



THE OLD MILL CREEK

www.oldmillschool.org
2007-2008 Issue No. 6

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February 13, 2008

SCIENCE FAIR 2008

The Old Mill Scientists were out in force this year with 72 students participating. Chemistry, physics, biology – you name it, it was there. Thanks to David Weinfeld, Elana Maggal and the other adult volunteers who helped make this happens. And congratulations to all of the participants!



Calendar

- Monday, February 18-
Friday, February 22**
Mid-Winter Recess-No School
- Monday, February 25**
Site Council Meeting
3:00 pm OMS Library
- Friday, February 29**
Red Panda Acrobats
Assembly 9:00 a.m.
- Tuesday, March 4**
4th Grade Star Writing Test
- Friday, March 7**
PTA Exec. & General Meeting
8:45 a.m./9:00 a.m. Old Mill
Author Assembly
Anne Carla Rovetta
- Wednesday, March 12**
School Board Meeting
7:00 p.m. District Office
- Friday, March 14**
Author Assembly
Denys Cazet
- Friday, March 21**
Author Assembly
Jim LaMarche
- Monday, March 24**
Staff Development Day
No School
- Wednesday, March 26**
School Board Meeting
7:00 p.m. MV Middle School
Old Mill Hobby Night
7:00-8:00 p.m.
- Friday, March 28**
Author Assembly
Ellen Klages

GOLDEN SNEAKER AWARD

Every Wednesday is Walk to School Day. Ingrid Tolson and Molly de Vries will be in the school courtyard stamping hands and serving orange juice to participants. Teachers will keep track of the number of participants each week and totals by grade will be posted. Let's get out and walk/roll!

DROP DON'T STOP SCHEDULE

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Week of February 25—Room 6 | Week of March 3—Room 5 |
| Week of March 10—Room 4 | Week of March 17—Room 3 |
| Week of March 25—Room 2 | Week of March 31—Room 1 |
| Week of April 14—Room 14 | Week of April 15—Room 15 |
| Week of April 28—Room 12 | Week of May 5—Room 11 |



PTA EXPRESS

By Jan Hudson
and Leanne Hansen



Rain or snow with a touch of sunshine, perfect ingredients for an incredible winter break! We're six weeks into the New Year and it's unbelievable what all we have accomplished!

Thank you for your delicious salads, entrees and desserts that you brought to our **Teacher Appreciation Lunch** last month. Jaime Lunder, Merilee Bordin and several other parents magically transformed the multi-purpose room into a cheerful dining room with daffodils surrounding it. Please mark your calendar today for our last **Teacher/Volunteer Appreciation Lunch on Wednesday, May 7th 12-1**. In addition to showing our appreciation for our fantastic faculty and staff at this lunch, we also will be expressing our gratitude to all of you, our outstanding parent volunteers.

Parents were challenged with math activities ranging from Numbells to Math Jeopardy at our **Math Parent Education**. Thank you Mrs. Shearer and Mrs. Tanguay for allowing us to manipulate these wonderful materials. We are fortunate to have such devoted teachers who willingly share their free evenings with us. These activities give one a whole new appreciation for our teachers' skills as they help our kids truly understand this stuff!

Our **second semester lunch program** is off to a terrific start! Your support of this program is instrumental to our wonderful assemblies, supplies, and programs that we provide the teachers and children with each day. Thanks to Heidi Whalen and Ali Duerr for their endless energy planning balanced meals and to the Lunch Coordinators who distribute and serve the lunches each day. If you are interested in volunteering with the lunch program next year, please contact Heidi Whalen (heidi.whalen@sbcglobal.net).

Our beautiful **mural** has truly sprung to life over the past few weeks! The spirit of the creek, which is an integral part of our 3rd grade curriculum, is captured in this amazing piece of art. It was great seeing many of you last month seizing the chance to place a tile on the mosaic. Thank you again to Dawn Dobras, Josef Norris with KidServe, and the third grade teachers and students. This masterpiece was a delight to unveil!

Science Night bubbled with excitement last week thanks to David Weinfeld, Elana Maggal, and their team of parent volunteers. The curiosity of the young scientists is astounding. Volcanoes, crystals, and more made for an educational, fun evening for all.

With Valentine's in the Air, we couldn't help but have a "hot" topic this month at our **PTA meeting!** Steve Gardner gave us a humorous, informative presentation on speaking with our children about sex. At next month's PTA meeting on **Friday, March 7**, our incredible chair of **Author's Month**, Lisa Carmel, will be joining us to talk about the four fantastic authors we have scheduled for the author assemblies in March. The authors or illustrators will interact with the children about their process of writing or illustrating a book. Visit www.oldmillschool.org for more information. Remember to turn in your book order form so you can receive an autographed copy of some of your favorite books.

We are delighted to announce that our **new playground** will be installed during winter break next week assuming our order for good weather is granted. The children will have a chance to watch part of the construction the week we return while the work is being completed. Thank you again to each of the families who generously contributed! We're looking forward to inviting you to *Come Out and Play* in March!

We wish you a **Happy Valentine's Day** and a wonderfully relaxing winter break! Be sure to join us at the coffee cart on Wednesday mornings – it's a great way to start the day!

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GRIST

By Jane McDonough



Did February sneak up on you as it did for me? It still doesn't seem possible that we are in the second half of the academic year, nevertheless, spring is fast approaching.

We have two newcomers to welcome on staff, both named Monica, whom you may not have had a chance to identify. Monica Oldmen and Monica Tasso both serve as Instructional Assistants covering a variety of classrooms and roles. Mrs. Oldmen works with students and teachers and relieves Lynn Frazier in the office for her lunch break. Mrs. Tasso serves multiple classrooms and is an active yard duty supervisor at lunch time each day. We are glad to have these positive and energetic additions to our staff!

Nitpicking is surely not why you went to college, but remains a vital task for all of us. We have been sending out notices and lots of information to families in those affected classrooms, but our best defense is the constant vigilance of parents who check for nits with regularity. They are visible to the naked eye, though quite small, but are unmistakable in their ability to adhere to the shaft of the hair, and they can often be found located close to the scalp at the back of the neck and over the ears. Picking out every nit is the only way to really get rid of these critters. Hang in there with us please, and check your child's head every day. Once we have four complete weeks with no cases we can go back to regular monthly checks. THANKS to Victoria Talkington, head (ahem) coordinator, and the volunteer parents who have given up so many hours to help us stay lice free.

And to loftier topics, although still connected to children's heads, as I mentioned last month, we all participated in the Professional Learning Communities all day conference with Rick and Becky DuFour on January 28th. It was astonishing to see all 2000 or so Marin K-12 educators in one place at one time. Our Old Mill team was energized and affirmed by the work of that day, ask your teacher about it; we learn so much when we get these opportunities.

Speaking of learning, on February 7 and 8, I attended a conference on Learning and the Brain in San Francisco. This field is of course an area of interest for those of us who spend our time trying to figure out what is going on in those wonderful brains, and how we can make it easier, faster, smoother, or less short-lived when attempting to expand and develop this amazing organ. Research is coming in fast and furious, and I believe that, armed with new information, the next generation of educators may reshape the face of schooling as we know it. I will try to give you some snapshots of the high points from the conference in next month's Grist. Some of you may remember an article by researcher Carol Dweck which was widely circulated and quoted in which the recognition of the ongoing capacity of the brain to learn was related to the way kids conceive of their own learning. Many students- particularly very bright ones- often think that their brains- their capacity for learning- are fixed rather than malleable. Dweck refutes that notion. Below an excerpt from an interview with Dweck on this topic:

Education World: Some students are mastery-oriented; they readily seek challenges and pour effort into them. Others are not. Have you been able to pinpoint in your research any direct associations between students' abilities or intelligence and the development of mastery-oriented qualities?

Carol Dweck: This is a really interesting question, and the answer is surprising. There is no relation between students' abilities or intelligence and the development of mastery-oriented qualities. Some of the very brightest students avoid challenges, dislike effort, and wilt in the face of difficulty. And some of the less bright students are real go-getters, thriving on challenge, persisting intensely when things get difficult, and accomplishing more than you expected. This is something that really intrigued me from the beginning. It shows that being mastery-oriented is about having the right mind-set. It is not about how smart you are. However, having the mastery-oriented mind-set will help students become more able over time.

Students who are mastery-oriented think about learning, not about proving how smart they are. When they experience a setback, they focus on effort and strategies instead of worrying that they are incompetent. This leads directly to what teachers can do to help students become more mastery-oriented: Teachers (and parents) should focus on students' efforts and not on their abilities. When students succeed, teachers should praise their efforts or their strategies, not their intelligence. (Contrary to popular opinion, praising intelligence backfires by making students overly concerned with how smart they are and overly vulnerable to failure.)

I continue to be astonished by the Mural which had its formal unveiling this month. Thanks to everyone for that learning experience. It will continue to be a learning tool, teaching about the elements of the watershed, for years to come.

Author Month - March 2008

Our PTA-sponsored March Author Speaker Series is right around the corner. We have four exciting author/illustrators coming to Old Mill. We will be offering their authored and illustrated works for advance sale with the help of Book Passage in Corte Madera. Books can be pre-ordered now (order forms were sent home early February) and books will be delivered to the children the day of the specific speaker engagement. Book orders are due back to the school office by Wednesday, February 13th. Book Passage donates 5% of all book sales to Old Mill School as part of their school link program. Books will be autographed on the days of the speaker engagements. This year's wonderful speakers include:

March 7th: Anne Carla Rovetta is a naturalist, education specialist and oral historian/ storyteller. For over 30 years, Anne Carla has been combining science, art and folklore to enchant students of all grade levels. She has illustrated many Marin books on natural history such as Exploring the Pacific Coast Tide Pools by V. Brown, The Natural History of the Pacific Grey Whale by J. Klobas and more. You'll also find her giving guided tours at Point Reyes or at exhibitions of her artwork. She will conduct multiple sessions at Old Mill, speaking to each grade level on topics targeted to their curriculum, such as Miwok legends and the biological life cycles of different animal and plant species.

March 14th: Denys Cazet is the author and illustrator of more than 25 picture books for children, including the much-loved Minnie and Moo early chapter books such as Minnie and Moo Go to the Moon, Minnie and Moo Save the Earth, and Minnie and Moo Wanted Dead or Alive. As part of our annual tradition, Denys will illustrate a story to be written collectively by the first-grade students.

March 21st: Jim LaMarche is a gifted writer and illustrator of beautiful books which convey strong environmental themes and a love of nature, most notably The Raft and Up. He will speak to all grades, demonstrating how he skillfully extracts life experiences and develops an engaging personal narrative in his stories.

March 28th: Ellen Klages is the San Francisco-based author of The Green Glass Sea - winner of the 2007 Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction. Ellen's chapter book is set in Los Alamos in 1943, where a young 11 year-old misfit girl tries to adjust to the move and her father is working on a secret mission, the Manhattan Project. Ellen will speak to 4th and 5th graders about this event in US history, the characters and their development and the writing process.

Come Out and Play Update

It was truly overwhelming to be the person to look into the donation envelope each day and pull out a stack of very generous donations for our playground project. Nothing speaks more clearly about the commitment our school community makes every day to our children than the kind gifts of time and money for projects like this one. We are happy to report that in one short month we have raised enough money to install our new playground in February. The installation will take about two weeks, weather permitting, and we will begin with the demolition and clean up over winter break with the installation to follow during the first week back at school after the break.

A big thank you to Sam Stuart for her participation in all aspects of the playground project and to Laura Diecks and Chris Hill for their help with communications. To all those who attended meetings and shared ideas, we could not do it without you. A special thanks to the **Hagar Family** for virtually matching the donations we received from all families and to the following families for their generous donations:

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Woodward Family | Kessell Family | Chemers Family | Blau Family | Bolte/Frederick Family |
| Hill Family | Lunder Family | Taft Family | Barnett Family | Briggs/Colloms Family |
| Holcomb Family | Hofele Family | Talkington Family | Hackett Family | Tang/McQuaid Family |
| Weinswig Family | Hansen Family | Hudson Family | Schottenfeld Family | de Saint Phalle Family |
| Goldman Family | Timberlake Family | Meezan Family | Burton/Wehr Family | Kearney/Young Family |
| Campfield Family | Capretta Family | Einhorn Family | Chen/Frankel Family | Pearce/Cramer Family |
| Lyman Family | Moses Family | Puckett Family | Sternfels Family | Watts/Baranow Family |
| Preger Family | Schulze Family | Rosen Family | Houha Family | |
| Stuart Family | Owen Family | Julia Althoff | Parker/Griffin Family | |
| John Craik | Bordin Family | Leane Family | Canavan/Eng Family | |
| Veghte Family | Connelly Family | Mercy Family | Gassman/Kerwin Family | |
| Tolson Family | Whalen Family | Stervinou Family | Goeking/Miyamoto Family | |
| McNeil Family | Belza Family | Agosta Family | Sperling/Schottstaedt Family | |
| Feng/Wall Family | Ferm Family | Satake Family | Swergold/Dobras Family | |
| Shirley Family | Nieker Family | Diecks Family | Berman/Grimberg Family | |
| Ken Miller | Wenig Family | Syben Family | Weinfield/Maggal Family | |

A Word from Kiddo! . . . Thanks to the members of the Old Mill School Community who donated to Kiddo! This list of donors will be printed in Kiddo!'s spring newsletter – if your name is missing, please contact Kiddo! as soon as possible at 389-7789 so we can make the correction for the newsletter.

John and Suzanne Agosta
 Greg and Christy Allen
 Gus and Margaret Arnold
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 Kenneth and Suzanne Austin
 Steve Baker and Claudia Cowan
 Gerry and Marit Bakken-Hansen
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 Robert & Natascha Weir
 Bill and Heidi Whalen
 Anthony and Kirsty Williams
 Stevens Williams and Sherri Yoshizu
 Vic and Nikki Wood
 Tim and Maggie Woodward

A PICTURE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY!

The Yearbook Committee is still trying to recruit a volunteer from each classroom to help collect and organize photos! This is your chance to get your child in pictures and be a part of our fun group!! If you are interested, please contact Chris Hill (chris@mackiemack.com) or Tori Herzog (herzog@earthlink.net) Last opportunity to get that favorite smile published!!! Friday February 29th is the last day to hand in photos to the yearbook committee!!! Please hand in copies of your photographs to the yearbook box in the office (with the room number on the back). Thanks for helping to make the Yearbook more fun!

WHATCHA' DOING?

It's hard to believe that we are already gearing up for next year. Now that you are familiar with the many wonderful activities we have at Old Mill, we hope you will get more involved with the PTA! If there are any particular events or activities that you are interested in, please contact the current event chair or Leanne Hansen, Deborah Goldman or Jan Hudson. You can also catch us Wednesday mornings at the coffee cart!



It Takes a Village – visit us online at <http://www.itavmv.org>

Thanks to the dedication of our board, It Takes a Village has launched its own website. Please check it out to learn how we can help you and your child. Information about our speaker events (including speaker notes and handouts), parent coffees, and playgroups is posted.

Parent Coffee—Wednesday, February 13th from 9:00-11:00, 133 Locust Ave.

Parents of children with learning differences face many challenges. These coffees provide a chance for parents to share information and support each other. Please join us. If you have questions, please contact Andrea Brandeis (abrandeis@aol.com, 383-9800).

Speaker Event—March 6th from 6:30-8:00 pm, District Office, 411 Sycamore

Dr. Claudia Trinklein-Engman, one of the District's counselors, will speak about the social and emotional challenges children with learning differences face and how parents can help. Stay tuned for more details.

SPEAKER NOTES – Many parents have asked for notes from our speaker events. Notes of the following events are now available for (1) September 27th Dan Phillips (technology that can help your child read and write); (2) October 16th Pauline Nacamuli, Erin Conklin, and Sarah Stoelting (reading strategies); (3) November 1st Dr. Virginia Bassi, Janet Miller (support for families/siblings of children with learning differences); (4) January 17th Stephanie Madrigal (social thinking); and (5) February 7th Karen Seekamp (organizational strategies).

Please contact your school representative, Deborah Goldman (dmfreed@aol.com, 383-2091) or Andrea Brandeis (abrandeis@aol.com, 383-9800), to get speaker notes or with any questions or comments you may have.

The Art of Nit-Pickin'

January and February always are buggy months and this year has been no exception. Sniffles, fevers, stomachaches, and sore throats are par for the course. In order to keep teachers and other students healthy please be sure your children are fever free for 24 hours before returning to school, or have not thrown up for 24 hours, or are not coughing incessantly. Fortunately our children love school and often beg to go to school even when they aren't feeling well. Please use your best discretion. Check www.oldmillschool.org for additional information to help you with this difficult decision.

We sincerely appreciate all of our parent volunteers, parents and teachers who have diligently helped with head checks and helped battle nits last month. The more frequently you check your own child's head at home, the more quickly these critters will be eradicated. Before returning to school after winter break, we encourage you to thoroughly check your child. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your child's physician. There are also several websites that provide information, pictures are in the binder in the office, and private salons may offer help. Remember if your child has had lice, please check in with Mrs. Frazier before returning to the classroom. Thank you for your help keeping our kids and teachers healthy!

Old Mill Creek Deadlines

Please submit any Creek articles by email to dale.rice@hellerehrman.com by the deadlines below (no pdf files please):

| <u>Deadline</u> | <u>Published</u> |
|-----------------|------------------|
| March 2, 2008 | March 12, 2008 |
| March 23, 2008 | April 2, 2008 |
| May 4, 2008 | May 14, 2008 |
| May 25, 2008 | June 4, 2008 |

Dale Rice, Editor

Don't forget that the Old Mill Creek is always looking for fun photographs. It's the best way to make sure you see your child in print! To submit photos for the Creek, send jpg files to the editor.