

THE TATTLER

NEWSLETTER

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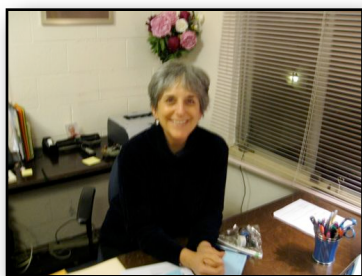
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FROM THE EDITOR

...Where Learning and Joy Come Together!



On January 25th, Living Wisdom School families and Ananda members joyfully celebrated the long awaited completion of the new school building with a jubilant walk down memory lane.

We felt tremendously grateful to the assembled Ananda Church members and Living Wisdom School families for their longstanding loyalty and support. Asha Praver, Ananda Spiritual Director, Founding Teacher, Barbara Rabin, and Founding Parent, Gary McSweeney reminisced about the intrepid group of teachers, parents, and church members who over the years have manifested Yogananda's vision of a school that honors the universal truths underlying all religions. Together we affirmed the reality of a school that shares with children a sense of the infinite possibility of their own goodness, a sense of the wonder and magic of learning, and a sense of the ultimate unity of all things.

The Ananda Barbershop Quartet riveted the audience with its rendition of the "School Song." Living Wisdom School children captured the mood of the day with a Shaker song, "Simple Gifts," and the Ananda chant, "You Fill My Heart with Music." Celebrants armed with candles and incense, prayer flags, and pictures of the Great Ones, processed through classrooms, chanting to the accompaniment of guitar, harmonium, and kirtals. One glorious shout of "Jai!" followed by a showering of rose petals, symbolizing past, present, and future blessings, and the sound of the conch pierced the air, a fitting exclamation point on a most joyful day!

Blessings and Joy,

Helen Purcell

Director

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Math to the Highest Power!

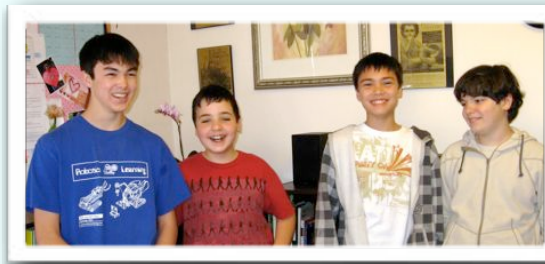
by Gary McSweeney

Every year Living Wisdom School participates in the American Mathematics Competitions (AMC 8 & 10) sponsored by the Mathematical Association of America and 20 other mathematical science organizations and companies including the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

Over 150,000 students from 2500 schools participate in the 2008 AMC 8. This year some of our advanced students took the AMC 10! This test is designed for sophomores in high school.

For the AMC 8 Zachary Munro won the bronze medal with 18 correct answers. Alex Tuharsky and George Selley tied for the silver medal with 20 correct answers, and Hazemach won the top honor with a score of 21, which placed him on the national honor roll!

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*Zachary Munro, George Selley,
Hazemach, Alex Tuharsky*

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Great Literature From the Very Beginning!

by Barbara Rabin

The world is dark, and light is precious.

Come closer, dear reader.

You must trust me.

I am telling you a story.

The Tale of Despereaux

Kate Di Camillo

As a teacher of young people for many years, I often see children discovering the magic found in story. I am present as the astonishing truth grows in their awareness that a great story can transport us into magical worlds where the seemingly impossible becomes possible. This can be the beginning of a lifelong love of reading. Classrooms across America praise the joy found in reading. Bookmarks telling children that books are their friends and homework stickers that say *I love to Read* acknowledge the conventional wisdom that says reading is important, a foundational skill *and* a source of imaginative pleasure—even in this technologically driven age given to bullets rather than sentences or



Barbara Rabin, Teacher Extraordinaire!



Younger and older students listen intently to Julia read a story

paragraphs. We need to give children great literature from the beginning, from their very first stories. I think we underestimate them if we give them less!

Early childhood experiences hold a possibility for our adult lives as readers. Because the pleasure found in reading continues as it begins, why not then infuse it with the richness of great literature, like the mesmerizing stories of *The Mahabharata*, the *Jataka Tales*, Lewis Carroll, or the Brothers Grimm?

What children read shapes their literary expectations and their world view. When a character begins to live in the reader's imagination, he or she can skip lightheartedly across bridges of difference! Children become familiar, then comfortable, with a culture other than their own by reading its poetry and narratives. Learning about cultural norms

through story brings traditions alive. Other people's manners suddenly make sense because they are placed in a context, either historical or fictional, that promotes understanding.

What children read strongly influences and shapes their aesthetic sense as well as their world view. The wise teacher knows this and guides the students in the direction of great literature. Sometimes it takes time. For example, my friend, Eric, teaches high school in New York. His students had little awareness or any interest in fine literature. Initially, he read comics of all kinds with them. Then gradually, he taught them to read well, until they were actually reading and loving Shakespeare within his first year! The power of great literature is vast, if shared at the right moment, and surprising things happen.

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Winter Camp with Teachers Matthew and Gary

During the first week of Winter Break, Matthew and Gary presided over a week of fun-filled days that included arts and crafts, drama, a puppet show, stories, and a trip to the snow. Kindergartener Hugo Pappalardo remembers with special fondness field trips to Printers Inc. for hot chocolate and Krispy Kreme for donuts.



Children frolic in the aftermath of an unexpected snow storm during Winter Break.

Great Literature, continued from previous page

I've found it's a mistake to imagine that our children cannot entertain depth and complexity. When I read a story by Byrd Baylor or a book by L. Frank Baum to the second and third graders, we all have to slow down. I watch them relax into the experience. Baum's descriptive passages take time to read, for he savors every purposeful word, and the action develops gradually. The various characters are engaging, and the language full of metaphor, offering one's imagination a great deal to visualize. The vocabulary is sophisticated. Children love it if given a chance.

I live with that magical possibility I knew so well as a child, and I extend it to the children I teach, knowing that one genre after another can be discovered throughout a lifetime. Each new author can delight us, and give us a wider perspective with which to view all of life. At times we may long for a writer who can capture the part of us that yearns for the extraordinary, a deeper part of us that desires inspiration, that wants to be uplifted. So we continue to search for those special books that ignite our imagination and fill our hearts.

When I reach for a book I haven't ever read, or when I reread an old favorite, there is always a moment when I pause, feeling such gratitude for the beautiful gift I am holding in my hands. ❀

Helpful Publications from the Children's Book Committee at Bank Street College:

- *Books to Read Aloud With Children of All Ages*
- *The Best Children's Books of the Year*

Contact Information:

bookcom@bnkst.edu

www.bankstreet.edu/bookcom

Math, continued from page 1

Congratulations to George Selley for his score of 90 on the AMC 10 which qualified him for Young Student Certificate of Achievement! George is a fifth grader! We will soon be completing the Olympiad, which consists of five tests given over the course of the school year.

The Mathematical Association of America honored Living Wisdom School as a School of Merit based on the overall scores of our students.

We congratulate ALL the students who participated in this year's test. ❀

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Kai, Guarav, Rose, Aditya, Sophia, Pablo, and Matthew wave joyfully on a science field trip to Hidden Villa.

Personalizing Science

By Doug Andrews

One day recently, Helen, our school's principal, walked by as I was preparing for my classes. Glancing at the materials I had out on the table, she asked what I would be teaching that day. "The Oceans" for Theodore's class and "Butterflies" for Matthew's and Julia's classes," I responded. "That is so wonderful," she said and then added a bit wistfully, "I never had much science in elementary school."

I, on the other hand, had plenty of science starting in third grade when I saw a portable science lab roll into my public school classroom for the first time. I faithfully took in the weekly black and white wonders of Mr. Wizard on broadcast TV, mixed combustible concoctions with my Gilbert chemistry sets, electrified things that should not have been, and launched rockets from

the backyard, just for the thrill of watching, but with no real hope of ever finding them again. However, my science classes from third grade through university never referenced a sense of wonder and awe at the beauty and spirit of the very creation they sought to explore.

While I certainly had a greater exposure to science than Helen, there was, nonetheless, some missing quality. I was not part of that which I studied. My study of science, which was quite typical, was so lifeless. That brief exchange with Helen and the contrast in our own experiences set me to thinking about the great gift I experience sharing science with the children at LWS. My overarching goal at LWS is to help our children experience themselves, as a part of Nature and to help them witness that special life inside of them as present in all living things.

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I suspect that neither Helen's nor my own science stories are unique. But here at LWS, the goal is not to simply expose our children to the sciences but rather to awaken in them at the deepest level an awareness of themselves as a part of Nature. In this way the basics of science, such as the scientific method and the relationship of cause and effect, become expanded beyond the investigation of matter and movement into a human dimension. If our children learn to investigate who they are in an orderly, objective manner and realize that their actions have reactions for themselves and others, then we will have succeeded in moving beyond the isolation of science from the scientist.

In his seminal book, *Education for Life*, J. Donald Walters, Ananda's founder, expands this thought succinctly. He designates the curriculum area of science as "Our Earth – Our Universe," a designation which he says,

"...will make of the sciences themselves, customarily the most intellectual of studies, something heartfelt and inspiring. 'Our Earth — Our Universe' would suggest a progressively expansive view of reality. It would encourage students to think of the universe as a wholeness – to see the particular and the universal in relation to one another. It might even suggest a comparison between physical laws and higher principles."

Therein is expressed both the path and the goal of science at Living Wisdom School. ❁



Kai, Andre, Guarav, and Pablo investigate.

LWS Parent Extraordinaire

Cheryl Chetkiewicz, Aidan's mother, will graduate June 3rd from the University of Alberta with a Ph.D. in Ecology. Her dissertation topic was *Looking at Wildlife Corridors for Cougars and Grizzly Bears Around Communities in the Rocky Mountains*.



Cheryl and Friend

THE TATLER

The Joy of Cooking

by Julia Timpson

Elisa Kleven writes so eloquently in her heartwarming story *Sun Bread*: "The sun was back to spread its light/ Like honey on each yummy bite/ ...And dance around the world and sing/ Of all the joy good bread can bring." The ongoing baking and cooking projects in the Playmakers' Pre-K/Kindergarten classroom truly bring joy to the little bakers! There are not very many other activities that elicit the excitement the children show when we get to work in our aprons. Even if the project is optional, many children will join the activity and are thoroughly thrilled to be helping with whatever we are making. Our repertoire has grown from bread, to raisin cinnamon rolls, to pretzels to Italian Focaccia.

There is more to be learned than we at first realize when we prepare our own food. It is a whole process that begins with the hygiene of keeping hands clean and ends when we sit down at the table with our hand-painted place mats to enjoy the product of our efforts.

Students learn about the importance of washing their hands before preparing food. They practice a tremendous amount of self control not to put fingers to their mouth as they cook, especially when honey is one of the ingredients! What a temptation to dip a finger into a glob of honey and lick it! To protect our clothes, we also put on aprons just like real bakers. Now, we can officially begin!

What are the ingredients required for making bread? Children are excited to

know what we need, and because cooking is such a hands-on experience, they can quickly learn the ingredients!

The main excitement comes from doing "real" work. Children watch adults daily with "grown up" tasks. They don't see adults working with blocks, putting puzzles together, or kneading the play dough. Rather, children associate "real" work with activities they see adults do, and they feel good about doing those kinds of tasks. In the



Andre Hyrkin measures the ingredients.

Playmaker's classroom we have another activity called Julia's Helpers, which again requires doing "real" work. Children sweep the floor, wash the tables, pick up the trash, and organize the books and the block area. Cooking is another job that gives them a chance to feel part of the grown up world.

The children are involved with cutting and measuring the ingredients. They help get the tools needed from the kitchen. They eagerly take turns mixing the dough and adding different ingredients. In the process of mixing the dough, the children experience the science and art of cooking. While they whip cream, they carefully watch with

scientific wonder as it becomes stiff. When they melt butter in a little milk on the stove, they watch the beautiful forms and shapes the butter draws on the surface of the milk. They pose questions. For example, what happens when a liquid heats up? Steam begins to rise. As they witness the milk vaporizing, our smallest students learn physical chemistry.

When it's time to shape the dough, a baker learns and experiments with different shapes. How do we shape a roll, a pretzel, or focaccia? And again, because baked goods are something they see in stores, children are eager to learn how to do it themselves.

Lastly, once everything is in the oven, the clean-up begins. The children get to work with sponges, drying towels, brooms, dust pans, and some soapy water. Everything - floor, tables, dishes - needs to be cleaned, and, finally, the table needs to be set.

By now a delicious smell is rising from the oven, and children in the other classrooms are getting excited about what is baking in our classroom. At times we have enough to include another class in our feast. The children practice how to walk up to our friends and kindly invite them to come over. We sit down then,

with our place mats and napkins, and once everyone has a piece (patience required!), we all enjoy the fruits of our labor together.

Bon Appetit, or as the Germans say, "Guten Appetit." ❁



Aruna Gauba concentrates on stirring the batter.

THE TATLER

Spirit and Nature Dancing Together

Come join the summer fun

*Choose happiness and practice kindness in a
summer program led by our LWS teachers*

Barbara, Matthew, and Julia!

- ♥ Nature exploration
- ♥ Write original stories and poetry
- ♥ Dance instruction by choreographer Marguerite Fishman
- ♥ Art projects galore!
- ♥ Delicious organic cooking
- ♥ Performing original work
- ♥ Swimming pool fun
- ♥ Relaxing reading on the green
- ♥ Happy play times
- ♥ Final Sharing Celebration of Dance and Poetry
- ♥ All this in a caring and nurturing environment with entrhralling moments of inspiration!

Contact: Julia Timpson
julia@livingwisdomschool.org
 (650) 947- 0835

Ages: Pre-K- 8th
Dates: June 8th- 26th 2009
Hours: Mon-Fri 8:30 - 4pm
Place: Living Wisdom School

From A Child's Perspective...

Leslie Peters writes about a moment with **Elizabeth, 2nd grade**: "You know a child is from Living Wisdom School when she tells you that the hum of the freezers in the Whole Foods frozen department sounds like "aum!" ❁

Tatler Tidbits...

LWS Alumni: Samantha Shireman, Class of '04 is a sophomore at U.C. Berkeley, majoring in Physics. **Roxie Arnold, Class of '01**, is spending her senior year at San Jose State University studying in Bath, England. **Laurel Druke, Class of '05** is a Freshman at Dominican University in San Rafael. **Dodson Miller-Morganthaler, Class of '08**, a Freshman at Los Altos High School, is on the Water Polo team and enjoys the many social activities of high school. **Genyana Greenfield August, Class of '06**, a Junior at Mid-Peninsula High School, travelled last summer to Alaska, Australia, and Ashland. Her mother says next summer she should go to places that start with the letter B! Two old friends dropped by recently: **Drew Schleck, Class of '06** a Junior at Menlo School and **Casey Jones, Class of '05**, a Senior at Lincoln High School. **Drew** continues to dabble seriously in computers, while **Casey** looks forward to college next year at San Francisco State University. She hopes to become an art therapist! **Hadley Sheppard, Class of '08** and a Freshman at Notre Dame, Belmont, is on the stage crew for the musical *Footloose*. She is building walls, hanging speakers and using skill saws and jig saws like a pro! ❁



Serena Peters, Sophia Timpson & Navya Nandwani

THE TATLER

Blessing the New School Building



A showering of rose petals puts the final touch on the new school!



Aidan Raygorodetsky leads the procession.



Asha Praver and Barbara Rabin, school leaders from the beginning!



Talia Frank and Zarina Stewart check their rose petals.

NOTE

The name *The Tatler* harkens back to a famous eighteenth century periodical which mixed politics, serious essays, and a little sly humor to offer a window into the city of London.

Coming Soon

Mirabai

Mystic Poet Princess of India

17th Annual

Living Wisdom School

Theater Magic Production

Performances

Matinees: March 18 & 19, 10 am

Evening: March 20 & 21, 7 pm

"A Starry Night"

**Living Wisdom School
Art Auction**

Saturday, April 18

5-9 pm

Save the Date!