



## Classroom News

Coming back to school the Monday after the Love of Learning Fundraiser felt really anti-climactic to me. After such a hullabaloo, it seemed rather forlorn and humdrum to return to the everyday routine. I suspect that our event's co-chairs, committee chairs and other deeply involved individuals felt otherwise. Probably a little ordinary routine was just what they were craving. The children, I can attest, felt no such let-down. They entered on Monday with their usual enthusiasm and I followed their lead.

We are studying Vietnam right now and it is really interesting. We had a big celebration for Tet (Asian New Year) today. We have been reading about it and talking about it for the past week. We know that to prepare for the New Year, Vietnamese families do all they can to attract good luck in the coming year and to frighten away any evil spirits. They clean the home thoroughly during the week leading up to Tet. They do not clean on the day itself, however, for fear of sweeping out any good luck. The gods that live in their kitchens leave and go to Heaven to report if the family behaved well or badly during the previous year. The family gives brand new money to children in bright red envelopes for red is a very lucky color. All debts must be paid by the New Year, all borrowed items must be returned. New clothes are purchased and the number 9 is avoided like the plague. The number 3, however, is very lucky and welcomed in all its possible forms. The first person to visit the family on Tet brings either good or bad luck. To avoid the possibility of some

unlucky soul darkening their doorstep, the father of the household often leaves just after midnight and re-enters the home to make sure he is the first visitor of the New Year. There are firecrackers and enormous dragon puppets parading through the streets and it is very lucky indeed to have the dragon stop and dance in front of your home. Everyone in Vietnam turns a year older on Tet as that is when all birthdays are commemorated.



A detail of a "nest" built by a group of children using our supply of bamboo and rocks

At group we presented the signs of the Asian Zodiac, discovered which animal energy reigned in the year of each child's birth and read about the qualities that these people supposedly have. Several of the older kids commented that they feel they possessed every quality that was mentioned whether under their particular birth sign or not. I shared that the beliefs of the Vietnamese (the Zodiac, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism and the worship

of ancestors) were very different from those I learned as I was growing up and that it was interesting to consider them now. The older kids and I have been discussing the 4 pillars of Buddhism and that has lead to the subject of suffering and death. Buddhists say that "life is suffering" and one need only look to nature to see the truth of that. Nothing and no one gets through this life without suffering. This idea seemed to resonate with the kids. Vietnam is also home to many Christians, Hindus and Muslims. We have also learned a children's song in Vietnamese called "Mot con vit" or "One White Duck." We have learned some Vietnamese phrases and also how to count to ten. If you would like to continue this Vietnamese theme in your family life, there is a restaurant called Baguette on 3rd St in Corvallis which serves traditional

sandwiches which are a blend of Vietnamese and French influences. Try it! In Albany, Sam City on Pacific Blvd serves a mean bowl of pho, which is also Vietnamese and delicious on a chilly day. And if you'd like to hear more about Vietnam, just ask Jude's parents. They honeymooned there!

Today, many of the children wanted to do some cleaning to ensure our good luck in the coming year. A pair of the kids took out our "rug rollers" which are little hand sweepers that we use to clean crumbs from the carpet. When children use these to clean large expanses of the carpet with a friend it invariably turns into a circus! I redirected the two children to other helpful cleaning tasks. One child washed all the plates from lunch, then wanted to wash tables. The other child was given the task of scrubbing our art underlays. I didn't want to deter them from their desire to bring us blessings. I just wanted to channel it into something I could tolerate! Children just love to clean and feel that they are helping the greater good whether that is the school, the family or the larger community.

Before our morning children left us today, each child was given a percussion instrument and we marched around on the line making as much racket as possible to frighten away any evil spirits that may have been lurking around. In the afternoon, the older kids and I got out the same instruments and used them as a percussion orchestra. They had to be disciplined enough not to play the instruments when I was speaking, but to leave them sitting on the floor in front of them and to pick them up only when I gave the signal. I had to go over this several times! Then we all played a variety of rhythms together to accompany some simple songs. This was great fun and I know we'll do it again before much time goes by.

The older kids also recently enjoyed a series of weather demonstrations that Pauline provided. She demonstrated water's evaporation and told them about the water cycle: evaporation from bodies of water and from plants, from snow and glaciers, the formation of clouds and the return of the moisture in the form of precipitation. Another day she demonstrated that land heats and cools more quickly than bodies of water and how that results in the creation of wind. These activities have materials that

children can take to a table on their own and continue to ponder the phenomena of wind and water. The kids have really gotten a lot out of her experiments and ask eagerly when there will be another.

We have been singing love songs as Valentine's Day approaches. One is called "The Magic Penny." One is "Year-Round Valentine" and another is the very old "Riddle Song," which you may know..."I gave my love a cherry that had no stone..." I also just introduced John Denver's "Annie's Song," which begins "You fill up my senses like a night in the forest..." I love this melody, how the lyrics celebrate nature as well as love and also because my best friend sang it as my sister walked down the aisle on her wedding day, looking radiant. I have also been telling the children some of the legends about Saint Valentine, telling them that they are legends because no one knows if they really happened or not.

On a sour note, some of our materials have been disappearing. I don't know if they are going home in little pockets or if they have been hidden around the classroom so that they can later be heroically found. Both of these dynamics have occurred in the past. We have discussed this problem with the children, at group. To my knowledge, there have been no further incidents. I have been told that children just love their school so much they want to keep a piece of it with them! In closing, I leave you with this quote from Confucius; "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand." 📖

## Newsline

Our first **Children's Open House** of the year will be on Thursday, March 7 from 5:30 – 7:00.

**Spring Break** begins Monday, March 25. School resumes on Monday, April 8. Enjoy!

We will be having our **Parent-Teacher conferences** in March and April. Signup are up already. Please signup as soon as possible so that we can begin focused observations.

We have our **last parent meeting of the year** on Thursday, April 18 from 6:00 -7:30.

**Our second Children's Open House** will be on Thursday, May 9 from 5:30 – 7:00.

Another **dining out fundraiser** will be held on Monday, May 20.th – **McMenamins** in downtown Corvallis 5pm to closing. The school will receive 50% of all proceeds! Again anyone can come – no flyers needed. So please spread the word! 📖




Corvus washes a chalkboard




## Art Fridays

The end of January, the class did acrylic paintings and when dry, they painted over the top with a paint cornstarch mixture that allowed them slow drying time to scrape off designs using tools, combs and slotted old credit cards. In preparation for Valentine's day, we did etched designs on styrofoam sheets and rolled on printmaking inks in order to print cards. After doing one print, they could wash it and add more to their design and print again on a different color paper. To get ready for a study of castles, the children spent one day making collage papers with crayon resist rubbings, painted with water colors and salt sprinkles which create starburst designs. After talking about different parts and functions of a castle, these papers and metallic papers were used to create their own castle design collages. At the end of the session, fun and interesting stories were shared about the castles they created. Some were completely 3-d, some had moving parts with opening doors, folding down drawbridges, flags, ladders, domes, lookouts, and surrounding water.

As we go into spring we will be doing basketry and sculpture.  
~Jennifer Smith 

## Farewell

We have lost another one of our families this year. Duncan and his family are moving to the Salem area. Luckily it won't be too far away, but the daily contact will be gone. I want to give a special thank you to Lara, Duncan's mom. She has participated in so many projects and work parties with the kind of enthusiasm that warms our heart. For Lara, no problem was insurmountable. If we didn't have something or it didn't fit or there wasn't enough, she cheerily found another way. She had an endless supply of ideas and the energy to make it happen. When our sukkot was drooping she reinforced it and brightened it up so it looked festive. She helped Allan and Damian paint our classroom, conjured up window displays for Footwise, Citizens Bank, and Book Bin – two years in a row, solicited big donations and packages for our auction, found our food vendor, and then on the day of our fundraiser this year came for setup early and didn't even go home until all was cleaned up. Now we know a mom is only able to do something like this, if there is good man behind her. Thank you, Dave, we knew you were an essential part of the equation. We will miss you all. Please do stay in touch – we give you all our best wishes... 

## The Love of Learning Auction Gets Lovelier Every Year

And it does! This year our auction was spirited back to Philomath, but in a completely new location – the Philomath Elementary School. It seemed to set the tone for our lovely evening event – warm and inviting – like coming home. Many hearts and hands went into making this fundraiser the best yet.

At the top of the list are our outstanding co-chairs — **Janelle Lohr and Trina McGaughy** were consummate organizers. The last basket party was held almost a week before the auction and preprinted labels and floor maps made setup a breeze! They also knew how to pull our families in – there was 100% participation AND attendance!!

We are deeply indebted to **Bill Brock and Lanny McGaughy** for putting their talents and creativity together to create such a stunning sideboard for our raffle. All 500 tickets sold – 200 at the auction where it was on display – a testament to its exquisiteness! Kudos to **Kerry Boysen** for heading up the raffle sales and for all her PR work. Thanks to her, **Raju Woodward** wrote a wonderful article for the Corvallis Gazette-Times featuring the sideboard with Bill and Lanny. Many thanks to **Kidd Larson** for doing the finishing work again, to **Classique Marble and Granite** for donating the cutting of the glass top, and to **Blackledge Furniture and The Inkwell** for displaying our sideboard and selling tickets.

**Liesl Ralston-Tavano and Jasmin Woodside** teamed up to plan a fun-filled evening for the children – something no other fundraiser that we know does! **Kidspirit** brought a large retinue of volunteers to keep the children entertained and safe, **Curt Nelson** of **Slightly Illusional** came to work his magic, **Kathleen Lloyd** wove wonderful stories and read books, **Leslie Cohen** provided art activities, while **Jenni Neville, Nina Erlich-Williams, Dawn Anzinger** and **Christian Petrovich** helped Liesl and Jasmin oversee the children's area. I can vouch that there were rave reviews from the children – they LOVED every aspect of the children's program!

**Rian and Jennifer Perry of Nutcakes**, new vendors for us, served up a tasty array of food this year – it was a delicious delight and disappeared quickly! **Francesco's** came again to serve up their luscious gelato to sweeten up the end. Many thanks to **Lara Lee-Reavis, Joy Ueng, Shannon Bedford and Sev Williams** for keeping our platters full and the kitchen up to snuff!

It can be tough for many of us to get out there and chase down those donation, but the solicitations were amazing again this year! A very big thank you to: **Becca Lynch, Lara Lee-Reavis, Joy Ueng, Rachel Splan, Andrea Myrhe, Janelle Lohr, Trina McGaughy, Liesl Ralston-Tavano, Doni Manning-Cyrus, Meagan Johanson, Shawne Johnson, Jasmin Woodside, Shannon Bedford, Kerry Boysen, Clara Bozievich, Bill Brock, Nina Erlich-Williams, Heather Gerding, Rory Plaire, Dawn Anzinger, Christian Petrovich, Jessica Neebe and Leslie Cohen**. We are very grateful to the many local businesses, organizations and individuals who have supported us enthusiastically. They are listed on our website. Please do let them know when you see them that we truly appreciate their generosity.

Our families were also lavish in their spirit of giving: **the Boysens, the Junges, Lanny McGaughy, the Irwins, Joy**

Ueng and friends, **Jenny Braxton, Amber Kenoyer, the Ralston-Tavano family, the Johansons (grandparents and Aunt Gretchen, too!), Jonathan Jensen, the Gratz family, Ed Durrenberger, Ruby Moon, Doni Manning-Cyrus, and Leslie Cohen.** Thank you for all the wonderful donations!

Putting those items into beguiling baskets was a cadre of creative ladies. First of all, a big thank you to our party hosts for sharing their homes and providing tasty refreshments: **Meagan Johanson, Clara Bozievich and Rachel Splan.** Hats off to our artistic and gifted partiers: **Jenny Braxton, Nina Erlich-Williams, Becca Gose, Amber Grapoli, Meagan Johanson and her sister, Gretchen, Shawne Johnson, Amber Kenoyer, Lara Lee-Reavis, Janelle Lohr and Trina McGaughy, Doni Manning-Cyrus, Liesl Ralston-Tavano, Joy Ueng, and Jasmin Woodside.** Thank you for those elegant baskets. Many came to two parties and some to all three!!

**Amber Grapoli** again did an awesome job on our raffle and admission tickets, auction invitations, posters, signs, and booklets – snazzy with a fresh and professional look. **Meaghan Johanson** put together a fun slideshow to showcase our adorable kids and to thank our sponsors and supporters. **Lara Lee-Reavis, Janelle Lohr and Trina McGaughy** conjured up an eye-catching display for the Footwise window. **Lara** and her friend, **Cindi Shear,** also created wonderful slicks and signs for the Citizens Bank window. Thanks to all who posted flyers around town for us. And a special thank you to **Ruby Moon of Golden Crane** for selling both admission and raffle tickets for us.

Thanks to the efforts of **Clara Bozievich,** we had some very generous sponsors this year who underwrote a large portion of our expenses: **Barker-Uerling Insurance, Gerding Construction, Mario and Alma Pastega Family Foundation, Dickerhoof Properties, Corvallis Clinic (Philomath Family Medicine), Swanson Agency, Phoenix Media and Public Good PR.** Thank you very much for sponsorship and support!

Helping transform all the rooms into a gorgeous setting and the tables into alluring magnets the day of the auction were **Shannon Bedford, Doug and Claire Boysen, Jenny Braxton, Clara Bozievich, Bill Brock, Leslie Cohen, Nina Erlich-Williams, Amber Grapoli, Meagan Johanson, Shawne Johnson, Amber Kenoyer, Lara Lee-Reavis, Janelle and Stony Lohr, Damian Lynch, Doni Manning-Cyrus, Andrea Myrhe, Christian Petrovich, Liesl Ralston-Tavano, Rachel Splan, and Joy Ueng.**

**The Suz Doyle Trio (Suzannah Doyle, Paul Bezanson, and George Beekman)** entranced us again with their music and songs and this time they treated us to a new member – **Nicki Bezanson,** Paul’s daughter. A special thank you to **Kurt Cleveland** for again being our auctioneer and to **Doni** for taking the stage to say a few words about our school and to thank everyone.

At the auction, **Leslie Cohen and Marjie Corbin** were at the reception table greeting and registering our guests and on the other end **Gary and Nancy Brown** (Doni’s In-laws) again did a stellar job at checkout with **Heather Gerding** at the charge card machine. Running the items from the bidding tables to checkout were: **Bill Brock, Tomas Garza, Shawne Johnson, Amber Kenoyer, Lara Lee-Reavis, Damian Lynch, Lanny McGaughy, Rory Plaire, David Reavis, Lua Siegel, and Allan Rack.**

We had a dedicated, hardworking crew of volunteers cleaning up at the end who never gave in to their exhaustion. **Shannon Bedford (and her parents!), Clara Bozevich, Bill Brock, Doni Manning-Cyrus, Heather Gerding, Meagan Johanson, Lara Lee-Reavis, Liesl Ralston-Tavano, Rachel Splan, Joy Ueng, Allan Rack, and Jasmin Woodside** all pitched in and left the building in perfect shape.

While writing this I was deeply moved by how much work was done and how many of you gave SO much time and effort. The lists are prodigious and the accomplishments were outstanding. No one can deny we have a remarkable community of parents who show in many ways how much they care for their children and our school. Thank you doesn’t begin to convey what we feel. 📖



Ace saws a board in two with lots of intention!

Attention friends & parents:

We will be adding the edible schoolyard installation over spring break! If you are interested in lending a hand with adding our planting boxes, potting bench, wood chips, and irrigation system, please email or call and I will put you on the logistics emails. We need to coordinate tools, bodies, and vehicles. No expertise of any kind is required to help. Unfortunately, we can not accomodate children at the site for this project. We are currently slated for **April 5th and 6th.**