

breakfast, the groups hiked to the Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park where they saw a replica of Sutter's mill and learned about James Marshall discovering gold. At the park there were exhibits depicting the various types of gold mining used throughout California and their effect on the local populations and environment. A three-mile roundtrip hike to the top of a nearby mountain ridge included vistas of the Coloma valley and gave each student the opportunity to do a solo hike on a safe section trail with adults at the beginning, middle and end of their walk. That evening around the campfire they learned about Native Americans from a visit by Shining Star, a local Nisenan Indian.

On the last day, as they returned from 1849 to 2004, there were sessions on ecology and chances to reflect on what

each experienced during the stay at Coloma. Later that day, the children arrived back at Slater School, some looking forward to a nice shower, some holding their heads a little higher with a new sense of independence, many excited about what they had experienced on the trip. While panning for gold was arguably the highlight for many of the children, Julian said that he was particularly interested in the Native American stories he heard from Shining Star. He told me that the stories use a lot of "symbolics" such as animals to express the meaning or moral of the story.

The Fourth Grade teachers Bonnie Malouf and Linda Carrillo and all of the parent chaperones who accompanied the children to Coloma deserve our hearty thanks. Opportunities like this field trip are only possible through their hard work and dedication.

PACT Student Work

This area is reserved for the work of the children in PACT. If your child has work they would like to contribute, please let Trish Morgan know (trish.morgan@comcast.net or 650-964-6820)

The PACT Newsletter is published four times each school year. Questions, comments and suggestions for future editions should be directed to Trish Morgan (trish.morgan@comcast.net).

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Garden

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warding at the same time. In appreciation of our participation, Slater will be mentioned in the activity guide and will receive a copy of the book when published.

A warm day thank you to Helen Choy for all her hard work collecting and correlating curriculum binders for all the age/grade levels. She has also put together a wonderful reference library for parents teaching children in the garden.

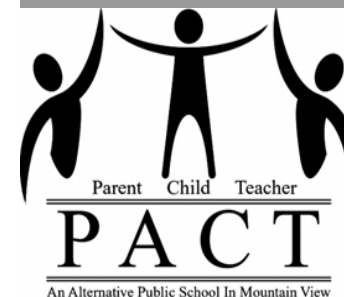
The team of gardeners this year is awesome. Thank you to Colleen Peterson, Kym Wenneberg, Leslie Khalilian, Carmen Bryant, Helen Choy, Kathy Welsh, Scott Haber, Elizabeth Gioumbusis, Keith Wilson and LeeAnn Wilson for their efforts to prepare the garden for the children at the workday.

Helen has plans to continue the Luncheon Garden. Look for the flag posted at the garden during lunchtime. All of the school is welcome to come and share the garden with Helen.

The rigid tree begins as a pliant sapling. A huge building begins as a shovelful of dirt. A thousand-mile journey begins under your feet. We are all doing good works by being with children.

Volume 9, Issue 1

October 2004



PACT NEWSLETTER
Committee, Classroom & Community News

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PACT Survey Update

Judy Levy

Last Spring we conducted our first PACT parent opinion survey. We identified four main issues and formed ad-hoc Action Groups to address them. Here's a quick update on the progress so far (Action Group leaders in parenthesis).

Increasing differentiation and integration in the curriculum: The Garden Committee has done great work. Helen Choy has led the effort to put together a whole binder of garden-related curricula for every grade level. Two of their newest projects include a sundial and compost bins. These projects nicely incorporate math and science into the garden curriculum. For instance, kids make computations to derive the 'time' as shown on the sundial and see how the sundial illustrates seasonal differences and solar movement. They're also making some new compost bins. The new bins must be of a sufficient size and shape to produce adequate heat (e.g., 3 feet by 3 feet). However, the kids must reconfigure them to make them slightly smaller to accommodate the available space.



Garden Committee

LeeAnn Wilson

There are many wonderful adventures in the Garden. Some have been evolving over the summer and others are just beginning to grow.

Scott Haber saw a vital need for the garden to be able to sustain itself over a hot summer with a drip watering system. Scott's efforts in June really made a difference this fall when the new school year began and the garden was thriving. During the first workday we discovered strawberries and tomato plants still producing and several different herbs ripe for the kitchen.

During the summer another energetic worker was active on a project that gives the garden depth and creates an opportu-

Parents are also working on finding interesting ways to integrate math (particularly measurement and geometry) throughout the curriculum. For instance, look for activities celebrating Pi Day as we get closer to March 14 (Gloria Higgins).

Communication: One improvement is the number of PACT newsletter issues which have increased from 4 to 6 a year (Elaine Spence).

Parent Education: Night meetings (general and classroom) are continuing to focus on parent ed – with particular attention given to age and developmental differences.

Parent Accountability: Teachers are working to ensure all parents are contributing to the classroom (Baird Nuckolls).

There's still much to do and we need your help. If you'd like to help (e.g., find math enrichments or offer suggestions on how to improve communication), contact the Action Group leader, Judy Levy or Dr. Smith.

nity to teach realistic time with an innovative approach. Jeanne Desai is creating a Sun Dial Garden for all the children and parents to use to discover the intimate balance plants share with the rhythm of the days. Like all gardens this will grow and open itself to the changing days and weeks ahead. This is a gift for all of us to share.

Carmen Bryant and LeeAnn Wilson were given the opportunity to field test math curriculum for the UC Botanical Gardens at UC Berkeley. They have been using some of the lesson plans and have found it to be challenging and re-

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Room 2

Rachel Alvelais

School has started with a bang in Bonnie Laster's Room 2. The students have settled into the class routine, and learning is at high levels already. Work is organized in journals, such as the Math and Science Journals, and the Interactive Writing Journal.

This last is a method to encourage students' writing and conceptualizing skills. Students draw a picture then write about it. More experienced writers are required to complete two sentences at this point, while others are focusing on the beginning of spelling and phonics, learning to write the words that describe what is in their picture. Bonnie and her team of parents works with each student in turn, using underwriting to reinforce their successes and show them where they can make further progress.

Two students picked at random report favorably on Interactive Writing Journals. "Writing Journals are my favorite part," according to Gabby A., and her sister Teresa adds "I like making pictures and telling stories about them."

Room 3

First off, Mrs. Lampkin would like to express what enthusiastic children she has in her class: "They're all wonderful kids." And they've been busy! For math, the children have been classifying, sorting, measuring and counting many types of materials. In sorting tiles, the first graders came up with many attributes by which to classify-length, color, shape, texture, to name but a few. They've also been learning about measuring by using unit blocks-

Room 6

Mrs. Jensen's class is off to a wonderful start this year. Our first field trip was to Deer Hollow Farm. We had a great morning using our senses to learn about the animals and garden. We got to touch a newly laid egg, pet a goat, and soften our hands in the lanolin of a sheep. Children recalled their observations by making animals and plants to fit a variety of locations in a barnyard collage. The collage facilitated the kids writing about their experience.

Journaling is off to a terrific start. The kinders have been introduced to the concept of kid-writing and have enthusiastically jumped in. The pictures and words are flowing. The first graders



Jean Moranda-Torres

combining their 1:1 correspondence counting skills with predicting lengths and widths of objects.

For Literacy, the children have been making many books and then reading them to parents and friends. The children have also been taking off with their Kidwriting, writing a variety of words, notes and stories.

Finally, the children have already enjoyed their first field trip to Deer Hol-

low Farm, where they explored and learned about the wonderful plants in their garden and around the trails, as well as the cow, rabbits, ducks, hens, quail, pigs, lambs, etc. that call Deer Hollow and Rancho San Antonio home. Next up? Bob's Pumpkin Patch in Half-Moon Bay.

are learning how to use action words and add more details to their writing in addition to figuring out where capitals and periods belong.

Balls are bouncing and rolling as we progress through a science unit on balls and ramps. Children have observed that bigger doesn't mean heavier, balls roll faster on steeper ramps, and some balls are much bouncier than others.

Math and reasoning skills are being sharpened as RD, Brij's dad, plays Parcheesi, Chess, and Mancala with the kids. Additionally, the kids get to practice their social skills.

We are excited to have three hermit crabs as our pets this year. Though mostly nocturnal, they make daytime appearances in circle and demonstrate their unique walking style.

Jean Moranda-Torres

Thanks to all parent volunteers for supporting wonderful learning experiences, chaperoning on field trips, and helping out at recess and lunch.

Room 7

Grace Lee Kok

A lair of dragons! That is what Room 7 has become. On entering the room, one cannot help but notice the 21 artfully painted dragons hanging from the ceiling. Some spewing fire, others glittery, spotted or striped. These frightful creatures, crafted by the children with the help of a group of dedicated parents, are to them the embodiment of those depicted in the books the class have been reading together. The theme on dragons will eventually culminate with the class production of a play adapted from the book 'How to Train a Dragon'.

Science in Room 7 also captures the children's interests with the study of 'Systems in the Sky'. Learning about our Solar System, its planets and their moons, and, recording the phases of the moon each night are but some of the activities currently engaging them.

To tie all of their learning together, the children have each started on the first of six quilt squares which should be completed and sewn into a whole quilt by the end of the school year. The theme for this first square is 'My Family'. This keeps the little fingers very busy indeed..... cutting, sewing, drawing and embroidering during their every free moment.

This wonderful start must surely herald an exciting year for Room 7 under the spirited guidance of Mrs. Campbell!



Room 8

Paulina Monaco

There is so much to learn when you're 7 and 8 years old! Not only are the kids in Room 8 learning about the solar system and early American history, they are also jumping into the world of writing with gusto. Following the success of last year's classroom newsletter, this year they are focusing on putting together a classroom newspaper. Trish Morgan is once again the editor in chief, and teacher in residence as she introduces the children to the basics of journalism. It's challenging learning to be a reporter and to write in the third person! Already students in Room 8 are exploring different types of writing with Mrs. Ross, for example, expository and narrative. Add journalism to the mix and you can be sure that the basics of strong composition are in the making.

The vision for the class newspaper is

Room 24

Lorien French

Have you ever wanted to go back in time and have the chance to live history right where it all began? The fourth grade class did just that during the recent trip to Coloma Outdoor Discovery School in the heart of California's "Gold Rush" country.

This exciting program correlates with the California Content Standards and allows the children to immerse themselves in the culture, music, folklore and daily life of those gold-seeking miners (the proverbial "49ers").

After hugs and goodbyes were said, the children went by bus to Coloma which is located about one hour from Sacramento on the banks of the South Fork American River. They slept in bunkhouses (with parent chaperones) and

ambitious as they hope to produce 4-6 editions by the end of the school year. One early discussion session generated a list of 12 or 13 school topics the kids are excited to write about, including girl scouts and cub scouts, problems on the playground, walkathon news, and "where's Marcus?" (who was apparently absent for a week and "mum" about it.) Eventually each student will get to participate in the variety of roles found at a newspaper, including reporters, illustrators, editors in chief, and "bureau chiefs" in charge of various sections of the newspaper: academic, gardening, Arts Focus, PE, playground news, and a weekend section. They write for themselves, but if you're really interested, I'm sure you can coax a copy from one of the happy contributors, for after all, who among us does not enjoy an audience.

had a variety of activities during the 2-day field trip.

On the first day, they learned the technique of panning for gold and made leather neck pouches in which to store their vials - Sara and Kayhon were particularly proficient miners from what I hear! They visited the "general store" to experience the economics of supply and demand in 1849 by purchasing and bartering for the ingredients for cornbread that was cooked in a Dutch oven over an open fire. In the evening there was a hoe-down with local musicians providing songs to do the Virginia Reel.

The following morning, after a hearty

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