



TAM VALLEY PTA NEWSLETTER

Volume #'09-'10 Issue #7

March 3, 2010

Principally Speaking...

From Gail van Adelsberg

THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

It was such a pleasure to hear these students read to me during the month of February: *Alexia Petraitis, Simona Krasnegor, Savanna Detjen-Creson, Quinn Boyle, Ava Finn, Dylan Sgamba, Griffin Nott, Grace Drake, Charlotte Jones, Alex Meislich, Sammy Sandgren, and Christopher Long.*



HAITI FUNDRAISER

The Student Council raised \$414 to donate to the Red Cross for earthquake relief in Haiti. Many thanks to all of the students who paid 25 cents for each estimate of the jelly beans in the jar. Our winners, who each took home the jar of jelly beans, were **Jenna Brown** (2nd grade) and **Hank Taft** (5th grade).

POETS SHINE

Congratulations to the nine third grade poets whose beautiful poems were presented at the February School Board meeting at Tam Valley: *Charlotte Jones, Annie Blackadar, Jamie Baker, Duncan McFarlane, Maya Rabow, Natalie Fax, Collin Prell, Savanna Detjen-Creson, and Ryan Ali.* A great deal of credit goes our California Poet in the Schools – Karen Benke – and to the inspiring third grade teachers, Ms. Croy, Ms. Dunn, Ms. O'Toole, and Ms Shapiro!

WANTED: TREATS FOR THE CABARET



Please, please, please contribute store-bought or homemade goodies to be sold during the Cabaret Intermission (Friday, March 5 and Saturday, March 6)! The students love these treats and all profits are donated to a community service project.

LET'S MAKE GARBAGE-FREE LUNCHES A HABIT

Tam Valley School has always encouraged students to bring their lunches in containers that can be reused. Many of our families are very conscientious about sending children with lunches that have minimum of items to go into the trash. As part of our "Cool the Earth" program, we are going to focus on trash-free lunches during the month of March. We'll give some gentle reminders, and will continue to reward students who have garbage-free lunches with "Green Team Bake Sale" coupons. Thanks to all of you who foster this practice!



IMPORTANT DATES

Fri, Mar 5, 7PM and Sat, Mar 6, 6PM: Cabaret (note two different start times)

Wed, Mar 10: School Board Meeting

Thu, Mar 11, 12:40 and 1:55: Fun Jumprope Assemblies

Wed, Mar 17, 8:45AM: PTA Fundraising Forum (Staff room #16)

Thu, Mar 18: Progress reports go home with 1st-5th graders

Fri, Mar 19: Staff Development Day, no school

Wed, Mar 24, 7:15PM: PTA Meeting (School Library)

Fri, Mar 26: Winter enrichment ends

Mon, Mar 29: Spring enrichment begins

Thu, Apr 1, 7PM: 2nd Grade Play

Tue, Apr 6, 8AM: Parent Appreciation Breakfast (MPR)

Fri, Apr 9: Sports Dress Up Day

TRAFFIC DUTY

Week of Mar 8: Dunn; Wed Kindergarten Garton/Stern

Week of Mar 15: Shapiro; Wed Kindergarten Scatena

Week of Mar 22: Croy; Wed Kindergarten Dale

Week of Mar 29: Brune; Wed Kindergarten Drake

GREEN TEAM BAKE SALES

For your planning purposes, here are the dates (all Fridays) and the classrooms contributing the treats for the remaining Green Team Bake Sales. Contact Mr. Thompson (athompson@mvschools.org) with any questions.

3/12 Alderson
4/9 Swanson
5/7 Beuhler
5/21 Shapiro
6/4 Brune

WRITING ANTHOLOGY



Beverly Coughlin, Carmel Dow's mom, is once again compiling our annual PTA-funded "Writing Anthology," a published book with poems, stories, etc. by each kindergarten through fifth grade student. If you are able to assist in typing student pieces, please contact Beverly at 388-4749 or bevchuck@comcast.net so that we will have this ready to distribute by June. Each family will receive one copy of this treasured collection.

IS OLD FASHIONED "PLAY" A WASTE OF TIME?

Clearly the way that children spend their time has changed, especially for the current generation of school-age kids. A growing number of psychologists believe that these changes in what children do in their free time has also changed kids' cognitive and emotional development.

"It's interesting to me that when we talk about play today, the first thing that comes to mind are toys," says Howard Chudacoff, a cultural historian at Brown University. "Whereas when I would think of play in the past, I would think of *activity* rather than an object."

Chudacoff's recently published history of child's play argues that for most of human history what children did when they played was roam in packs large or small, more or less unsupervised, and engage in freewheeling imaginative play. They were pirates and princesses, aristocrats and action heroes. Basically, says Chudacoff, they spent most of their time doing what looked like nothing much at all.

"They improvised play, whether it was in the outdoors... or whether it was on a street corner or somebody's back yard," Chudacoff says. "They improvised their own play; they regulated their play; they made up their own rules."

But during the second half of the 20th century, Chudacoff argues, play changed radically. Instead of spending their time in autonomous shifting make-believe, children were supplied with ever more specific toys for play and predetermined scripts. Essentially, instead of playing pirate with a tree branch they played Star Wars with a toy light saber. Chudacoff calls this the commercialization and co-optation of child's play – a trend which begins to shrink the size of children's imaginative space.

But commercialization isn't the only reason imagination comes under siege. In the second half of the 20th century, Chudacoff says, parents became increasingly concerned about safety, and were driven to create play environments that were secure and could not be penetrated by threats of the outside world. Karate classes, gymnastics, summer camps – these create safe environments for children, Chudacoff says. And they also do something more: for middle-class parents increasingly worried about achievement, they offer to enrich a child's mind.

It turns out that all that time spent playing make-believe in past decades actually helped children develop a

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critical cognitive skill called **executive function**. Executive function has a number of different elements, but a central one is the ability to self-regulate. Kids with good self-regulation are able to control their emotions and behavior, resist impulses, and exert self-control and discipline.

We know that children's capacity for self-regulation has diminished. A recent study replicated a study of self-regulation first done in the late 1940s, in which psychological researchers asked kids ages 3, 5 and 7 to do a number of exercises. One of those exercises included standing perfectly still without moving. The 3-year-olds couldn't stand still at all, the 5-year-olds could do it for about three minutes, and the 7-year-olds could stand pretty much as long as the researchers asked. In 2001, researchers repeated this experiment. But, psychologist Elena Bodrova at Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning says, the results were very different.

"Today's 5-year-olds were acting at the level of 3-year-olds 60 years ago, and today's 7-year-olds were barely approaching the level of a 5-year-old 60 years ago," Bodrova explains. "So the results were very sad."

Sad because self-regulation is incredibly important. Poor executive function is associated with high dropout rates, drug use and crime. In fact, good executive function is a better predictor of success in school than a child's IQ. Children who are able to manage their feelings and pay attention are better able to learn. As executive function researcher Laura Berk explains, "Self-regulation predicts effective development in virtually every domain."

According to Berk, one reason make-believe is such a powerful tool for building self-discipline is because during make-believe, children engage in what's called private speech: They talk to themselves about what they are going to do and how they are going to do it.

"In fact, if we compare preschoolers' activities and the amount of private speech that occurs across them, we find that this self-regulating language is highest during make-believe play," Berk says. "And this type of self-regulating language... has been shown in many studies to be predictive of executive functions."

And it's not just children who use private speech to control themselves. If we look at adult use of private speech, Berk says, "we're often using it to surmount obstacles, to master cognitive and social skills, and to manage our emotions."

Unfortunately, the more structured the play, the more children's private speech declines. Essentially, because children's play is so focused on lessons, leagues, and technological toys, and because kids' toys increasingly inhibit imaginative play, kids aren't getting a chance to practice policing themselves. When they have that opportunity, says Berk, the results are clear: Self-regulation improves.

"One index that researchers, including myself, have used... is the extent to which a child, for example, cleans up independently after a free-choice period in preschool," Berk says. "We find that children who are most effective at complex make-believe play take on that responsibility with... greater willingness, and even will assist others in doing so without teacher prompting."

Despite the evidence of the benefits of imaginative play, however, even in the context of preschool young children's play is in decline. According to Yale psychological researcher Dorothy Singer, teachers and school administrators just don't see the value.

"Because of the testing, and the emphasis now that you have to really pass these tests, teachers are starting earlier and earlier to drill the kids in their basic fundamentals. Play is viewed as unnecessary, a waste of time," Singer says. "I have so many articles that have documented the shortening of free play for children, where the teachers in these schools are using the time for cognitive skills."

It seems that in the rush to give children every advantage — to protect them, to stimulate them, to enrich them — our culture has unwittingly compromised one of the activities that helped children most. All that wasted time was not such a waste after all. *(from www.npr.org)*

President's Corner

From Suzi Glaubit

I'll let you in on a little secret. I can't sing, I can't dance, I can't act, and I don't play any musical instruments. I took a shot at the violin when I was in the fourth grade, but it became pretty clear that I was not bound for first-chair at the symphony. And one month at the local dance studio was enough for the entire family to figure out that the tuition money was best spent elsewhere.

But even though I was not gifted in the performing arts, I did have plenty of moments in the spotlight - as a participant in my elementary school's student talent night. My rendition of "Good Ship Lollipop" may have sounded off key to most and I may have been slightly off-step in the group dance to "Car Wash," but I look back on those performances with a smile and laugh. It's a shame that the video cameras of the day were too cumbersome (and expensive) to lug around, because I think there are people who would pay to see me singing and dancing my heart out!

My daughter and her friends have been hard at work on the dance they will perform at this year's Cabaret. For the first time, I have been one of the parents sitting in the back of the MPR during auditions and rehearsals. I am amazed at the gusto with which our Tam Valley students deliver their performance of choice and the poise and confidence shown by even the youngest of performers. I am awed by the dedication of our Cabaret Chair Ally Stoops and our Technical Director Greg Everage, who are working diligently to produce a show that will be both entertaining and heart-warming. And I am thrilled that today's video cameras fit in my purse!

Break a leg!

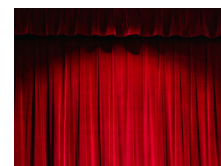
Suzi Glaubit

PTA President

News from Tam Valley School

CABARET PERFORMANCES THIS FRIDAY AND SATURDAY

This year's Cabaret performances are this Friday and Saturday nights. On Friday starting at 7PM, the Kindergarten, 1st, 3rd and 5th grades will perform. Saturday's performance will start at 6PM and includes the 2nd, 4th, and 5th grades. Both nights will include the always-anticipated 5th grade finale. We look forward to seeing everyone there!



LUNCH PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

The Hot Lunch Program needs volunteers on Mondays. The commitment is 2x a month from 11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. If interested, please contact Julie Cohen (juliecohen@att.net) or Marisol Gravelle-Bush (marisolgb@yahoo.com).

SECOND GRADE PLAY IS COMING

Always an evening to remember, this year's 2nd grade play, "Project Rescue...Save the Planet", will be presented on Thursday, April 1st at 7PM in the MPR. Mark your calendar!

SITE COUNCIL MEETING REVIEW

For those of you who aren't familiar with the Site Council, this group of engaged parents, teachers and the principal is tasked to ensure each school is engaged in identifying and implementing curriculum and instructional practices that result in strengthening the core academic program and ensuring students have access to and success in the program.

The Site Council's last meeting on February 1 generated a lively discussion about a number of important topics, including feedback about the new Mill Valley progress reports and a report out from the "Discovery Forum 2010" featuring Steve Wozniak.

We also briefly touched on age-appropriate community service projects to suggest to parents, something that we'll take a closer look at when the Site Council next meets on March 15.

Our discussion about the new progress reports included some great insights noting the benefits of moving to more detailed reports. But we also talked about the necessity to make the reports part of a larger conversation that parents have with their child's teacher, since the reports themselves aren't designed to tell the whole story.

You should know that the door is open for a broad range of potential topics to discuss as they pertain to our community at Tam Valley School – and we invite your input if you think there's something that should be on the school's radar! As noted, the Site Council next meets on March 15. Please contact a council parent if there's a topic you believe deserves some attention. This year's members are: Jackie Broad, Becky Dolan, Wendy Johnson, Loren Quaglieri, Isae Wada, Maureen Behrs, Mary Dale, Karen O'Toole, Ashley Scatena and Gail van Adelsberg.

– Isae Wada

TRAFFIC DUTY THANKS



For the week of Feb 1, from Ms. Cover/Kellman's class: Jon Geller, Nancy Conger, Peggy Kwun, Wendy Johnson, and Lise Jordan.

BIRTHDAY BOOK CLUB

The Tam Valley Library and PTA would like to thank the following March Birthday students and their families for joining the Birthday Book Club and contributing to the library's collection:

Lia Pletcher, Jack Wynne, Talia Smith, Jake Franco, Jason Love, Lilin Smith, Alyssa Broad, Luca Pelo, Claire Finch, Kate Miekley, Jacques Martin, Alexia Petraitis, Quinn Boyle, Sara Iisaka, Kelly Koenig, Charity Jeter, Michael Traverso, Quinn Maynard, Lance Sell, Charlotte Ash, Hugo Slothower, Sydney Ridge, Matthew Rodriguez, Connor Finch, Valentini Muench Mavridoglou, Emmanuelle Pardoe, James Rooke, Joe Lubenow, Ethan Millard, Henry Collins, Alison Schwartz, Alexander Dubowitz, Jessica Herdman, Phoebe Merriman, Oliver Neeley, Andrew Kerner, Mia Masturzo, Ian McCormac, and Devon Murphy.



News from It Takes A Village, Special Education PTA

NEXT SPEAKER EVENT: DR. DEVORA DEPPER – THE SOCIOEMOTIONAL IMPACT OF LEARNING DIFFERENCES

Thurs, March 4, 2010, 6:30-8:00 pm, Park School Auditorium (changed from Mill Valley Middle School)



Devora S. Depper Ph.D. is an Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychology in the Department of Psychiatry, UCSF. For over 30 years she has maintained a private practice in San Francisco focusing on providing assessment and treatment for children and adolescents, and their families.

UPCOMING SPEAKER EVENT

Thurs, April 8th, 6:30-8:00 pm, Mill Valley Middle School Gym, 411 Sycamore

Transitions from Pre-K to Kindergarten, 5th to 6th (Middle School) and 8th to High School featuring Karen Mates, Teri McGlaughlin, Terry Sullivan, Barbara O'Toole, Barbara Musser

NEXT PARENT COFFEE

Fri, March 12th, 9:00-11:00 am, 186 Corte Madera Ave, Mill Valley

Parents of children with learning differences face many challenges. Our coffees provide a chance for parents to share information and support each other. Please join us. If you have questions, please contact Tam Valley School parent, Erica Kelly (381-8866).

FAMILY EVENTS: FAMILY WALK/NATURE SCAVENGER HUNT

Sun, Mar 21st, 9:00 am, Tennessee Valley Trail, Mill Valley

Meet in the parking lot at the end of Tennessee Valley Road. And join us on a nature scavenger hunt.

WEBSITE

Please check our website out to learn how we can help you and your child. It's at itavmv.org. Information about our speaker events (including speaker notes and handouts), parent coffees is posted.

SPEAKER NOTES AND HANDOUTS

Many parents have asked for notes from our speaker events. They are available on our website, itavmv.org

News from the Community

SIGN UP FOR CAMP

Sign Up For Camp (<http://www.signupforcamp.com>) is a new website designed by local parents to make it easier to plan children's summer camps. Parents can search for camps by age, location, dates and activities. There are over 400 SF Bay Area camps for all grades as well as overnight camps. Camps can be saved to a summer calendar and shared with friends. Create a free account to be notified by email of early registration discounts and other timely information.

DISCUSSION ON PARENT CONCERNS

On April 7th, there will be a panel discussion at the Middle School entitled "When Should I Worry?" addressing parents' concerns about their kids' academic, social, and emotional challenges.

NEWS FROM THE MILL VALLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY – MARCH 2010

March Book Madness: We have many brand new award-winning books (*When You Reach Me*, *The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate*, *The Mostly True Adventures of Homer P. Figg*) as well as titles by all your favorite authors (Roald Dahl, J.K. Rowling, Mo Willems, Rick Riordan, and more). If you're not sure what you want to read, talk to the friendly librarian and get matched up with a perfect book. See the latest titles on our website under **100% Hand-Picked**.

Picture Books & More: 5 Years of Fun! Thanks to teachers, parents, and enthusiastic 1st and 2nd graders for making this after-school literacy program a success year after year. Our latest session, **Spaceships, Wings, and Other Flying Things** will feature 4 weeks of high-flying fun in March and April. Registration begins on March 1.

Coming Soon: Spring Break Film Festival (April 12 – 16) and Earth Day Science Story Time on April 22. Watch for details at the Library, on the Library's website, and in this newsletter. For information on all of our programs and services, including HelpNow online tutoring, Personalized Reading Program, and My First Library Card, please visit our website at <http://millvalleylibrary.org> or call 415-389-4292 x106.

MVMS PRESENTS FIDDLER ON THE ROOF

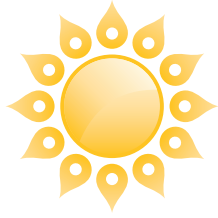
Tickets are now on sale for the Mill Valley Middle School's production of **Fiddler On The Roof!** Ticket price is \$16, and the performance is at the Showcase Theatre in San Rafael (by the Civic Center). Performance dates are:

- Thursday, 3/25- 7:30pm curtain
- Friday, 3/26- 8:00pm curtain
- Saturday, 3/27, matinee- 1:00pm curtain
- Saturday, 3/27- 8:00pm curtain

To place your order, contact Liz Bayer to get an order form at (415) 383-3111 or email her at LizForLoans@gmail.com

TAM VALLEY PTA NEWSLETTER POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

- The newsletter is normally published by the Tam Valley PTA on the first Wednesday of each month.
- Articles submitted late will be included at the discretion of the editor. TV PTA reserves the right to edit all submissions
- Submit articles by email (preferably unformatted in Word attachment) to editor Chris Reid at tvsnewsletter@verustechnology.com; include your name and phone number with all submissions.
- No commercial, sectarian or partisan ads or attachments or material critical of any individual or group are allowed.
- No advertising is permissible. Notices of sign-ups for sport, scouting or other similar kid-related events are allowed.
- No copyrighted material will be printed without author's consent.
- All content is reviewed by PTA President Suzi Glaubitz (cadleglaub@hotmail.com) and Principal Gail van Adelsberg (gvanadelsberg@mvschools.org).
- Community news is published as a service as space permits. Tam Valley Elementary School and the Tam Valley PTA do not endorse the organizations or the content of pieces published in this publication.
- Tam Valley Elementary School * 350 Bell Lane, MV CA 94941 * 415.389.7731



Sign Up For Camp

Making summer planning easy

What are your kids doing this summer?

Find the perfect camps for your kids – the best activities, the right dates, the perfect location.

Schedule camps on our convenient camp calendar.

Coordinate your calendar with friends and view their kids’ schedules on your calendar.

Free ☀️ Easy ☀️ Dare we say fun?

We have all types of camps — from pre-schoolers to teenagers, day camp or overnight, academics to sports.

Summer will be here before you know it.

June						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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27	28	29	30			

July						
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

August						
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

QUESTIONS?

Email info@signupforcamp.com, call **(415) 504-CAMP (2267)**

or visit us today at

www.signupforcamp.com