Avenue. [See TOPS News, March 2007, p. 3]

Muriel Weissberg lived on another block of Franklin Avenue in the 1920s and 1930s. She remembers using the playground as she grew up, first the sandbox, then the swings, rings and bars, and finally the tennis courts. She drew this diagram of what was there.

Many other neighbors and students enjoyed the field and playground until the freeway disrupted the thriving neighborhood in the late 1950s and early 1960s. School-aged children disappeared and the playground became run down. In 1965, the Parks Department gave Rogers Playground a minor makeover. The baseball diamond was upgraded to Little League standards and new restrooms replaced the shelter house, though they weren’t nearly as aesthetically pleasing as the shelter house had been.

In 1975, neighbors and school parents installed new play equipment on Franklin Avenue between the field and school. Only the swings and prechoolers’ sandbox remained in the northeast corner of Rogers Playfield. This setup remained until 1992, when the Eastlake Community council and TOPS teamed up to again replace the equipment at the Franklin Avenue playscape.

Sadly, in 1998, this popular playscape was demolished as part of the renovation of Seward School, though a temporary playscape was installed. The playscape outside the kindergarten classrooms came shortly after the opening of the new TOPS building in 1999, but left a void for those younger and older.

A mother from the neighborhood, Laurie Stusser-McNeil, soon led efforts to create a new playground. Grieving from the loss of her 23-day-old son, Fletcher, she was spurred on by what at first seemed like a manageable $5,000 project. Instead, it became an enormous two-year process of fund-raising, grant-writing, and alliance-making, with Friends of Rogers Playground raising about $320,000 in grants and donations. Glass artist Gerry Newcomb designed beautiful glass leaves to grace the sidewalk, playground wall, and street corners. Eastlake Community Council and the TOPS community were involved throughout, including neighbor and TOPS parent, Jules James, and TOPS parent, Rebecca Sadinsky. At the time Stusser-McNeil began the process, she was not a TOPS parent. By the time the playground was completed and celebrated in May of 2002, she was a member of both communities. This time, the playground area was sited in the northeast corner of Rogers Playfield, back to the original 1909 spot.

Unfortunately, in winter or spring of 2003, a panel of glass leaves sponsored and personalized by donors, was shattered in an act of vandalism by a TOPS middle school student. Other glass leaves and a bronze plaque inscribed “inspired by Fletcher McNeil” remain undamaged. Following that disturbing incident, Stusser-McNeil and others put their heads together with the help of a facilitator and the TOPS Stewardship Program was born. Students have been learning to care for and respect their surroundings as active stewards of the Seward grounds and Rogers Field and Playground since the 2004-05 school year, and we hope for many more years to come.

*Much of this article was lifted verbatim from Rogers Playground: A Neighborhood History, by Jules James, printed in 2001 or 2002, from the TOPS Archive.*
April 1: April Fools Day The day originated with changes in the calendar. At one time New Years was celebrated on March 25. In 1582 King Charles IX adopted the Gregorian calendar and the beginning of the new year became January 1. Those who refused to accept the new date or simply forgot received foolish gifts and invitations to nonexistent parties.

April 1: Palm Sunday (Christian) Occurs on the Sunday before Easter Sunday in the Western Christian liturgical calendar. It signals the upcoming end of Lent and the beginning of Holy Week.

April 1: Id-Mawlid-Al-Nabi (Muslim) The Prophet Muhammad’s birthday

April 2-9: Passover (Jewish) Festival of Freedom. Pesach is an eight day observance which begins at sunset of the 15th day of Nisan in the Hebrew calendar. It celebrates the delivery of Jews from Egyptian slavery and commemorates the historical ideal of freedom. A ceremonial feast known as the Seder takes place on the first two nights of Passover with the reading of the Haggadah and the eating of symbolic foods.

April 5: Third Moon (Chinese) Also known as Spring Remembrance, Ching Ming (“clear and bright”), is when Chinese families show their respect by visiting the graves of ancestors to clear away weeds and make offerings of wine and fruit.

April 6: Good Friday (Christian) Observed in commemoration of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, this is the oldest Christian celebration.

April 6: Organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints The “Church of Jesus Christ” was officially organized in the home of Peter Whitmer Sr., in Fayette, New York on April 6, 1830.

April 8: Easter (Christian) Commemorates the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It also marks the end of Lent. The date is set by determining the Sunday following the full moon on or after the vernal equinox. Many churches hold sunrise services to symbolize the return of light to the world after Jesus’ resurrection.

April 8: Hanamatsuri (Buddhist) Celebrated by Buddhists in Japan, Korea, and the United States. One of the most important of Buddhist holidays. The founder of Buddhism had the given name Siddhartha and lived in India from 563 BCE to 483 BCE. Ceremonies include the offering of flowers, burning of incense, and bathing statues of baby Buddha with sweet tea.

April 13: Cambodian New Year A major holiday based on the lunar calendar and celebrated for two-three days. Homes are thoroughly cleaned to remove unclean spirits and new clothes are made to represent a new beginning.

April 13: Baisakhi (Sikh) Marks the beginning of the new spring year and the end of the harvest of wheat crops in India. Celebrated with ceremonial baths, prayer, and fairs.

April 15: Orthodox Christian Easter Orthodox churches use the Julian calendar to calculate Easter Day and adjust the date so it falls after the Jewish Passover. Also known as Pascha.

April 15: Yom Hashoah (Jewish) Holocaust Memorial Day commemorates the six million Jews killed by the Nazis during WWII. In Israel all public entertainment is closed on the date. At ten in the morning, a siren is sounded, everyone stops what they are doing, and stands in remembrance.

April 22: Earth Day First observed on April 22, 1970. The goal of the day is to attract attention to the need for clean air and water and the need to conserve the earth’s natural resources.

April 30: Beltane (Celtic) A Celtic festival named after the god Belenus and meaning “brilliant fire”. The festival starts with two bonfires made from nine different woods. Modern celebrations include maypole dances and jumping the cauldron for fertility of reproduction and imagination.
TOPS ANNUAL SPRING AUCTION 2007
“MOSAIC”

“We become not a melting pot, but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams.” – Jimmy Carter.

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