Message from the Principal

Happy Fall, and thank you for the excellent turnout at the TOPS Open House on October 2. The students were very excited to host their parents and show off their work. We would love to hear your opinion of the new format! Please go to the TOPS website at www.topsk8.org and complete the survey. So far, we have received approximately 60 responses to the survey. We would like to have more. We will publish the results in the December newsletter.

Parent-Teacher Conference Schedule – Nov. 13-20
If you did not sign up for a conference with your child’s teacher at Open House, please do so now. Parents of middle school students, please call the office to schedule an appointment. K-5 parents, please sign up directly with the teachers. This will give you a chance to find out how your child is progressing both academically and socially in the classroom. Remember, students are dismissed at 1:10 p.m. during conference time.

Olweus Anti-Bullying Program News “C.A.R.E”
We celebrated our return to school and our commitment to the C.A.R.E. program with a “We All Belong” assembly. The assembly focused on the contributions that we all make to TOPS.

The middle school staff, parents, administrators, and 184 TOPS middle school students converged on Seward Park on September 28 with the goal of building community in the middle school. The day began with giving the 6th, 7th, and 8th graders an opportunity to get acquainted with students they didn’t know and to practice skills of cooperation, communication, and inclusion. The skills will be developed through intentional teaching and intentional ongoing practice. The students returned to school and shared reflections on the day. It was awesome!

TOPS Music Program
We welcome back our music teachers to begin our music program for the 2007-08 school year. Mark Oesterle from Seattle Public Schools will lead our 4th grade band. Paul Gillespie and Erica Johanson are our 5th grade and middle school band and orchestra teachers.

Our Hummingbird and Inspire Choirs are sending out beautiful sounds from the choir room under the direction of Sari Breznau. The students will perform at the Winter and Spring Concerts.

Continued on page 2

A Preview to Parent Conferences

By Gerrit Kischner, Assistant Principal

Parent-teacher conferences are an annual rite of passage in schools that carry tremendous expectations. Parents and teachers alike spend the first few months of the school year sizing up what the year might bring for their students, and they anticipate the conference as the best chance to provide undivided attention to the needs of that child. That is a huge expectation for a half-hour conversation (even less in the upper grades). A few years ago, as I was anticipating my own conference as a parent for the first time, I found a book written by one of my heroes, Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, whom I first met as a college freshman and who is one of the giants in the insights she provides on the role of schooling in the United States. The book is The Essential Conversation: What parents and teachers can learn from each other (Random House, 2003).

The book portrays a series of profiles of parents and teachers from a wide variety of public and private

Continued on page 9

December / January TOPSNews Deadline

Friday, November 9 • Submissions to topsnewsletter@gmail.com
ABOUT THE OUTRAGEOUS PUBLISHING SERVICE

Welcome to the third newsletter of the 2007-08 school year. Jamie Flaxman and Ann Simonson edit, Paul Loovis handles photos, design, and 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. Please send photos to javabrain@msn.com. The deadline for the November issue is November 9.

FieldTrips/Events
Some of our students have been to SCT and the Children’s and Burke Museums. Our 6th Graders went to camp from October 17-19. On October 9, we enjoyed storytelling in the Library with Sister Rosina Ampah.

TOPS No-Bake Sale
Our goal this year is $85,000 and we need 100% support from our TOPS families. No amount is too small and it is tax deductable. The funds are used to help fund our music program, counselor, reading block, drama program, 8th Grade Passage, and many, many more programs. Please donate!

Cheers!
~ Clara

Message from the Principal continued from page 1

CSJ CORNER

This is where you will want to look each month to find out what the Coalition for Social Justice has planned for the coming month!

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.

On October 5 the CSJ kicked off this year’s TOPS Movie Night Series with two entertaining and informative films about family diversity, That’s A Family and It’s Elementary. The evening’s discussions were facilitated by Lisa Love and Helen Walsh who are Health Education Specialists for the Seattle School District. More than 30 adults and 20 children participated. It was a fun and informative evening with good food and interesting discussion.

If you are interested in viewing either of the documentaries shown on October 5, they are both available for you to check out from the TOPS Library.

We hope that a number of families who could not attend TOPS Movie Night in October will borrow the films and watch them with family and friends so you can be part of the ongoing discussion about family diversity. The TOPS staff will be viewing That’s A Family during a staff meeting in November or December.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE FOLLOWING EVENTS!

Friday November 9, 6:00-9:00 p.m.

TOPICS Party: Join CSJ to help brainstorm and organize Social Justice TOPICS to be taught during the current school year. CSJ has generated a list of possible TOPICS with a social justice theme to be taught on Friday, January 9 (which will focus on the theme of Social Justice) and also throughout the year. A number of people have indicated an interest in helping to teach TOPICS and others have ideas of social justice themed TOPICS they want to offer. If you are interested in putting your volunteer hours to work on this project, contact Bonnie Cech at bcech@cechsystems.com or Karen Stuhldreher at kstuhldr@secc.cte.edu for more information about the TOPICS party. It will be fun for all.

Stay Tuned: In early December Pamala Trivedi will share the results of her research on bi-racial children at TOPS and beyond. Pamala is a Doctoral Candidate at the UW who is researching bi-racial families and included TOPS 4th and 5th graders in her study last year. She will report her findings and facilitate a discussion. As part of this evening, the film Just Black?, also about bi-racial college students will be shown again. A light dinner and snacks will be provided. Child Care will be available. Look for information about the date and time in upcoming Go Homes and flyers.

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Cheers!
~ Clara
This fall, TOPS 5th graders began a new school-wide composting program designed to turn the thousands of pounds of lunchroom waste generated each year into rich garden soil. The 5th graders began learning about composting last spring as 4th graders when they had a visit from Marlisa Thoman, Cedar Grove representative, and Nicole Riss, resource conservation specialist. Marlisa came back at the beginning of this year and, together with 5th grade teacher Nina Binder, taught the 5th graders how to tell what is organic matter, which is biodegradable, and what is inorganic matter, which must be recycled or put in the trash.

Nina is working on the science behind composting with her class.

The 5th graders made posters and posted them around the school to coincide with the composting program's debut at the CARE assembly. One says “To compost or not to compost, that is the question,” with the answer being “DUH!”

Another is “Watch TOPS turn GREEN!”

Another is “Compost is like steroids for plants--except it's legal.”

As part of the all-school CARE (Coaching All to Respect Everyone) assembly on September 18, we worked in the theme of how CARE could be broadened from respecting each other to respecting the earth. Also, the 5th graders did a skit showing how we would be sorting our lunches in a new way, in order to compost.

We began our lunch sorting and “mock composting” on September 19. During this trial period, the school separated its compost as if Cedar Grove were going to pick it up, except the compost material actually went in the trash. Then, on September 28, Marlisa and Nicole did a site visit and inspection to determine whether there was contamination. We passed our test! Now we are approved to have a real composting dumpster, which will be picked up and hauled to the Cedar Grove composting facility in Auburn. The dumpster was delivered on October 9.

Here’s how the lunch sorting works: There are two teams of three 5th graders, one at each trash station. The only problems occurred when large groups of students “rushed” the bins at one time, leaving contaminated bins in their wake. After that happened for a few days, we set up (hopefully temporary) cones and yellow tape to funnel students in front of the sorting station to slow the process down and allow people to learn how to do it correctly.

A great side benefit of the program is that our recycling rate has gone way up—we have gone from about half of a 32-gallon can of recycling to now two full 32-gallon cans of recycling, and obviously much less trash.

Once we have successfully demonstrated that we can maintain the program and our garbage is consistently less, we can order a smaller garbage dumpster and start saving the school district money. At that point, the district will also begin to pick up the compost dumpster fees, which for now are being covered by the Site Council.

Right now only the 5th graders in Nina Binder’s class are in the program, but we hope we can broaden it to include Mary Chao’s 5th graders in January.

Some quotes from 5th graders who have been on the lunchroom team:

Gene Carpenter: “It’s a fun way to spend lunch, especially when the weather is rainy.”

Henry Chapman: “I like how the kindergartners and little kids look up to you.”

VOLUNTEERS: If anyone is interested in volunteering with the program, we do need people just for the next month or two, until the systems are totally in place and everyone knows what they’re doing.

Also: Please contact your classroom’s stewardship coordinator if you’re interested in exploring other earth-friendly projects. Some classes don’t have stewardship coordinators—let volunteer coordinator Maureen Germani know if you’d like to take this position in your child’s classroom.
PLEASE DONATE TODAY to the
TOPS NO-BAKE
Our School’s ANNUAL FUND DRIVE
Our goal this year is $85,000
& participation from 100% of our generous families

FREQUENTLY ASKED Q’S about the NO-BAKE FUND DRIVE

WHAT IS THE ANNUAL TOPS NO-BAKE FUND DRIVE?
At TOPS we don’t bake…. We donate. It’s easy! Each fall TOPS has a good old fashioned fund drive. Just get out your checkbook, write a check to FRIENDS OF TOPS and mail it off! We do not ask our kids to hit the streets to raise funds. We don’t have a bake sale. We don’t sell candy. TOPS has only two fundraisers: the fall NO-BAKE fund drive and our spring school auction. Each is vital to ensuring our continued support of FRIENDS OF TOPS.

WHAT IS OUR $ GOAL THIS YEAR?
Our goal is $85,000 this year. We hope to receive a donation from each of our 400+ families.

HOW MUCH SHOULD OUR FAMILY DONATE TO THE NO-BAKE?
We welcome your generous donation of any amount… whether your family can give $10 or $1000. Last year we averaged approximately $200 per family.

WHERE DO WE SEND OUR NO-BAKE DONATION?
Mail: TOPS NO-BAKE 2500 Franklin Ave E Seattle, WA 98102 or DELIVER to the TOPS OFFICE

WHAT IS THE DEADLINE FOR NO-BAKE DONATIONS?
Our NO-BAKE ends on December 31st – donations gladly accepted into the 2nd week of January

HOW ARE THE NO-BAKE DONATIONS USED?
Your NO-BAKE DONATION serves the children, families & community in a variety of ways. Funding of core programs, arts, student support & scholarships are made possible through your generosity.

HERE ARE A FEW OF THE PROGRAMS THAT YOUR NO-BAKE DONATION SUPPORTS:
*our school counselor, Jennifer
*our elementary art teacher, Cynthia
*recess supervision
*science materials for all grade levels
*Oleweus anti-bullying program
*tutoring
*literacy block
*choir program
*instrumental music program
*3rd grade drama program
*supplies for every teacher & classroom
*middle school & elementary plays
*school directory and newsletters
*library supplies & multicultural books
*volunteer coordinator
*childcare during evening events
*Writers in the Schools for 5th-8th
*8th grade passage
*Taste of TOPS
*Safety committee
*Mandarin and 8th grade math scholarships
*ACT Theatre Young Playwright program

VISIT THE TOPS WEBSITE TO SEE THE COMPLETE FRIENDS OF TOPS BUDGET

CAN WE USE OUR CREDIT CARD TO DONATE TO THE NO-BAKE?
Yes! We can accept donations via MASTERCARD OR VISA. You fill out the Donation form in your NO-BAKE letter or download a form on the NO-BAKE link on the TOPS Website. You can also contact the Kris Johnston, the NO-BAKE treasurer at 285-0284 for more information.

IS MY DONATION TO THE NO-BAKE TAX DEDUCTIBLE?
Absolutely. FRIENDS OF TOPS is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit entity (TAX ID 94-3142402).

CAN MY EMPLOYER MATCH MY NO-BAKE CHARITABLE DONATION?
Many employers will match the charitable donation of their employees. Your employer’s matching donation will double your gift to FRIENDS OF TOPS. Please contact your human resources department to fill out the necessary forms.
Middle Schoolers at Seward Park

Photos by Don Zemke
Fourth Grade Corn Maze Adventure

By Shelly Haverkamp

On a Tuesday in September, we ran along 250 actual roads and saw over 400 places and towns. We saw real bridges at Vantage, Bridge Port, and the Tacoma Narrows, and actual models of the Space Needle, Peace Arch, and Grand Coulee dam. We scrambled along country roads with names like Uncas, Rat Trap Pass, and Cow Canyon. There was even a replica of Stonehenge.

So how come the highlight of the 4th-grade field trip to the 12-acre Washington State Corn Maze at The Farm on Rivershore Road in Snohomish was pig races and Dreamsicles?

Farmers Ben and Carol Krause sold their milking cows in 1997 and have been giving city kids a taste of farm life at their pumpkin patch, petting zoo, and corn maze ever since. Instead of cows, now they keep goats, sheep, chickens, rabbits, a couple of cats, a sweet Bassett hound named Nellie, and best of all, the pigs.

(The replica of Stonehenge overlooks the Columbia River near Goldendale. It was built by wealthy entrepreneur Sam Hill in 1918 to honor soldiers from Klickitat County who died in World War I. This is the sort of historical fact we learned when we took the time to read the signs.)

After an hour and a half of “team” navigating, we finally made our way across Washington from Pullman to Grays Harbor by way of I-90, I-5, Hwy 12, Hwy 2, and the Pacific Crest Trail. We were ready for ice cream, and Farmer Ben had our bags of frozen treats ready. Then, he demonstrated how his pigs, with only one short training session and no maps, could find their way through chutes, up ramps, and across the maze of the barnyard in less than 30 seconds. (He gave the piglets treats when they finished, too.)

We were impressed.

The 4 ½ miles of trails through a giant corn-maze map of Washington gave students a great opportunity to test their map-reading skills and enjoy each other’s company on a rare dry day in September. It was fun!
By Steve Haines, Librarian

“I had just taken to reading. I had just discovered the art of leaving my body to sit impassive in a crumpled up attitude in a chair or sofa, while I wandered over the hills and far away in novel company and new scenes… My world began to expand very rapidly… the reading habit had got me securely.”
— H.G. Wells

October ushered in a new campaign for Seattle Public Schools with the goal of having its members read a million words in one year. This was brought to us by Chief Academic Officer, Carla Santorno, and is modeled after a similar program in the Denver Public Schools. It is designed to encourage reading for pleasure, and to support the academic vision to have “every student a reader, writer, mathematician and ready for college and work.” The program objectives include some key points. They are: to help students develop the habits of good readers, to create excitement about reading every day, to support students in becoming proficient readers, and to increase academic achievement for all students. There is a website up and running that gives complete information on this campaign including a link to record your own reading. The site is worth a gander: www.seattleschools.org/area/readamillion/index.html

On Tuesday, October 9 our students had the good fortune to meet with Ghanaian storyteller Rosina Ampah. She was in Seattle as part of a community service of Saint Mark’s Cathedral, and she had a full week of activities planned all over the city. During her daylong visit to TOPS, she told stories with lessons to groups of students by grade level. The stories were designed to make the students think. After each story she would ask questions of the audience. The students learned among other things that lying to friends, taking things, and cheating are certain activities that will cause one to lose respect and erode friendships. A strong message about how actions done today can affect what happens in the future. We thank the TOPS community for your support in bringing quality multicultural assemblies to our school. The students and staff thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Caution – Banned Books!

By Marianna White, Grade 6

A few weeks ago, Book It (an acting group) came to TOPS to read passages from banned and challenged books. This year they read from The Higher Power of Lucky. This award winning book would not have raised any eyebrows if not for two things; one, the shiny award on the cover; and two, the multiple use of the word scrotum. A Wrinkle in Time is an older classic that was challenged due to religion. It was said that this book promotes magic, witch craft, and Satanism. Believe it or not, Harry Potter was (is) challenged for the exact same reason – a lot of fictional, highly thought of books are. The last book they read from was an Alice book. This particular one was challenged for teen suicide and sexual content.

Many, many books are challenged yearly, but (hallelujah) only a very small portion of these books are taken off the shelf. There are hundreds of reasons why a book may be banned. An easy way to think up some is to imagine the reasons why your mom or dad would not want you to watch a T.V. show, or read a certain book. I’ll bet you can think up at least three.

So celebrate your freedom to read what interests you (and if that is satin rock on)! Here is a list of challenged (and banned) books. And, people please, ask your legal guardian BEFORE you start reading:

- Lord of the Flies
- The Earth, My Butt, And Other Big, Round Things
- Gossip Girl
- To Kill a Mockingbird
- Captain Underpants
- Scary Stories
- I Know Why a Caged Bird Sings
- Witches
- Blubber
- The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
- The Color Purple
- Forever
- It’s Perfectly Normal

“Because of the Penny Harvest I know I can make a difference in the world – I learned to speak-up.”
— Katrina, third grader, Northgate Elementary, Seattle, WA

Commencing Monday, October 22 through Wednesday, November 21, 2007 students in Seattle, WA, New York City and metro New York, Colorado, Florida, and Nashville, TN, will all be harvesting pennies en masse. We will all be part of the national launch for Common Cents, New York and Penny Harvest, Seattle.

How to help
Get a Penny harvest bag, gather pennies and bring them to your classroom teacher.

How to prepare
Set a goal of how to harvest pennies. To find tips, tools, sample letters, and translations go to www.PennyHarvest.org/neighbors

In 2006/2007 students nationwide gathered an astonishing amount of pennies- 220 tons or $711,394.58! Every cent was reinvested in the community to organizations and service projects of the student’s choice. TOPS K-8 students raised a total of $1,222.62, and the TOPS Philanthropy Roundtable Grant allocated funds to the Youth Care Orion Center and First Place (both dedicated to serving homeless youth).

Young children want to help others, but they have few real opportunities to do so. Penny harvesting is a simple and safe way to start the journey to good citizenship. Along the way, students gain confidence, learn to work as a team, and increase their dedication to school and their community.

www.PennyHarvest.org

### 2007 TOPS Calendar

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<th>November</th>
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<tr>
<td>3 (S)</td>
<td>Fall Landscape Work Party, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.</td>
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<td>6 (T)</td>
<td>End of first quarter</td>
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<td>7 (M)</td>
<td>TOPICS 12:30 - 3:20 p.m.</td>
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<td>12 (M)</td>
<td>Veteran’s Day; no school</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-20 (W)</td>
<td>Elementary Parent-Teacher Conferences; 2-hour early dismissal</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 (W)</td>
<td>Site Council Meeting, 5 - 7 p.m., Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 (W)</td>
<td>Common Cents Penny Harvest ends</td>
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<tr>
<td>22-23 (Th-F)</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holiday; no school</td>
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<tr>
<th>December</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 (T)</td>
<td>Winter Concert</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 (W)</td>
<td>4th and 5th grades to SCT</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 (F)</td>
<td>Middle school dance, 6:30-9:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 (T)</td>
<td>Katie Waters’ class play, 1:30 and 6:00 p.m., Lunchroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>24-31</td>
<td>Winter Break; no school</td>
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<th>January</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-4 (M)</td>
<td>Winter Break; no school</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 (M)</td>
<td>School resumes</td>
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<tr>
<td>17 (Th)</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 (M)</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Day holiday; no school</td>
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<tr>
<th>February</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 (F)</td>
<td>Speech Tournament, Expository</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 (W)</td>
<td>Professional development block time; 2-hour early dismissal</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 (F)</td>
<td>Speech Tournament, Oral Interpretation</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 (F)</td>
<td>Speech Tournament, Editorial Comm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 (M)</td>
<td>Presidents Day; no school</td>
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<tr>
<td>19-22 (T-F)</td>
<td>Mid-winter break; no school</td>
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<th>March</th>
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<tr>
<td>5 (W)</td>
<td>Professional development block time; 2-hour early dismissal</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 (F)</td>
<td>Middle school dance, 6:30-9:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 (Th)</td>
<td>Taste of TOPS</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 (F)</td>
<td>Middle school Speech Tournament</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 (F)</td>
<td>Professional development day; no school</td>
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<th>April</th>
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<td>1-4 (T-F)</td>
<td>Spring Break; no school</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 (F)</td>
<td>End of third quarter</td>
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<tr>
<td>14-30 (T-F)</td>
<td>WASL testing</td>
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<tr>
<td>16-17 (W-Th)</td>
<td>1st and 2nd grade Poetry Festival</td>
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<th>May</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2 (M)</td>
<td>WASL Testing</td>
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<td>2 (F)</td>
<td>Middle school dance, 6:30-9:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>3 (S)</td>
<td>TOPS Auction</td>
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<td>14-16 (W-F)</td>
<td>7th grade Camp</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 (W)</td>
<td>Professional development block time; 2-hour early dismissal</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 (M)</td>
<td>Memorial Day; no school</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 (W)</td>
<td>Spring Concert, 2 and 7 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-6 (T-F)</td>
<td>8th grade Camp</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-6 (Th-F)</td>
<td>3rd and 4th grades to Camp Arnold</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 (F)</td>
<td>8th grade Passage</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 (M)</td>
<td>Field Day – elementary grades</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 (M)</td>
<td>Wild Waves – middle school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 (T)</td>
<td>Last student day</td>
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Send your events and dates to our webmaster, Jack Lee, at webmaster@topsk8.org. Please check Go-Homes and the web site for updates.
COME TO EGYPT FOR SPRING BREAK IN 2008!

Have you ever wanted to see the pyramids, cruise the Nile, fly to Aswan, visit Luxor, or take a first-class train to Cairo? You can share all that and more with TOPS families and their friends from March 27 to April 5 in 2008. On this guided tour, you can focus on the history of Egyptian dynasties and their pharaohs or on the spectacular scenery as you relax on a felucca floating down the Nile. Please contact 6th grade teacher Marianne Trangen at mtrangen@raincity.com or at mptrangen@seattleschools.org if you or someone you know would like to join us for this adventure. TOPS students, their families, and their friends are all welcome on this trip. Visit www.explorica.com to sign up early and travel for less.

Parent Conferences continued from page 1

Schools around the country. She speaks to the challenge parents and teachers have in shedding the many pressures on everyone involved in the conferences that often relegate them to being merely “benign and pleasant.”

It’s difficult in the short time available for a conference to get a chance to talk through everything the teacher and the parents would like to cover. In order to provide a focus for the conversation, Professor Lightfoot recommends that parents and teachers must endeavor to speak their truth about the child which they share responsibility for educating. If parents can come to the conference prepared with a vivid anecdote about their child to share which helps portray some aspect of their child that they hope the teacher can understand, that will provide a useful springboard for building collaboration between families and teachers. Similarly, when teachers can share a classroom anecdote, that helps reassure parents that the teachers knows their child as an individual.

By avoiding the pressure to cover every aspect of the child’s day at school, these focused anecdotes can go far to put all of our minds at ease that we’re talking about the same child and that we can keep talking over the course of year. One change that parents of elementary students at TOPS can expect to see this year is that the students’ first trimester progress will end before parent conferences. This will enable teachers to organize the conference around the full trimester of work in anticipation of the progress reports (which will be sent home with students on Monday, November 26th). This new schedule will make those “true” anecdotes all the more important to ensure that the conference can bring life to the “data” reflected on the progress report.

You can read a full interview (and stream the video!) with Professor Lightfoot conducted on the PBS Newshour at http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment/july-dec03/parent_10-15.html.
Every Friday for about a month I have been sailing at the Center for Wooden Boats. Well...mostly sailing. The boats are gorgeous and the people are really nice. We start with a lesson of what we're going to be doing and a snack. Then we put mast and sail (etc.) on and get in. Then start the journey to a certain buoy tacking and gibing along the way. In my case when you get too far from the wind you “get” to be towed by the motorboat.

Last week me and one of my friends took a little swim in the lake after taking down the boat. I pushed her in on “accident” then did a cannonball to join her. I have to say this was my highlight but many other things have been fun. It was really fun. The instructors were laughing very hard. We did not realize that we had to be wet for another 45 minutes...dumb idea but worth it.

So far we have learned how to tack and gibe and how to sail directly into the wind. Also to put in the mast and sail and tiller. When we get in the water in high wind it is so much fun!! To tack in high wind the water level is right at the edge of the boat and sail swinging above...if not careful hitting your head. Always just hoping that it won’t rise any higher and get us wet. Where we sail there are many seaplanes. It’s really fun to watch them take off and land and catch some of the wake.

If you can I would definitely get friends to sail with you. Also...always bring extra clothes even if you don't plan to swim.

By Madison, Grade 6

Sailing has been lots of fun. We go on Fridays during P.E. at 2:30. It’s been chilly but we’ve had great winds to sail with. We’ve gone very fast! Sailing is easier with two people in the boat but harder with one person in the boat. You should try it!
By Philip Patterson, Grade 7

Frisbee is the coolest. It’s a chance to hang out with your friends, get exercise, and just have a great time. I have been playing Frisbee for awhile and it’s one of the most fun and interesting sports there are. One of the biggest parts of Ultimate is the sportsmanship aspect. It’s all about being a good sport and it can teach you a lot about how you should act towards other people.

I love Ultimate Frisbee and I always have and I will continue to play and have a great time.

Ultimate Frisbee

By Kylin Sandstrom, Grade 7

Ultimate Frisbee is over all a great sport. But, I’m sure it wouldn’t be as great a sport if TOPS wasn’t as great a team. Everyone can have fun. Sure, you have to participate but that’s not that hard. The games are really fun, too. We here at TOPS are lucky enough to have enough people to form three teams, one per grade. Each and every team seems to work as one unit. They pass, catch, and all of the other things people in Frisbee do, with efficiency. It’s like any other sport you play. Your team is like, well, a family of some sorts. The only thing is, you see these people almost every day. It’s really nice to have something to look forward to doing every Saturday, even if you are tired or have something else to do. If you play on a Frisbee team, you get praises from all your team mates. Not only is it a great sport, but it also builds confidence. We all should play Frisbee.

By Zev Magasis, Grade 6

Hi, my name is Zev Magasis and I am a middle school Ultimate Frisbee player for TOPS. I enjoy Ultimate Frisbee because it is a very athletic sport that allows team work and having fun. When you play Ultimate Frisbee you can meet new and fun people. When I first started to play Frisbee I was having fun immediately. I met a lot of new kids and the sport is not always about winning, it is about having fun and sportsmanship. I always like to make a really good diving catch or a nice throw and when you start playing you’ll start getting good and having fun.

Ultimate Rocks!

By Zev Magasis, Grade 6

Hi, my name is Zev Magasis and I am a middle school Ultimate Frisbee player for TOPS. I enjoy Ultimate Frisbee because it is a very athletic sport that allows team work and having fun. When you play Ultimate Frisbee you can meet new and fun people. When I first started to play Frisbee I was having fun immediately. I met a lot of new kids and the sport is not always about winning, it is about having fun and sportsmanship. I always like to make a really good diving catch or a nice throw and when you start playing you’ll start getting good and having fun.

Photos by Don Zemke
November Early Dismissals and Holidays

School will be dismissed at 1:10 for parent-teacher conferences, Tuesday, November 13 – Tuesday, November 20. School will be dismissed early at 2:20 on Wednesday, November 21, for Thanksgiving.

There is no school on Monday, November 12 (Veteran’s Day), Thursday, November 22 (Thanksgiving), and Friday, November 23 (Day after Thanksgiving). Please plan your schedules accordingly.

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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.