



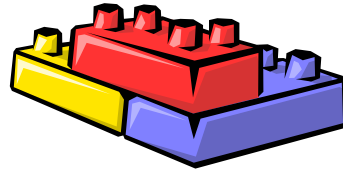
# THE OLD MILL CREEK

www.oldmillschool.org  
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March 12, 2008

## Get Ready Hobby Night is Coming!



Old Mill School Hobby Night – Join us on Wednesday, March 26<sup>th</sup> from 7:00-8:00 p.m. at the OMS Auditorium (set-up at 6:30) as we carry on this school tradition. Legos, coins, artwork, knitting, rocks, comics, ducks and beanie babies are examples of some of the awesome and unique hobbies that Old Mill students will share with you on HOBBY NIGHT. It doesn't have to be real fancy or ultra complete, just a collection or interest your child thinks is neat. Get your hobby or collection ready - no collection is too small, we love to see them all. Entry forms can be obtained and dropped off in the envelope next to the front office. Don't miss the fun, and remember that your entry must be received by **Friday, March 21st**. Questions? Call Jamie Lunder @388-3305 or Merilee Bordin @ 388-8922



## Calendar

### Wednesday, March 12

School Board Meeting  
7:00 p.m. District Office

### Friday, March 14

Author Assembly  
Denys Cazet  
10:15 a.m. K-2 11:00 a.m. 3-5

### Wednesday, March 19

Old Mill Night at Pizza Antica—Fundraiser

### Friday, March 21

Author Assembly  
Jim LaMarche  
10:15 a.m. K-2 11:00 a.m. 3-5  
End of Second Trimester Progress Reports

### 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 p.m.-8:00 p.m.

### Friday, March 28

Author Assembly—Ellen Klages  
11:15-12:00 Grades 4 & 5

### Monday, March 31

Site Council  
3:00 p.m. OMS Library

### Friday, April 4

PTA Exec. & General Meeting  
8:45 a.m./9:00 a.m. Old Mill

### Monday, April 7-

### Friday, April 11

Spring Recess—No School

## 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 March 10—Room 4  
Week of March 25—Room 2  
Week of April 14—Room 14  
Week of April 28—Room 12  
Week of May 12—Room 10

Week of March 17—Room 3  
Week of March 31—Room 1  
Week of April 15—Room 15  
Week of May 5—Room 11  
Week of May 19—Room 9



## PTA EXPRESS

By Jan Hudson  
and Leanne Hansen



What a busy month we have had this month on the school grounds! Thanks to your support, the PTA has been able to make some very tangible and lasting improvements that will benefit Old Mill students for years to come.

Thank you for your patience as we have been installing our playground. As the construction company began to excavate the area, a few additional surprises were uncovered and added to construction time and cost. By mid-March, though, the children will be enjoying their new play area. We are still waiting on the installation of the new water tap so please advise your children to be respectful of areas that are behind orange fencing. As ever, strong support from our school community has made the dream of a new playground a reality for children to enjoy!

Many thanks to **Ingrid Tolson** for her enthusiasm and unwavering efforts to arrange for a fabulous line up of assemblies for our children this year. We loved the Red Panda Acrobats—their colorful performance was full of surprises and brought smiles and laughter to all. We are looking forward to an Earth Day assembly in April.

March is Authors Month, and **Lisa Carmel and Christine Waldron** have brought an exciting series of author/illustrator presentations to Old Mill this year. Presentations are every Friday morning in March. Parents are welcome to stop by and hear from the authors and illustrators of the books we love! Thanks, Lisa and Christine, for making books come alive in this way for our children.

**Hobby Night** is March 26<sup>th</sup> this year. This Old Mill tradition is great fun for even our youngest students. Pick one of your favorite hobbies and bring a display – we see everything from sports to Lego creations to collections of all shapes and sizes. Set-up begins at 6:30, and the show runs from 7-8 p.m. Thanks to **Merilee Bordin and Jamie Lunder** for organizing the evening so we can all have some fun! Look registration forms, fill them out, and we'll see you there!



### Join Us At The Coffee Cart!

Join us every Wednesday morning  
in the courtyard between 8:30  
and 9:00 for a cup of Peets.

Compliments of the  
PTA Executive Board

### PTA Executive Board

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# GRIST

By Jane McDonough



About that Learning and the Brain conference... some things I learned, or relearned:

- Brains in men and women act differently, mostly. Surprise!
- Rest is critical for optimum performance of the brain.
- ADHD is “caused” by compulsory education ( kidding . . .but not entirely).
- HUGE amounts of influence on the brain's learning patterns and other issues that have impact in later life come from earliest (think really early) parenting.

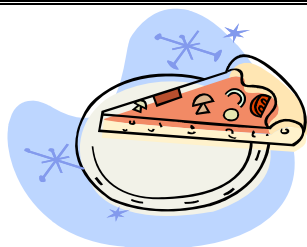
Overall, we are learning that we all must nurture the nature of our children and our students . . .great resources abound! If you are interested in more on learning and the brain, send me an email and I will route you to some excellent information. Teri Hagen, two other site principals and I truly enjoyed the conference.

Playground construction continues as I write, but with luck from the weather and no unforeseen issues, by the time you get this article the play structure will be up and the kids using it successfully. Play, of course, being one of the very important things that happens each school day for our children. Recently a great article on the importance- and complexity- of play was published in the New York Times *Taking Play Seriously* 2.17.08.

The fact that we really know so little about play, and its relationship to learning and to other aspects of human development is a research gap that I hope will get filled in. The other day as I was on the yard, observing the constant fast action of the children at play, I noticed an older couple walking up the sidewalk on Lovell. They were walking in time with each other, and altering their steps to avoid the cracks in the sidewalk, keeping the squares matched to their gait. It was a small game, but playing it had smiles on both of their faces, and, it would seem, made their walk home more intriguing. Why do we play? What makes us seek it out as children, and what makes us diminish our capacity for play – or make it regimented in fixed forms like highly organized sports – as we get older? When we observe and engage in play with our students we learn so much. It is not a simple, joy-filled experience, as we adults sometimes expect it to be. Although joy, energy and delight are part of it, play includes all of the human range of emotions and actions. I can tell you from 35 professional years with children that it is undeniably important and valuable. As we embark on this newest invitation to our children to play, I hope you will consider that couple I observed, and include play in your own life. It is a great way to connect with your children. Here’s what one letter of response to the NYT article said:

It has become fashionable to examine childhood behavior in terms of (very adult) ideas about what adaptive purposes it might serve. But play is good as play! Play in childhood, like play in adulthood, need not be the instrument of some other or later capacity. It is rather what ethicists call a “final good” — good in its own terms. (Michael Lipson)

Thanks of course to Leanne Hansen for the leadership role she played (ahem) in our new structure. All of the PTA and school community have something to be proud of as well as to enjoy. Spring is sprung, even though there are a few weeks to the official opening day, it is time to enjoy the outdoors again!



**Old Mill School Night at Pizza Antica**—Invite your friends and family to dinner at Pizza Antica the third Wednesday of the month through May, and the Old Mill PTA will receive 10% of the proceeds from your meal. The first dinner will be held Wednesday, March 19<sup>th</sup>—just drop in anytime after 5:00 p.m. and tell your server you are from Old Mill School. The next two Old Mill School nights will be on April 16<sup>th</sup> and May 21<sup>st</sup>. Hope to see you all there!

## A Word from Kiddo! . . .

### **Mollie Stone's Market Recycles for Kiddo!**

Mollie Stone's Market in Sausalito is setting up eScrip collection bins for recycling cell phones, printer cartridges, iPods and laptops in their store. Mollie Stone's will return the waste to eScrip and all funds generated will benefit Kiddo! Cell phones and printer cartridges can also be recycled at the Park School campus in Mill Valley. Thank you!

### **Kiddo! Student Art Show**

Kiddo! is proud to announce the opening of the 2008 Student Art Show at the Mill Valley Community Center. The show, which runs from March 4<sup>th</sup> through March 29<sup>th</sup>, features various works of fine art from Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The young artists are from each of the Mill Valley School District's five elementary schools and middle school. Please join us at the Community Center on Tuesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. for the opening reception.

Thanks to the ongoing support of Mill Valley School District parents and community members, Kiddo! is here to fund the arts in our public schools. By providing excellent programs in art, music, dance, drama and poetry, we are helping each of our children reach their full potential and learn skills necessary for life. Thank you!

### **March is Art Education Month**

The California Legislature has designated March 2008 as Arts Education Month, as a way to promote the arts as an essential part of a well-rounded education. The arts help children develop literacy skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The arts encourage divergent thinking and problem-solving skills, enabling students to think creatively. Current research shows that arts education can play a critical role in a child's academic and social development. Well-designed and executed arts education leads to overall improved academic performance, builds skills necessary for workplace success, and has a positive influence on the lives of students. In addition, research shows that access to and participation in the arts helps decrease and prevent negative behavior by at-risk youth.

"To succeed in today's economy of ideas, students must masterfully use words, images, sounds, and motion to communicate. The arts provide the skills and knowledge students need to develop the creativity and determination necessary for success in today's global information age."

Arts Education Creating Student Success In School, Work, and Life

### **Old Mill School Site Council**

The 2007-08 Old Mill School Site Council has been active on a number of projects. For those unfamiliar with it, the Site Council is a state-mandated group of five parents and five teachers that meets monthly. Our goal is to assist in ensuring that Old Mill provides your child with the best possible education. Each year, we create an annual school improvement plan that sets goals, looks at resources to improve student success and monitors the effectiveness of the school's curriculum and programs. The Site Council adopted three focuses for this school year: student health/fitness, "green" awareness and practices, and math and science curriculum. The overall goal of this year's plan is to get more kids to school on foot or bikes more often and hopefully to incorporate math and science projects that focus on the health and environmental benefits of getting around without a car. Earlier this year, the Site Council worked on other time-sensitive projects, including the District Facilities Master Plan (input on "educational specifications"). We also evaluated and solicited input on proposed improvements to the Old Mill block. We concluded that the proposed improvements would not significantly improve traffic or safety and requested alternative changes. The City has agreed to some and is considering others.

This year, in addition to Principal Jane McDonough, the Old Mill teachers on the Site Council are Karen Levin, Ann Nichols, Erica Dowell, and Molly Bass, with Lisa Mudd substituting for Ann Nichols as needed. The parent representatives are Victoria Talkington (President), Mary Anderson (Vice President), Bryce Goeking (Secretary), Andy Mercy and Heather Young. During the school year, we meet in the school library on the last Monday of each month from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. and you are welcome to join us.

Please email any questions or suggestions to the Site Council at [sitecouncil@oldmillschool.org](mailto:sitecouncil@oldmillschool.org).

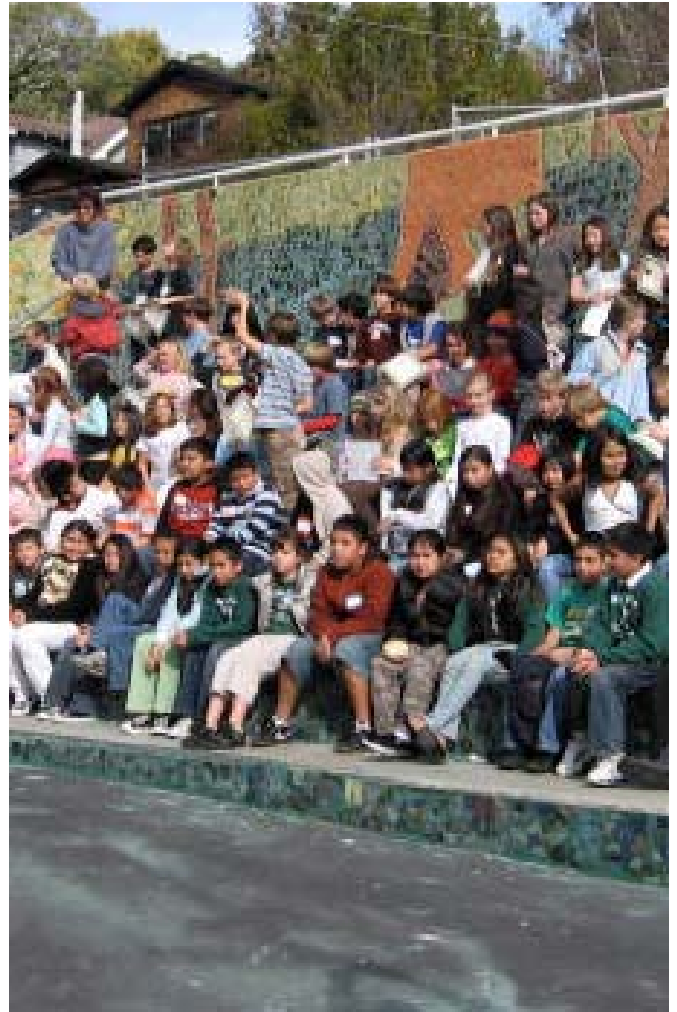
## The Old Mill School Mural

from the Third Grade Artists

For the last few months, the third grade has been working on a mosaic mural. We have been connecting with another school that is also making a mural. That school is Bahia Vista in San Rafael. We have been writing to them about ourselves, our community, and the mural project. We made parts of their mural and they made parts of ours. Their mural is about school and learning. Our mural is about the Tamalpais Watershed. When you see it, you'll see a person reading against a tree, little bugs that live in the creek environment, trees, fish, and the creek itself.

To create this, we observed the creek and drew sketches. We made clay figures and painted tiles. The artist, Josef Norris, painted an outline on the amphitheatre and then we began tiling, cementing, and grouting a little bit each week for the past two months. We even had one big Saturday when our families came to help with the tiling.

One of the highlights of this five month process was some of us going before the school board to ask permission to create the mural. We will remember putting in the cement to get it started and putting on our first and last tiles. We will remember all the stages of this process and getting to meet our Pen Pals from Bahia Vista. We also will remember Josef, who was a great teacher for the mural and also a great friend. We liked that this mural represents our Old Mill School community and that nature is important to us.





**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, May 14<sup>th</sup> from 9:00-11:00, 405 Wendy Way**

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 Caron Stapleton (caronstapleton@comcast.net, 383-1192).

**Speaker Event—Thursday, May 1<sup>st</sup> from 6:30-8:00 pm, Mill Valley Middle School Library**

Diane Provo, one of the Bay Area's most popular speakers on parenting issues, is back! On a topic of interest to parents of all of the District's students, Diane will discuss how your child's temperament affects learning and self worth, as well as the impact of your own temperament. Diane is an educational consultant who maintains a very active consulting practice in the Bay Area. She appears regularly on KRON TV's Weekend News show where she has a live parenting segment. Diane has taught special education classes in public and private schools and has coordinated special education programs. She also co-authored the books "Starting Blocks" and "Kids are Great... When You Know How They Work." More details to come.

**SPEAKER NOTES** – Notes of the following events are now available for (1) September 27<sup>th</sup> Dan Phillips (technology that can help your child read and write); (2) October 16<sup>th</sup> Pauline Nacamuli, Erin Conklin, and Sarah Stoelting (reading strategies); (3) November 1<sup>st</sup> Dr. Virginia Bassi, Janet Miller (support for families/siblings of children with learning differences); and (4) March 6<sup>th</sup> Dr. Claudia Trinklein-Engman.

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.

**DON'T FORGET TO DO NIGHTLY LICE CHECK AT HOME**—NIT removal is the trick when it comes to eradicating our ongoing lice irritations. There are almost no schools in the area without some cases of head lice, and the only way to be sure we can keep it under control is for parents to monitor and remove nits after treatment until they are all gone, and stay gone for about two-three weeks. Thanks, thanks, undying thanks to the vigilant teams in the lower grades who have been checking heads every day for a long time. It is really easy for us to miss a nit in our examinations and rechecks here at school, so please do not rely on that as your only means of verification as to whether or not your child's head is free of the little "love bugs." Check for nits every night!

**March at the Mill Valley Public Library**

**Fairies, Dragons, Mermaids, and Lore.** Picture Books & More, our wildly popular after school series is back. If your 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grader and did not receive a lavender flyer describing the program, be sure to find out more by calling the Children's Room or visiting our website.

**Author Visit on March 28.** Children's author Ellen Klages will captivate listeners on Friday, March 28 at 3:30 pm. Her first novel, *The Green Glass Sea* (gr. 5-8) won the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction. She is an insightful writer whose meticulous historical research, sharp wit, and scientific knowledge will entertain audiences of all ages.

**Reminders:** Don't forget to give yourself a break from the homework blues by logging on to **Live Homework Help**, our FREE online tutoring service for kids in grades 4-12. Watch our website for information about our **Spring Break Film Festival**, April 7-11 – free movies and popcorn for the entire family! For more information about our programs and services, visit <http://millvalleylibrary.org>

**Old Mill Creek Deadlines**

Please submit any Creek articles by email to [dale.rice@hellerehrman.com](mailto:dale.rice@hellerehrman.com) by the deadlines below:

<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Published</u>
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. To submit photos for the Creek, send jpg files to the editor.