MAKING ENRICHMENT RICHER

By Heather Worthley

Several parents joined the regular January Site Council meeting for a lively discussion of the current status of enrichment and TOPICS at TOPS. Mr. Tubbs opened with an overview (outlined below) of what TOPS currently offers. He noted that TOPS is still a relatively small school, with a total of 600 children including the Bilingual Orientation Center. That smallness is part of TOPS’ charm, but the proportionately small staff size limits the range of subjects that can be included in our curriculum.

THE CURRENT STATUS OF ENRICHMENT AT TOPS

Drama: Linda Downing, TOPS parent, office staff, and drama queen extraordinaire reported that the new five-week drama Topic is going well, and that in addition to the elementary and Middle School plays, we have just received a grant for a third production focusing on anti-harassment issues (See article on page 8).

Visual art: Middle School art teacher Luzita Roll and elementary art teacher Cynthia Livak provide art instruction during the school day for all grades.

World language: This is the pilot year for incorporating world language into the TOPS curriculum. Sixth graders are learning Spanish as part of the regular school day (See article on page 9). In addition, 2nd grade teacher Willie Jones teaches a five-week Spanish TOPIC to interested 1st-5th grade students. After-school Spanish is also available at TOPS for a fee through One World Language. Sandra Welsh, TOPS parent, has worked industriously with the World Languages Committee for years to get us to this point. Kindergartners are also learning lots of sign language as part of their regular school day.

The challenge: Last year, Site Council agreed that if this year’s 6th grade Spanish pilot was successful, we would commit additional funds to have Spanish in both 6th and 7th grades next year . . . but how can we best incorporate

continued on page 2

IS SITE COUNCIL ON TRACK?

At the January 12 Site Council meeting, Site Council Chair Heather Worthley handed out some homework to Council members: copies of the revised strategic plan adopted at the June 1999 Site Council retreat. Heather asked Site Council members to review the plan and come to the February 9 meeting ready to discuss whether Site Council is achieving its stated goals.

This is a chance for the TOPS community to evaluate our goals and the Site Council’s performance. Consider the following goals and offer your thoughts on how we are doing.

1. Improve student achievement in the basic comprehension and writing conventions.
2. Decrease the achievement gap between white students and students of color—particularly African American students—in reading and math.
3. Develop and retain a talented teaching staff.
4. Improve school climate with particular focus on the Middle School.
5. Further develop site-based governance with particular focus on the alignment of the Leadership Team and Site Council in addressing programmatic issues, including stable funding.

The TOPS newsletters are available online in PDF format, usually before the printed copy arrives in your mailbox! From the TOPS home page (http://www.ssd.k12.wa.us/schools/tops), click on Hot News Spots, then TOPS Newsletters.

VOLUNTEER HOURS = MATCHING FUNDS$ PLEASE REPORT YOUR HOURS!

With a note in the Volunteer Coordinator mailbox, on the Volunteer Hours clipboard in the Main Office, or with a monthly e-mail to kdlyson8227@aol.com.
Preschool Assessment Available

The District’s Preschool Assessment Team can assess your child’s development, abilities, or difficulties. The Team consists of a group of professionals within the District who evaluate children 3-5 years of age who have possible developmental delays. The Team includes registered nurses, school psychologists, speech/language pathologists, and physical and occupational therapists.

An assessment measures a child’s skills in these developmental areas:

- Thinking and learning
- Speech and language
- Fine motor (drawing, cutting)
- Gross motor (jumping, running)
- Social/Emotional development
- Self-help skills

Children are screened for hearing and vision, then parents/guardians share their observations of the child’s development in an interview. Anyone can refer a child to the Preschool Assessment Team—a parent, relative, nurses, teacher, or physician; however, parental/guardian permission is required for the assessment.

Children receive services if they meet the criteria defined by Federal and State Special Education regulations and have approval of the parents/guardians. The type of service depends on each child’s individual needs. Services can be school-, community-, or home-based. They include:

- Instruction to build learning and social skills by teachers certified in early childhood and special education
- Speech and language services
- Physical and occupational services
- Vision support services
- Transition planning for children in Birth-to-Three programs

For more information, contact the Preschool Assessment Team at (206) 298-7805.

Enrichment, continued from page 1

Spanish into the 7th grade without wreaking havoc with the existing curriculum and staff? Can we bring Spanish into K-5 as well?

Music: Music has been a stumbling block this year. Last year’s vocal and instrumental music teachers did not return, because of a number of logistical issues. Two years ago, children had a half-hour vocal music class weekly, but that didn’t work well in the faculty’s view.

We have funds set aside to hire a music teacher for extended music TOPICS, but so far no one has been hired. It’s possible that the ideal candidate might teach vocal music, help with a choir, and possibly lead Middle School after-school band practice as well. Mr. Tubbs has put a lot of time and effort into interviewing prospective music teachers. Lauren Grinnell, AmeriCorps volunteer, is now coordinating the search effort. Please contact her at school if you can help.

Dance: Kindergartners have a dance teacher once a week. Mr. Tubbs is in discussions with Ewajo to provide an extended dance TOPIC for elementary students this semester.

Computers: Things are looking up! Fifth grade teacher Kevin Crozier announced that TOPS will be getting approximately 100 new computers from the District for next school year. (See next month’s newsletter for some updated news on this. Ed.) Kevin, parent Jack Lee, and the Internet/Technology committee will be developing a detailed Technology Plan over the next three months in preparation.

Chess: Parent Mark Morales has helped win a grant to supplement funds for the after-school Chess Club.

City School and service learning: Two tried-and-true TOPS philosophies that tend to be stronger in some grades than others—Examples include 4th grade tree planting at Greenlake, kindergartners improving habitat at Pritchard Wetlands, and the 5th grade/kindergarten buddy project involving salmon and the Cedar River Watershed.

Bright ideas: As part of the current strategic plan, we could develop a comprehensive enrichment plan. Essential learning requirements for all the arts now exist, and they will be assessed in a few years.

What you can do if you have ideas about enrichment at TOPS? Ask one of your Site Council representatives (back cover of the directory) to raise your concern at the February Site Council meeting, where we will be discussing the Strategic Plan in preparation for the 2000-2001 budget process. Talk to a relevant committee chair and consider joining that committee. Work with other parents and staff to develop a budget proposal for next year!
SITE COUNCIL MEETING JANUARY 12

By Gretchen Chambers

All members of the TOPS community are invited to attend Site Council meetings: second Wednesdays in the Library, 5-7p.m. Next meeting February 9.

INTRODUCTIONS

Judy Strickland, 2nd grade parent, described a new, free tutoring program now underway at Miller Community Center, which provides needs assessment for students, one-on-one tutoring, and tutor training. The program currently needs tutor volunteers and has openings for students on Saturdays. Judy offered pamphlets describing the program.

Heather passed out copies of the Site Council’s strategic plan and asked the members to review the goals and evaluate progress toward them. She added that budget proposals for next year’s budget are due in May.

PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

Mr. Tubbs said that the tours for prospective parents have gone well and have been well attended, but few parents are volunteering as guides. Middle School students will be assisting with the Middle School tours in February.

TOPS Gets ESL!

Mr. Tubbs was pleased to announce that the district has given TOPS approval for an English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) program. With this program, 35 BOC students from TOPS and elsewhere will be mainstreamed into the regular TOPS program. Most of the new kids will be in the younger grades.

Basketball Uniforms! And Volleyball

The Leadership Team has approved the purchase of new uniforms for the both basketball teams. Apparently we look pretty shabby in faded, masking taped jerseys. Mr. Tubbs hopes we’ll get the uniforms before the end of the season.

He also announced the approval of purchase of volley ball standards (The gym is already equipped with floor fittings.)

Neighborhood Appreciation Day—February 12th

Counselor Jennifer Murray volunteered to coordinate Neighborhood Appreciation activities, and Linda Downing discussed Drama Committee plans to coordinate Neighborhood Appreciation activities with the Middle School played scheduled for February 11-12. She looked to Eastlake Community Rep Jules James for assistance.

Team Grant Denied

Despite a great deal of research and work by Mr. Tubbs, Fund Development Chair Penny Bolton, and Lianne Sheppard, who has been instrumental in bringing AmeriCorps members to TOPS, the grant application for 10 AmeriCorps workers was not accepted. The TOPS team hopes to get feedback as to why their proposal was denied.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL REPORT

Middle School Dances

Student Leadership Council representatives Deva Crouch, Julia Fehrenbach, Meiko Hall, and Rachel Leonardi were happy to report the schedule of dances for the rest of the year. The plans represent a huge improvement over last year’s two dances, which were held during 5th and 6th periods and, in sum, “lame.” Evening dances in the cafeteria are scheduled for February 18th, March 14th, May 5th, and June 9th. TOPS students will be able to bring two guests each, if their friends are listed on a guest list in advance and bring a valid school I.D. The representatives encouraged parents and teachers to volunteer to chaperone, adding that they could dance and have lots of fun. Contact Meiko Hall if you want to volunteer.

Parents of non-Middle Schoolers would be welcomed as chaperones, too. In fact, Middle Schoolers prefer them!

Middle School Commons

Students are excited about plans for the Commons, which include a ping-pong table and a wall on which each 8th grader will have a space for decorations, postings, and other personal expressions.

Elementary School Buddies

The Middle Schoolers are planning to start a buddy program with the elementary schoolers. Julia recalled from her early years at TOPS when she admired the big kids, and said it would be fun for the young kids to have a Middle School buddy.

Student Mr. Tubbs?

The Student Leadership Council is also exploring the possibility of having a “Switch” day when Middle Schoolers could trade places with the teachers and administrators.

EASTLAKE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

TOPS dad and rep to the ECC Jay Pickering reported that completion of Franklin Green Street will make it easier for the community to use school facilities after hours. Community use of the buildings has been one of the original goals of the school’s renovation. The ECC is developing plans for administering community activities to minimize demands on Mr. Tubbs and other TOPS staff. Among the planned activities, TOPS will be an official polling place, starting with the presidential primary on February 29th. Because of the lack of parking, only a few neighboring precincts will vote at TOPS.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair Dana Carey-Twight provided the nonprofit tax I.D. number for Friends of TOPS: 943142402. She was happy to report that donations to the No Bake Bake Sale look like they will exceed last year’s take. So far some 220 families have participated. She also reported that the Finance Committee passed a resolution regarding funds

OFFICE STAFF APPRECIATE BEING APPRECIATED

The Office Staff would like to thank the generous parents and staff who brought in cards, treats, and gifts for them at the end of the year. We feel very appreciated!
DIVERSITY COALITION IDENTIFIES TASKS

By Tilman Smith

At its regular monthly meeting January 12, the Diversity Issues Coalition sharpened its focus and identified specific action plans.

The evening began with a look at efforts to update the TOPS Roster. Members of the Coalition want to ensure that all families who want to be included in the school roster are included. Phone calls are being made to families who aren’t listed. If people have ideas about how to communicate more effectively to families about the roster, please let us know. This is just one way the Coalition is hoping to help all families feel included.

The Coalition also discussed Requests for Proposals (RFPs), due to Site Council in April. The Coalition is working on several proposals. One idea would seek funding for all-school assemblies like the MLK, Jr. Day assembly held January 14th. Another would fund artists in residence who would reflect the diverse families in our school.

NEW WORK/FOCUS GROUPS

The discussion about RFPs led to a discussion about budget planning, because the Coalition is planning projects for the next year and a half and will need funding for some of these projects. Lists of work/focus groups, which were initially generated at the State of the School meeting, were brought back out to prioritize projects in terms of timing and funding. Work/focus groups include:

- Organizing reading groups or study circles to explore issues related to diversity
- Organizing forums, workshops, and training sessions for the TOPS community on, for example, overcoming institutional racism, culturally sensitive communication and conflict resolution, and cultural identity development support for students.
- Deepening the connection between BOC children and their families and the rest of the TOPS community, by, for example, providing ESL instruction at TOPS to enable BOC “graduates” to continue at TOPS and involving BOC families in all-school activities.
- Generating interest among and supporting the involvement of adults from diverse backgrounds in Site Council, TOPS Committees, TOPICS, tutoring, mentoring, the Middle School Grant, Room Reps for BOC, school tours and visitations, and the hiring process
- Celebrating good models of inclusion and multiculturalism in the TOPS community by identifying and recognizing teachers and their curriculum and classroom activities, parents and their diversity-related jobs or community work, and kids and their roles in multicultural dialogues and communities
- Deepening our knowledge and sharing information about the “performance gap” between students of color and white students
- Developing budget proposals for 2000-2001 diversity activities

Please feel free and inspired to join one of these groups. The more input we have from families, the stronger we’ll be.

Participants also proposed that the Coalition discuss Christmas celebrations at TOPS. There are Jewish and other families who would like to have a dialogue about Christmas and how it fits into the TOPS community. Everyone agreed that it was an important topic to discuss and will be scheduled for a meeting.

LOOKING AHEAD

Long-term and short-term Coalition projects were also discussed. The group decided that we must host at least one Diversity forum for TOPS by the end of this year, as well as plan for larger projects for the 2000-2001 school year.

In the Puget Sound Area, there are many groups that can provide rich resources and information for our community efforts. One organization, The Northwest Coalition for Human Dignity, will be asked to come talk to the Coalition at our next meeting, Wednesday, February 9th, at 7pm. Another related monthly community meeting is the REAL project, sponsored by the National Coalition Building Institute. Garry Owens can provide more information about these meetings.

Finally, an effort is being made to provide TOPS faculty, staff, Middle School students, parents, and community members with “Undoing Racism” training over the next couple of years. Funding and partnerships are being sought out to make this a reality. The Coalition will provide more information soon.
**A Parent’s Thoughts on Diversity**

By Francie Ringold

In reading the January newsletter, I was impressed and pleased by what the Diversity Issues Coalition has been working on at TOPS and things they plan to do in the future. It also made me reflect on my visit to TOPS the last day of school before winter break. I walked in the main entrance and was struck by the very large paper Christmas trees on the wall. It made me feel a bit uncomfortable being the mother of two Jewish boys, but I thought to myself there are probably other decorations in the school honoring other winter holidays and festivals. I looked on several floors as I went to collect my boys and I saw no others.

I thought about it that day and for several weeks after: Should I say anything or not? My boys weren’t too bothered by it, so I didn’t do anything. Then I got the newsletter and it reaffirmed for me that I should say something, not just for my boys, but for the other Jewish children in the school, the Muslim children, and many others who come to TOPS as their first entry into the United States educational system.

We must be culturally sensitive to all the children and their cultures, and even educate our children to the cultures we don’t see represented here at TOPS. They can be wonderful teaching moments for parents, as well as for teachers. Let’s continue to strive to make TOPS an inclusive environment, not an exclusive one. Thank you.

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**International School Moves Ahead Under Karen Kodama**

Former TOPS principal Karen Kodama is at the helm of the new Stanford International School, scheduled to open in fall 2000. The goal of the school is to provide K-5 students an education with an international point of view and a strong foundation in technology.

Students will begin studying a foreign language in kindergarten and first grade. Language immersion is the key. For example, kindergartners and first graders will receive half their instruction in Spanish and the other half in English. Japanese and possibly Mandarin Chinese will also be offered. An international perspective will characterize the overall curriculum.

The school is working together with the University of Washington to develop this new curriculum and to connect the classrooms to the high speed Internet. Good luck to Ms. Kodama on this exciting new adventure!
MEET THE TEACHERS

Each month during the 1999-2000 school year, the TOPS Newsletter is meeting the people most directly involved in your child’s education. In this issue, Jim Wells continues our series with 5th grade teachers Kevin Crozier and Tal Troy.

KEVIN CROZIER

TOPS NEWSLETTER: What drew you to the teaching profession and to TOPS?

KEVIN CROZIER: The teaching profession drew me. Shortly after getting married, I looked for a new career that would challenge my mind and be easier on my body than construction work. Many people mentioned I might be good at teaching, and after a few observations, I was hooked.

Concerning TOPS, I was interested in a chance to work in an environment where a strong child-centered teaching staff already existed, experiential/project learning was supported, and where I could integrate technology to its fullest potential in a newly networked building.

TN: What do you like about teaching?

KC: I like how any day, or any lesson, or any student’s viewpoint can stimulate discussion, excitement, and a sharing of ideas. I feel I am always learning myself while teaching, and that is a nice feeling to me.

TN: Any changes you’ve seen in the kids over the last few years?

KC: Not really. Although today most kids are more adept at technology and may be more experienced in Pokemon card playing, most still are eager to learn and make friends.

TN: How can parents help out in your classroom?

KC: Two ways: First, as I integrate technology more into our daily learning, parents can guide a small group of students in the finer art of word processing or creating technology-supported projects. Second, different students need to build different writing skills and one-on-one reinforcement by a parent can make a real difference.

TN: Your philosophy? Goals?

KC: My overriding philosophy of education is that learning should be fun and/or satisfying. While doing this, I want to raise each child’s skills and knowledge, offer and guide different perspectives/opinions, and model how to work together as a successful team.

TAL TROY

TOPS NEWSLETTER: What made you think you might want to become a teacher?

TAL TROY: While I was an undergraduate studying civil engineering, I knew I would eventually become a teacher, because I was so good at helping my friends study for big exams. I started a career in engineering and expected to stay with it for about 10 years and then get a Ph.D. so I could teach college. But then I did volunteer tutoring for a middle schooler, and I enjoyed that much more than my engineering job. So after only a couple of years, I decided I wanted to teach public school.

TN: What do you like about teaching now that you’re doing it?

TT: I like the interaction not just with kids but also with parents and all my colleagues. I’ve been especially lucky at TOPS to team-teach with Nani last year and Kevin this year. Being with the kids and the adults here is very uplifting. Even on the hectic days, working usually puts me in a pretty good mood (although my students might not believe that). But on a larger scale, I like knowing that my work is very closely connected to my social beliefs. I deeply believe in public education and its role in a democracy.

TN: Can you describe how kids have changed over the last few years?

TT: It would be hard for me to say anything about how kids have changed in general during the seven years I’ve been teaching. Each group of kids has its own sort of character, so you never really see the same thing. But if I compare these kids with myself and my classmates when I was their age, I would say that I’m very impressed by how much more mature and responsible these kids are than we were.

TN: What do you think of the new campus this year? How can you take advantage of it?

TT: This is the first time I’ve had a phone at my desk. During the first two weeks of school, I kept forgetting it
in the reserve account ($98,000): A total of $30,000 could be used for capital expenses. They will be accepting proposals for grants through March.

Dana also reviewed a summary of expenditures and income for the year to date. She noted that Chessmister Mark Morales procured a $2000 instruction grant for the Chess Club, which saved TOPS a lot of money. Bravo, Mark!

Dana was also pleased to report several new committee members who will be taking over for retiring members. Lisa Meyer will be taking over the No Bake Sale from Sue Wardle, and Peter Dewey will be taking over for Phil Converse.

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

Kevin Crozier announced that net-wired Seattle schools (TOPS is one of six) will be receiving 100 computers to create a ratio of one computer for every five students. The new computers will be added to existing computers at TOPS by next fall and will mean one computer for every five students.

In light of this development, the Technology Committee will divert most of the money approved at the November Site Council meeting for the purchase of computers to the purchase of one computer and a printer, as well as Ethernet converters. The Technology Committee is also developing a plan for acquiring support equipment for the approximately 100 new computers, such as software, printers, and tables not included. Kevin also reported that every teacher will have an e-mail address by the end of spring, and that a civic-minded acquaintance of Middle School parent, Carla Griswold, donated a brand new iMac to TOPS. Many thanks to Carla and her great friends.

DRAMA COMMITTEE

Chair Linda Downing reported that the Middle School play will be presented February 11th and 12th. In observance of Neighborhood Appreciation Day, neighbors will be eligible for discounted tickets.

The grant proposal for an anti-harassment play has won funding through PONCHO and the Seattle Public Schools’ Department of Visual and Performing Arts, and also the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation Middle School After School Activities Program (ASAP). Linda said the brainstorming and writing process has begun with Shana Bestock as director.

Linda is also working on a grant for set design instruction in 2000-2001.

In related business, Fund Development Chair Penny Bolton reported that she has solicited advice on coordinating bidding for curtains for the gym stage.

FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Chair Debrah Walker noted that a public meeting on playscape equipment for Rogers Field was scheduled for January 24. Jay Pickering and Jules James reported on Eastlake Community efforts focused on a playscape in Rogers Playfield. TOPS parents Sadinsky and Craig Dawson are helping “Friends of Rogers Playfield” develop a Small and Simple matching grant for the planning stages. A landscape architect will be contracted to locate and design the playscape, which is targeted at preschool children. They hope to be able to make use of the hillsides in the design. The group will also be investigating removing the bathrooms. They will survey community members and TOPS students about use of the bathrooms.

The Site Council approved a letter to the Office of Neighborhoods declaring TOPS’ support and participation with the playscape effort in the form of a contribution of $500 and up to 100 volunteer hours by TOPS parents.

Deborah Walker also distributed a “Wishlist and Unfunded Items from Renovation,” but time was short and the discussion was postponed until next month. Be there!

THANKS FOR NO BAKE PARTICIPATION

By Sue Wardle, Head Baker

The No Bake Bakery sends sincere thanks to the generosity of our TOPS family. Thanks to you, we raised more dough than ever before: $28,000 as of January 12, 2000. Your money will be wisely spent by the Site Council.

One of the best stories our bakery received was from a family that gave out donation forms to family members at a holiday gathering. Each extended family member gave a small donation, but the whole was quite significant. More important is the thought that the extended family was so committed to their family and our school. Thank you for the great support!
STUDENT ART GRANTS AVAILABLE

By Rachel Brumer

Passion for Art? A local Seattle artist named Barbara Ireland is giving $100 grants to students aged 10-18 with great ideas, and a passion for their art. A new grant program, starting this January by Ireland, is funding one student every month. The money can be used for work in any discipline: writing, painting, film, video, digital design, or dance. Ireland has her own film and video production company called Filmus Maximus.

If you are interested in applying, and want some help with your application, I’d be happy to help you (Rachel Brumer, 328-7007). Applications are available on-line at filmusmax@earthlink.net.

TOPS’ KACIE TATE INTRODUCES NELSON MANDELA AT DECEMBER EVENT

In December, former South African President Nelson Mandela and his wife, Garca Machel, visited Seattle. TOPS’ 8th grader Kacie Tate had the honor of introducing President Mandela at the welcoming ceremony at Boeing Field. According to the newsletter for the Employees of Seattle Public Schools, Kacie said Mandela’s “life, and the sacrifices he has made on behalf of others, are awe-inspiring. Speaking with him made me feel as if I were a part of history.”

DRAMA COMMITTEE PURSUES CHALLENGING PROGRAM

By Linda Downing, Drama Committee Chair

Drama performances can entertain, but they can also force us to think about issues that may be uncomfortable and experience feelings that are very powerful.

The TOPS Drama Committee believes in the value of drama as an educational and problem-solving tool. In line with TOPS’ 1999-2000 priority on issues related to student civility, school climate, social competence, bullying, hate language, and violence, we have hired director Shana Bestock to collaborate with our Middle School students in the writing and performing of a play that asks questions about social rejection, hate, and violence. This is in addition to the Middle School play set for February 11-12.

Brainstorming, writing, and rehearsal of the play will begin in mid-February as an after school activity for Middle School students. The performance will be presented free of charge to the TOPS community in late March or early April. Students on both sides of the curtain will find the play thought provoking and should be able to incorporate some portion of what they see on stage into their daily school lives. If this play can prevent even one student from following through on a harmful action toward another student, we will be satisfied with our work on this project.

Funding for this project will be provided by a grant through PONCHO and the Seattle Public Schools’ Department of Visual and Performing Arts, and also the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation Middle School After Schools Activities Program (ASAP).

Questions may be directed to Linda Downing at 367-0615, momdowning@aol.com, or in the school office.

KIDS AND COMMERCIALISM

Phinney Center will be sponsoring a free panel discussion on “Kids and Commercialism” on March 16, 7-8:30 p.m. at the Center’s Community Hall, 6532 Phinney Ave. N. Speakers include Janet Luhrs, author of the Simple Living Guide, Cecile Andrews, author of Circle of Simplicity, and Karen Schneider-Chen, parent. Carrie Klein, President of the Phinney Preschool Coop, will moderate.

The evening will focus on the increase in marketing to children, how children are encouraged to connect their self-esteem and self-worth to what they can purchase, and ways to counteract negative values, such as greed and over-consumption. For more information, call 783-2244.
7TH GRADE LA/ART STUDENTS STUDY NE MEE POOS PEOPLE

By Sally Buckley

From November to January, Ms. Eickelberg’s and Ms. Roll’s 7th graders have studied aspects of the literature, lifeways, legends, history, and art of the Ne Mee Poos People (Nez Perce) of the Columbia Plateau. A focal point of study was “Soun Tetonken,” fictional story about the part a young nephew of Chief Joseph played in his tribe’s forced move from its Wallowa Valley homeland and the ensuing Patriot’s War with the flight toward Canada in 1877.

Students handled and discussed tools and artifacts of the Ne Mee Poos’ daily life from the Burke Museum’s resource boxes and studied some of the Walla Walla Treaty. They also met Nez Perce Elder and Former Tribal Council member Allen V. Pinkham, Sr. who drove from Lenore, Idaho, to share tribal history and legends of their lives since time immemorial in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. Mr. Pinkham talked with and answered questions from the 60-plus students in TOPS’ spacious new LRC, showing them examples of beadwork and other cultural items as Librarian Steve Haines took video and still photos.

Later Ms. Roll and the 7th graders worked on art projects in leather-bead work drawing on themes inspired by their reading, research and study.

Parent Sally Buckley prepared a series of laminated posters and a bulletin board by the school office illustrating Ne Mee Poos history and lifeways to complement the literature and art study.

This collaborative Language Arts/Art unit has been developed as a permanent multicultural addition to the Middle School curriculum by TOPS Middle School faculty Lori Eickelberg and Luzita Roll and parent Sally Buckley with the assistance of a grant from TOPS’ Site Council Curriculum Enhancement funds. Library funds were used to purchase several books and archival Nez Perce music/dance CDs. Grant funds supported purchase of classroom collection videos, such as “Sacred Journeys,” a curriculum guide, student copies of “Chief Joseph, His Own Story,” and other literature resources, which will be available for future classes.

MIDDLE SKI PROGRAM UP AND RUNNING!

By Janet Moore

The Middle School Ski Program has a record number of kids participating this year. At last count it was 115, and every request for a scholarship has been fulfilled! Now if it will just snow tons!!!!

(Editor’s note: Many, many thanks to the TOPS parents who organize and run this program. They are amazing.)

6TH GRADE SPANISH

By Sandra Welsh

Sixth grade Spanish is now primarily during fourth period. Spanish teacher Lettie Pickett is teaching with Julie Trout, and the Spanish class is incorporated into Social Studies. P.E. teacher Eric Herndon is also working with Lettie and the students one day a week, and they are planning to purchase a P.E. video in Spanish. Lettie is also planning on cooking tamales with class soon. It seems to be working well.

Mr. Tubbs and the staff have been flexible and creative in shaping the program. A recent informal poll of students and their families suggests that the 6th grade would like to continue Spanish in 7th grade. Comments from students ranged from, “We need more language to carry on a conversation” to “I was surprised. I really like it. It’s interactive. I’d love to continue.”

The big question is how would Spanish be worked into the 7th grade curriculum?

If you are interested in helping or would just like more information on the World Language Committee, please contact Kathleen Nelson at 325-8484.
ON THE TOPIC OF ARCHITECTURE

By Alan Ness

On December 9 and 10, five third- and fourth-graders participated in my “Looking at Architecture” Topic. Activities included hanging on a beam held by two students to demonstrate how forces work in structures. The highlight was touring the school (inside and outside) looking for items on our A-Z Architecture List. We had fun, and I think we all learned as well.

BOC VISTIS AQUARIUM

By Julie Pickering

The entire BOC program took a field trip to the Pike Place Market and the Seattle Aquarium on January 11. In my many years as a TOPs parent, I have to admit that this was the most enjoyable field trip I’ve ever been on (apologies to my daughters!).

We took school buses downtown. Ours was slow leaving school. We had to wait for nearly an hour for a student who had ended up in Queen Anne that morning (long story!), but that was okay. We had a great time chatting and singing—thank you, Mercedes Sandoval! It’s amazing to see how quickly, and enthusiastically, the kids have picked up English.

The BOC staff—Dalmar Ali, Sorayya Aly, Linda Jordan-Todd, Linda Orantes, Bethany Plett, Mercedes Sandoval, Loren Smith, and Karen Wong—did a wonderful job preparing the kids for the trip. On the bus downtown, I learned everyone’s favorite marine animal and color, and got an earful about what sharks are capable of.

Our group missed Pike Place Market because of the bus delay, but we had plenty to do at the Aquarium. We walked through in small groups, rubbing elbows with a lot of big high school students. The kids searched out their favorite creatures and had fun identifying colors and explaining camouflage techniques. We were especially lucky to see the Aquarium staff release an enormous purple octopus back into the Bay.

After lunch upstairs, we listened to a presentation on invertebrates (complete with anemone and clam puppets) and had a chance to pick up and touch all sorts of real-life examples. It was great fun.

I encourage all TOPS parents to volunteer on future BOC field trips and in the classrooms. There’s lots to be learned!
AUCTION COUNTDOWN:
ITEMS DUE FEBRUARY 25

Just about a few weeks left ‘til the big auction night, Saturday, March 18! Now’s the time for a major push to procure those great auction goodies. The more items we come up with, the more great school stuff our kids are going to get. Just about everywhere you go there’s a product or service that a fellow TOPS parent is itching to buy. Think you can produce at least three auction items? Four? Five?

All it takes is a few quick conversations with people who can donate a product or service to the auction. These are people you talk to every day. Your grocer, soccer coach, hair stylist, book authors, ice cream storeowners, restaurateurs, theater operators, book store managers. Everywhere you usually spend your time or money—that’s where the items come from.

Other ideas? Collaborate with friends to create and serve a theme dinner, a year’s supply of chocolate chip cookies, wash cars. Can you donate a week at your summer cabin in the mountains? Mariner season tickets? Art lessons? The possibilities are endless.

Be sure to fill in your procurement slips and bring the items to the TOPS office by February 25. If you run out, you can pick up additional forms at the office. Please fill them out completely and correctly. For more information, call Laurie Black at 285-7079, Diane Magasich at 633-0546, or Carol White at 634-3105.

We’re still seeking capable volunteers to engineer the auction activities (call Anna Savage at 633-5718):

- **Live Auction Coordinator**—Could be an individual or a team. The coordinator decides which items will go into the live auction, organizes and communicates with the auctioneers, and supervises the display of live auction items.

- **Class Project Coordinator**—Advises and keeps track of all the separate class projects.

- **Writers for auction item descriptions**—The more, the merrier! Rev up your creative side to write brief blurbs for the cards that go next to all the great auction items. Your word processor, in your home.

- **Worker bees for all those important “little” projects**—There’s plenty to be done before and on the day of the auction, and you’re just the one to help out.

Any other auction questions? Please call Rhian Lombard at 325-5395.

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**2000 TOPS CALENDAR**

**FEBRUARY**

- 1-2 (T-W) .. CHOICES Education Program for 8th Graders (By Central Area Youth Association)
- 9 (W) ........ Site Council Meeting, 5-7 p.m.
- 9 (W) ........ Diversity Issues Coalition Meeting, 7-8:30 p.m.
- 11(F) ........ Apple to Grandma, SCT, K-3, 10:15 a.m.
- 11-12 (F-S) Middle School play—The Good Times Are Killing Me
- 18(F) ......... Middle School to Skate King, Bellevue
- 21 (M) ...... Presidents Day. No school
- 22-25 (T-F) Mid-winter break. No school

**MARCH**

- 6-31 ............ ITBS testing (4 weeks)
- 8 (W) .......... Site Council Meeting 5-7 p.m.
- 8 (W) .......... Diversity Issues Coalition Meeting, 7-8:30 p.m.
- 10 (F) .......... Teacher workshops. No school
- 17 (F) .......... End of 2nd trimester (K-5)
- 18 (Sa) ....... TOPS Auction, Asian Resource Center
- 22 (W) ........ The Midwife’s Apprentice, SCT, Grades 2-6, 10:30 p.m.
- 24 (F) ........ K-5 2nd trimester report cards come out

**APRIL**

- 5 (W) .......... Site Council Meeting 5-7 p.m.
- 5 (W) .......... Diversity Issues Coalition Meeting, 7-8:30 p.m.
- 7 (F) .......... End of 3rd quarter (Middle School)
- 10-14(M-F) . Spring break
- 24-May 12 .. WASL testing

**MAY**

- 2 (Tu) .......... Class picture day
- 10 (W) ........ Site Council Meeting 5-7 p.m.
- 10 (W) ........ Diversity Issues Coalition Meeting, 7-8:30 p.m.
- 10 (W) ........ When I Grow Up, SCT, Grades 2-6, 10:30 p.m.
- 12 (F) .......... Teacher workshops. No school
- 29 (M) ...... Memorial Day. No school

**JUNE**

- 2 (F) ............ Art Walk
- 2-3 (F-S) .... Elementary school play—James and the Giant Peach
- 7 (W) .......... Site Council Meeting 5-7 p.m.
- 7 (W) .......... Diversity Issues Coalition Meeting, 7-8:30 p.m.
- 11 (Su) ...... Site Council Retreat
- 16 (F) ........ Last student day
- 19 (M) ...... Last teacher day
YOU’LL LAUGH. YOU’LL CRY. AND YOU JUST MIGHT GET UP AND DANCE!

TOPS Middle School presents

THE GOOD TIMES ARE KILLING ME

By Lynda Barry

A play about the sixties, music, best friends, racism, and the seventh grade.

Directed by Shana Bestock
Starring TOPS Middle School students

Join us for the first production in our “new” school! Join us to celebrate Black History Month and Neighborhood Appreciation Day (Saturday, February 12)! Come and enjoy this touching coming-of-age story. For more information, call (206) 329-0441.

Friday, February 11 at 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, February 12 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.
TOPS gym, 2500 Franklin Avenue East

General Admission $5
Eastlake neighbors $4
Seniors (over 65) and children (under 12) $2

Support TOPS drama: advertise in the play program!
For info, call Gail Miller, (206) 325-0291.

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