SITE COUNCIL ELECTIONS IN THIS ISSUE: PLEASE VOTE!

A ballot to elect Site Council members is included in this issue of the newsletter. Be sure and vote! The Site Council still needs a diversity representative. It is an appointed position. Call Heather Worthley 789-6092 to volunteer.

FINANCIAL REPORT

TOPS Site Council will have a proposed budget for school-wide consideration by May 7. An open meeting is scheduled May 12, 7 pm, to invite comment.

At its April meeting, Site Council members reviewed the fifty requests for funding it received in response to the request for proposals, totaling over $128,000. The budget is only about $70,000.

One big item is the World Languages program, which might be piloted in sixth grade using Friends of TOPS money. There are also concerns the new building may entail some unexpected costs, like setting up a new science lab and the Franklin Ave. Greenstreet Project.

The final auction accounting reveals the gross take was $44,800, with about $7,000 in expenses. Our income this year and last from the No Bake and Auction is almost identical, so it seems funding is stable. We may need more, however, to cover new programs.

There was also considerable discussion about whether the Site Council should recommend that these donations be used to pay for field trips. Currently, the money collected for field trips goes into the district’s TOPS Associated Student Body account. We collect money for scholarships in that fund and seem to have enough every year to pay for those that need them. The amount of money spent on field trips and camps amounts to over $40,000 a year, so Site Council agreed that we can’t fund all field trips through the Site Council.

7th and 8th graders gather at Green Lake to go boating, under the leadership of P.E. teachers Don Zemke and Eric Herndon.

McDonald School
144 NE 54th Street,
Seattle, WA 98105

729-3360

http://sea-css.ssd.k12.wa.us/TOPS/index.html

Principal:
Gary Tubbs

Site Council Chair:
Penny Bolton

THE LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

The last day of school will now be Monday, June 21, to make up for the April 22 teacher strike day. Faculty are now considering special activities for that day, but nothing is finalized. For example, students may go off site for a Field Day and picnic lunch. This will allow for packing at the building with a specified number of adults and possibly some students. (Can you imagine trying to pack while 567 students are in the school?!) Editor’s note: Actually, I’ve always thought the school would run a lot more smoothly without all those students.

ALL-SCHOOL PICNIC

To celebrate spring and our TOPS community, there will be an all-school picnic and games at the Miller Community Center (330 19th Ave. E) on Saturday, May 22. Bring food—plenty of it. We’ll gather from 5 to 8 pm. Sports will include basketball, badminton, croquet, softball, and competitive knitting. To help set up, clean up, or referee, call Penny Bolton at 325-5074.

http://sea-css.ssd.k12.wa.us/TOPS/index.html

Principal:
Gary Tubbs

Site Council Chair:
Penny Bolton

QUOTE FROM GARY TUBBS, WHO’S WORKED IN BOTH PLACES:

“When you work in Central Office, issues are constantly attacking your brain. When you work in a school, issues are constantly attacking your heart.”
EASTLAKE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN TO BE STEWARDED

The Eastlake Community Council has assembled a “Stewardship Committee” to keep the neighborhood informed and involved in City follow-through on the newly adopted neighborhood plan. The committee has a formal seat for parents of TOPS, along with seats representing apartment owners, businesses, the Eastlake Land Trust, Floating Homes Association, parks, social service providers, noise advocates and the community council. The committee will meet at least twice a year, and will hold public meetings twice annually on progress in implementing the neighborhood plan and how to get involved. It will also report in the Eastlake Community Council newsletter. (You can subscribe by sending $25 to 117 E. Louisa #1, Seattle 98102.)

In other Eastlake news, the Eastlake Tomorrow Steering Committee was given a $50,000 bonus from the city for completing its neighborhood plan on time. The money will be spent on intersection and pathway improvements at the south end of Fairview Ave. E, a planted median on Eastlake, and for I-5 noise reduction.

TOPS IS FIRST CHOICE FOR 190 PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

190 students requested TOPS as their first choice for the 1999-2000 school year. 111 requested Kindergarten spots; 20 requested first grade; 10 each requested second and third grade spots, 9 requested fourth grade, 11 requested fifth grade, 14 requested sixth grade, 4 wanted seventh grade, and there was 1 request for eighth grade.

Under the School District’s weighted student formula funding system for schools, schools are dependent on filling their classes to receive the highest budget levels. Filling classes with more challenging kids generates even more dollars (bilingual, low-income, low-scoring). For schools to be financially viable, they need to remain popular and highly requested. Long live TOPS!

LIBRARY GIFT

Bryce Nelson, the Seattle Schools’ program manager for libraries, has informed TOPS that we will receive $10,000 to improve our library collection for the new school. The money to improve District libraries comes from a private, anonymous donor.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I have been wondering if other parents are concerned with the social behaviors of TOPS students. Recently, at the elementary play practice at Asa Mercer School, kids were running in halls, standing on chairs, and arguing with chaperoning parents. Earlier this year, I witnessed similar discourteous behavior while on a field trip. And while at the Seattle Children’s Theatre I overhead an adult remark, “Oh, they are from an alternative school,” as to explain socially inappropriate behavior.

Too often, during evening or weekend activities, it seems too many parents “turn their kids loose” as if school rules no longer apply. When an adult says something to the kids, it’s not uncommon to be totally ignored. Some children want to argue or respond disrespectfully. Further, it should not be the staff’s responsibility to parent our children when we, in fact, are present at the very same event.

I’d like to see our kids be respectful and considerate of others. We need to work together as a community to support and expect common courtesy.

Sincerely,
Janet V. Moore
TOPS parent
NOT TOO LATE TO SAY “THANK YOU” FOR GREAT BASKETBALL

It’s been awhile since the TOPS middle school basketball season has ended, but it’s never too late to thank the devoted staff who year after year make sure this happens for all the students interested in playing and representing TOPS in the district’s middle school league. Once again, Eric Herndon coached the girls team, assisted by Robin Norton. And on many occasions, former 6th grade middle school teacher Michele Ota returned to TOPS to add her energetic and enthusiastic assistance at both practices and games. The boys’ team was coached this year by Rob Preston and Josh Leggett.

Because we don’t have a gym with bleachers, all of our games were played away, at the opposing teams’ schools. So, week after week, the TOPS teams played in gyms filled with the other schools’ students and parents, while only a handful of our students, staff and parents accompanied the teams to the games. And week after week, the boys’ team rooted for the girls, and the girls cheered for the guys. Oh, and did I forget to say that as one of the smallest middle schools in the league, we played against many of the strongest and toughest schools in the district. We won some, lost more than a few, but always, always, everyone came to play and support one another.

Both of my children have played on the TOPS’ teams, and for the last four years I have been able to attend many of the games; some thrillers (like this year when the girls’ team beat Southshore), some where we lost by a lot, and also a fair number of heartbreakers. Through it all, even when they felt outnumbered, this small group of players, staff and parents have represented TOPS—proudly, with determination, and always with a good sense of fun and humor.

So I really look forward to next year when more of the TOPS community will be able to come to the games after school in our NEW gymnasium, cheer on our teams and coaches and be a grand part of this experience. Thank you, Eric, Robin, Michele, Rob and Josh for giving your time to make this basketball program work, and thanks to all the players for your hard work and great skills in playing a sport that’s so much fun to watch!

Linda Secord

A BIG THANKS TO ALL AUCTION VOLUNTEERS AND DONORS

Once again, TOPS held a wildly successful evening of fun and profit. An unofficial tally puts us at about $36,500 net for the event. Looks like we’ll be getting a terrific sound system at Seward, plus many other much needed goodies for our kids. Auction night itself gave all in attendance a stirring sense of the TOPS community, everyone rubbing elbows not only with familiar friends but also with parents and teachers we don’t ordinarily run into during the course of the school year. Congratulations, everybody, on a job well done!

LOOKS LIKE WE’RE OUTTA HERE!

The school district now believes we will move to the Seward building and open in September! Oh, boy, we get to pack, and clean, and carry heavy objects, and move! The Site Council’s facilities committee discussed the possibility of using the last day of school, June 21, to help teachers pack up. The Facilities Committee is appealing for more members, especially handy types to be “tool people” during the move. Call Phil Converse at 323-8123. There will also be a series of work parties in October to install plantings on Franklin Avenue. Jay Pickering is the man to call on that, 632-5181.

Hi! My name is Yader Morales, and I’m writing about how much I enjoyed learning to jump rope in PE. Learning to jump rope has opened up numerous opportunities for me during lunch recess. During rainy-day recess I now find a group of friends and we jump rope at least two times a week.

Thanks, Don and Eric!

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT ON THE LOCAL FRONT

There may be several teacher moves among classrooms, and at least a couple of teachers are likely to leave TOPS at the end of the year. All these changes are sure to make the typical over-anxious TOPS parent nervous. Jack Lee, parent and Internet Committee chair, has offered to post next year’s class lists on the Web site before school opens so students and parents can have advance notice of who their teachers are. The posting will also include the new room assignments in the Seward Building. Technology to the rescue.
Green Lake is used all year round, for different sports, exercise, and in the case of a group of TOPS middle schoolers, rowing activities.

TOPS Middle School is about nine blocks away from Green Lake, which means an easy trip down to the lake. For the past six weeks, half of the TOPS seventh and eighth graders have been making a trip to the lake every Tuesday and Wednesday because of a program sponsored by the Green Lake Advisory Council. There, we have the opportunity to learn and have a fun experience with crew, kayaking, and canoeing. This program takes place at the Greenlake Aquatics Center, where all the boats, lifejackets, and oars are stored.

Although I am normally too busy for it, I took advantage of my time there to learn about crew. Rowing in an eight-person shell means a lot of coordination and cooperation. The boats we use for rowing are long and skinny, and easy to tip. You can not just go on your own tempo of rowing; you must be in sync with your teammates, and you must listen to your coxswain, who gives you commands. From my personal experience, crew takes patience, cooperation, and careful listening.

Starting off is where you first learn everything, such as the commands and the terms for the parts of the boat. This is a crucial part, for when you are out on the lake, one person can not take you back ashore. It takes all eight crew members. Learning commands is also important when taking the boat outside the boathouse and putting it into the water. You must know terms such as “gunwale,” which refers to the inside part of the boat that you hold when carrying it. You must also know the “riggers,” which are the black holders for the oars, along with “way enough,” which means stop, and other rowing terms.

From my perspective, rowing in an eight person water craft is really fun. It’s a good workout for basically the whole body. Your arms get exercise from rotating the oar, and your body and legs get a workout because they help put force into your strokes. It is not a sport that can wear you out quickly, like basketball and soccer, which are non-stop running. When rowing, sometimes not all eight crew members row, or the boat can become unbalanced and easy to tip. You have rest periods, and you’re sitting down. If you learn to listen in the beginning, in the end you can go quickly and have lots of fun.

What changed our group of eleven kids, who mostly had no idea about rowing, to a group of eleven who could row together, carry a boat out onto the water, row so we actually got somewhere—and quickly—was ourselves and our instructor Krishna. Krishna and the other Green Lake instructor, Chris, have been working with our rowing team as well as with the other groups who canoe and kayak every Tuesday and Wednesday. They have been a big help in the success of this program, along with one of our PE instructors, Don Zemke, who has accompanied us down to the lake every time, and all the parents who assisted us and took the time to drive us in the beginning when we had no transportation.

By Sydney Townes-Witzel

A SEVENTH GRADER LEARNS TO LOVE ROWING AT GREEN LAKE

The TOPS first, second, third, and fourth graders have been working with professional dancer Kate Lounsbury from the Co-Motion Dance Company in PE class. Students put together a great performance demonstrating the elements of dance.

TOPS KIDS SCORE AT SEATTLE SCHOOL DISTRICT MATH OLYMPIAD

On April 25, 18 students from the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade competed in the Seattle School District Math Olympiad. TOPS did very well. The sixth grade took 2nd overall in the district, and the seventh grade took 3rd overall in the district. In the separate competitions, the sixth grade took 1st in both “Problem Solving” and “Probability and Statistics” and 3rd place in “Arithmetic.” The seventh grade took 1st place in “Problem Solving,” 2nd place in “Geometry/Measurement,” and 3rd place in “Algebra.” The students had a great time.

Mark Ellis
**MY ADVENTURES DURING CREW**  
*By Kristin Braziunas*

When I first heard about crew, I wasn’t very well informed. I thought you could only be competitive if you raced against other competitive people and you should already be experienced. I believed that you had to be strong and you had to be a good rower. I was wrong, and I am glad I decided to go for it anyway, because crew has been a lot of fun.

The first day I was excited yet unsure of myself. After listening to the “brief” announcements and getting a “little” tour, I was glad to follow “Wolf”—an instructor who went by this nickname—to where the eight person shells were kept. We started by rolling out a cart stacked with smaller shells that seated less people. When we had that safely tucked away, we got to begin learning parts of an eight person shell—gunwale, riggers, bow, stern, and slide to name a few—and then we went through the slow procedure of taking it out.

“Way nuff!” Wolf called when we got the boat far enough out on the dock. (Way nuff means stop.) We then practiced putting the boat in the water and taking it out again. Later, we practiced getting in and out. That was the first day.

The second day began much like the first—announcements, pushing the smaller shell cart out of the way, getting out the eight person shell and putting it in the water—but this time we got to go out, a little ways. An eight person shell actually seats nine people—eight rowers and a coxswain (who tells which rower to row)—but some people were still left out. They rode with Wolf in the motorboat. That is, until Wolf had to get two people—the other counselor and a girl in seventh grade named Tamelia—out of the water because their canoe had capsized. We just sat there and soon had to go back in.

Crew days passed quickly, except maybe for the one when I had to stay out and row on an erg (rowing machine), but I did burn one hundred calories. I got to go out the next week both times, though. The most recent crew day, Wednesday the 31st of March, was so windy that we could only go around in circles no matter how much we tried to turn the other way. Of course, we’re lucky we actually got to go out. No one else did.

Well, that concludes my adventures during crew, so far at least. Hopefully in the crew days to come, we’ll truly be able to maneuver well enough in the eight person shell to actually put up a good fight in a race. Hey, it could happen.

---

**GREEN LAKE ROWING IS A GREAT EXPERIENCE**  
*By Kathleen Compton*

For four weeks now some seventh and eighth graders have been going down to Green Lake on Tuesdays and Thursdays to either row, canoe, or kayak. I am in rowing. We leave at 1:30, right after fifth period, and load onto a bus. The group gets to Green Lake and meets two to three coaches, one for rowing and one to two for canoe and kayak. We split up into groups and get our life jackets on. I meet with the other rowers and we get the boat out. The boat is heavy, so it takes all of us to carry it. Since there are more than eight people we must rotate. The people that are not rowing that day row on the ergs, or rowing machines. The people that do row get oars and lock them into place. Now we are ready to be assigned places in the boat. The seats are bow, the person farthest away from the coxswain in the back of the boat, to eight, the person right in front of the coxswain.

The first day we didn’t go out on the water, we just learned the terms and techniques, but the second day we were out on the water going pretty fast. Only four people row at a time and usually we have only a little amount of time to be out on the water but the experience is great.

We put all the equipment back where it belongs at about 3:10 and hop on the bus that takes us back to school. I’m glad I chose to do this program and I would like to thank everyone who made it possible for me to participate, especially Don, one of the PE teachers, and the coaches that provide the opportunity for the seventh and eighth graders to do this wonderful thing for four weeks.
FOR LEZLIE AT TWELVE
I brought you into a world
Of riots and drive-by shootings
What made me believe
When I had navigated the labyrinth
Of choking, colic and croup
That I was done with terror?

I send you out each day
Book bag across your back
And cello under your arm
I am seeking for amulets and charms
I am weaving prayers through the colorless dawn

Keep her safe
Keep her true
She is so good
She bruises so easily
Oh, You who watch for sparrows falling
and number the hairs of heads
Don’t let anyone hurt her

Then I watch you
Lean the golden wood against your body
Pulling rich sweet strands of Mozart from the air
Building a breath of timeless beauty
With your own strong hands
Your eyes lift from the pages of your book
Coming back to this world slowly
Bringing with them
Depth beyond your years
And a wisdom you were born with

In the end
Darkness can only be fought with light
And you Fragile flame
With a core of blazing steel
Glow brighter every day

Leaving my door each morning
Going out into the world
With knowledge slung across your back
Beauty under your arm
Wisdom and laughter
In your eyes

You are your own talisman
Your shining self
The radiant answer
To my prayer

Edwina Peterson Cross
Ashland, Oregon
(as submitted by Dominique Sewell)

A PRAYER FOR THE CHILDREN
We pray for the children
who sneak popsicles before supper,
who erase holes in math workbooks,
who can never find their shoes.

And we pray for those
who stare at photographers from behind barbed wire,
who can’t bound down the street in a new pair of
sneakers,
who never “counted potatoes,”
who are born in places where we wouldn’t be caught
dead,
who never go to the circus,
who live in an X-rated world.

We pray for children
who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions,
who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money.

And we pray for those
who never get dessert,
who have no safe blanket to drag behind them,
who watch their parents watch them die,
who can’t find any bread to steal,
who don’t have any rooms to clean up,
whose pictures aren’t on anybody’s dresser,
whose monsters are real.

We pray for children
who spend all their allowance before Tuesday,
who throw tantrums in the grocery store and pick at
their food,
who like ghost stories,
who shove dirty clothes under the bed,
who never rinse out the tub,
who get visits from the Tooth Fairy,
who don’t like to be kissed in front of the carpool,
whose tears we sometimes laugh at and
whose smiles can make us cry.

And we pray for those
whose nightmares come in the daytime,
who will eat anything,
who have never seen a dentist,
who aren’t spoiled by anybody,
who go to bed hungry and cry themselves to sleep,
who live and move, but have no being.

We pray for children who want to be carried
and for those who must,
whom we never give up on
and for those who don’t get a second chance.

For those we smother and . . .
for those who will grab the hand of anybody kind
enough to offer it.
THE MIDDLE SCHOOL PARENT FORUM ON MARCH 25 WAS ANOTHER SUCCESS

For example, we learned that adolescents have important “jobs” which do not include taking out the trash or mowing the lawn. They have to get ready to move out, which means:

· taking risks
· transitioning away from parents and toward peers
· identifying moral issues
· cultivating vanity
· sexual awakening
· increasing abstract, critical thinking
· increasing their desire for autonomy and independence
· increasing their awareness of death and dying
· increasing their need for trust and privacy

The forum also discussed some true-to-life TOPS scenarios that were troubling. For example:

Two years ago a Garfield counselor came to help those 8th grade students who had selected Garfield with the fall class schedule. The students were rude, didn’t listen, and were generally disrespectful. At the end of the session, the counselor told the observing parent that she had never had such an experience at any other middle school. She had come solely to be helpful; students were argumentative, interrupted and challenged her statements.

Several other scenarios, which raised similar concerns about behavior, were discussed and strategies for encouraging better behavior were discussed.

Parents were also provided a “talking guide” to open up conversations with their kids about issues like dating, grades, time for extracurricular activities, who should get to decide certain issues, and attitudes toward issues like teen sex.

The Middle School Committee is planning another Parent Forum for the Spring and is planning a program to further the social and emotional growth of our students for next year. The Site Council has asked the Middle School grant to pay for a student recognition program, a portion of the tutoring program, and bringing artists into the classroom to talk about their work.

SPEECH TOURNAMENT

This year’s speech tournament was an exciting and successful event. More than 70 TOPS students in grades 3-6 participated in the finals, having already been selected at their classroom levels. Each Friday, for five weeks in March-April, distinguished judges listened and ranked contestants in the various categories. Students did an excellent job and certainly impressed the judges with their preparation, attitude, and skills.

Below is a summary of each week’s speech category, judges, and trophy winners. Many of the winners will be sharing their speeches with the student body as part of a special assembly the first week of May and again as part of the ACHIEVEMENT FAIR on the evening of Thursday, May 13.

STORYTELLING
Judges:
John Humphrie, Director Labor Relations, Seattle Schools
Beth Tubbs, UW Student
Pat Kyle, Alliance for Education

Trophy Winners:
Erica Badgeley, 1st
Andrea Ness, 2nd
Miriam Schwartz
Catherine Means

EXPOSITORY
Judges:
Ron Jones, Director of Curriculum (retired)
Sue Byers, Assistant to the Superintendent
Margaret Kihara, Personnel Manager, SSD

Trophy Winners:
Jane Frost, 1st
Ali Haruta, 2nd
Adlai Pappy, Christoph Krumm, Justin Weber, tie for 3rd
Karlin Castor-Peck, 4th

ORAL INTERPRETATION
Judges:
Karen Kodama (former TOPS Principal)
Chris Neilsen (former TOPS Secretary)
Les Foltos, Technology Program Manager, SSD
Tom Rowe (former TOPS teacher)

Trophy Winners:
Maia Williams, 1st
Jason Boyd, 2nd
Peter Chiappinelli, 3rd
Lavena Johanson, 4th
TOPS 1998-99 CALENDAR

MAY
3-7 ..... Teacher Appreciation Week
7 ........ Site council’s finance & budget and executive committees draft a proposed budget
12 ..... Site council meeting, 5-7 pm
12 .......... TOPS public meeting held on the budget, 7 pm
13 ..... Achievement Fair
14 ..... Waiver Day
20 ..... Newsletter deadline
20,21 . Environmental Sculpture field days for Luzita’s art class
22 ..... All-school picnic at Miller Community Center, 330 19th Ave. E
24 ..... Instrumental music concert, 6:30 pm
26-29. 7th Grade at Mt. St. Helens (tentative)
31 ..... Memorial Day
31 ..... to June 4, Franklin Ave. designs on display in library

JUNE
2-4 ..... 5th grade at Camp Kirby on Samish Island
3 ..... Site council executive committee produces a final proposed FOT budget
4 ..... Art Walk, 5:30 to 8:30 pm
4 .......... final day Franklin Ave. designs in library, 5:30 to 8:30 pm
8 ..... See Franklin Ave. designs at Hydrohouse Cafe, 1201 Eastlake E
8 ..... K-2 to Camp Long
9 ..... Site council meeting; 5-7 pm
9-11 ... 8th grade to Deception Pass
9 ..... State of the school meeting
10 ..... Newsletter deadline
13 ..... Annual Site Council retreat
16 ..... 8th Grade Passage
17 ..... Wild Waves
21 ..... Last Student Day (Note revised date)
21 ..... Last Teacher Day
30 ..... Site council fiscal year ends
30 .......... K-8 TOPS / BOC Event
30 .......... Awards Assembly

SEPTEMBER ’99
7 ..... First Day of School

THANKS TO G&H PRINTING

2370 EASTLAKE E 329-9888

The Seattle School District is an Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative Action employer and employs individuals without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex, marital status, handicap/disability or sexual orientation. The Seattle School District provides Equal Education Opportunity without regard to race, creed, color national origin, sex, mental state, handicap/disability or sexual orientation. The District complies with all applicable State and Federal laws and regulations, including but not limited to Titles VI, VII, and IX of the Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), RCW 49.60, Law Against Discrimination, and RCW 28A.648 "Sex Equality," and covers, but is not limited to, all District programs, courses activities (including extracurricular activities, service, access to facilities, etc. The Title IX officer and 504 coordinator with overall responsibility for monitoring and ensuring compliance is: John Yasutake, Manager, Affirmative Action Office, 815 4th Av. N., Seattle 98109. Phone (206)298-7175. 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.