



Upcoming Events

- PTA General Mtg.
Thurs. May 7
- PTA Spring Carnival
Sat. May 9
- Dads' Club Meets
Tues. May 12
- Spring Open House,
Science Fair & Art
Show
Thurs. May 28
- Movie Night
Fri. June 5
- School Year Ends
Thurs. June 11

Join the Fun at the 62nd Annual Spring Carnival! Saturday, May 9, 11 am - 3 pm

Felicia Layser Robertson

The Carnival Committee has been working diligently week after week to bring the Hilltop families this fun event we have all grown to love and enjoy together as a family.

Going through the first Carnival Chairman's numbers from 1947 you will see familiar things like Books, Cookies-Candy, White Elephants, Lunch Stand, Fish Pond and Ring Toss. You will also see an old favorite we are pleased to bring back this year: Fortune Telling. Look for it next to the Face Painting booth. The Cake Walk will be back with new and improved sound close to the May Pole. The Dads' Club is delivering their well-known and high quality grilled lunch of tri-tip sandwiches, sausages, hamburgers and hot dogs. New this year, all food will be served in the Multipurpose Room, cafeteria-style, which you will take outside to enjoy on the Patio and playground. Be sure to buy your food tickets before you get in line! Spirit Wear will be available with our Kensington Cougars mascot adjacent to the Information Booth and will feature new items, such as yoga pants.

We have made some changes to the ticket sales to help ease lines the day of the event and to make it easier on those who prefer to shop with a credit card. Pre-sales will be expanded to include meal tickets. Use Sally Fraser's form in the Thursday Packet to pre-purchase all your game tickets and



Photo by Hanson Quan

meal tickets on Friday, May 8. Send the form with a check or cash and your child will come home with your tickets. Or, drop off or pick up your child that day and pre-purchase your tickets outside the Multipurpose Room with your credit card in hand. Credit card purchases will be available at the Carnival, too.

Thank you to everyone who has been working in preparation of the Carnival. The Carnival relies on parent participation so please remember to give an hour or two or three volunteering in your classroom booth and helping set-up and tearing down at the end. Let's make the 62nd Annual Carnival the best yet!

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Final PTA Meeting May 7 - Plus Stargazing

Join us for our last PTA meeting Thursday, May 7, 7 - 8 pm, in the MPR.

It's going to be a big night! Come early and enjoy "finger food that can substitute for dinner, and a few dessert items" supplied by our teachers.

- We will be holding an 'open mike' parent discussion for the main portion of the meeting. Topics suggested so far: the status of class-size reduction next year (in light of budget cuts).
- Sign in and indicate your membership status: we need a quorum to vote in our new bylaws and executive board for 2009-2010. Bylaws are available for review in the PTA cubby at the school office. (Please don't remove from office.)
- On the MPR patio from 8 - 9 pm, stay for STARGAZING with the Astro Wizard from Chabot Space Center! A fabulous event for our final meeting.

As always, free childcare provided during the PTA meeting, 7 - 8 pm.

PTA builds bridges between homes and schools, integrating the efforts of parents with those of principals and teachers. When you get involved in PTA, the child who benefits most is your own; you are taking a major step toward improving not only your child's school and community, but also your state and national education and health policies. Resources for parents are available at www.pta.org or www.capta.org.



MAY & JUNE EVENT CALENDAR

While we try
to teach our
children all
about life,
Our children
teach us what
life is all
about.

- Angela Schwindt

THURS. MAY 7 General PTA Mtg. &
Stargazing, 7 - 9pm, MPR

FRI. MAY 8 May Volunteer Celebration,
6:30pm, MPR Patio

SAT. MAY 9 PTA Spring Carnival, 11am - 3pm

MON. MAY 25 Memorial Day - NO SCHOOL

THURS. MAY 28

Spring Open House, 6 - 8pm
Science Fair, 5:30 - 8:30pm, MPR & Library
Art Show, 6 - 8pm, Art Room

FRI. MAY 29 June Volunteer Celebration,
6:30pm, The Arlington Cafe

FRI. JUNE 5 Movie Night, 7pm, MPR

THURS. JUNE 11 Last Day of School

BULLETIN BOARD

May & June Volunteer Happy Hours

MAY Felicia Layser Robertson
Friday, May 8, 6:30 pm @ the
MPR patio for pizza

JUNE Outgoing 6th Gr. Parents
Friday, May 29, 6:30 pm @
The Arlington

The PTA would like to celebrate our volunteers and encourage volunteerism at our school! If you currently volunteer your time at Hilltop School, have ever volunteered in the past, or are interested in volunteering in the future, come to Volunteer Happy Hour!

These events are to celebrate our many school volunteers, relax with fellow parents and let the weekend begin! **Bring the kids!**

Spring Open House

Thurs. May 28, 6 - 8 pm

This special night allows our teachers to show off their students' work and students to show their parents their classroom, as well as the classrooms for science, art, music, computers and the library. Science Fair presentations will be in the MPR & Library from 5:30 - 8:30pm. **Mark your calendars!**



Megan Molkenbuhr shows her dad, Marty, and sister, Kate, her work papers last May at the Spring Open House.

Spring Art Exhibition

Thursday, May 28, 6:30-8:30pm, Art Room (during Open House)

Start picking your favorite creation of the year! All categories are welcome, including sculpture, photography, drawing, collage, arts and crafts, clay, jewelry & needlework. They need not have been completed at school, or even this year, but create a display and bring them in! Teacher and Parent Arts & Crafts also welcome. This is not a competition, just a chance for kids to see their own artwork on view, and get inspired by what others have done. Drop off time and place TBA. For information contact Camille Mulligan, camille_mulligan@sbcglobal.net.

April Kenvue Spotlight Correction:

Jayne Nichols' husband, Jay Levy, is a physical therapist assistant. He is a creative photographer and his photographs are for sale. Some of his work can be seen at Cafe Roma in Berkeley this August.

We Are the Ones We've Been Waiting For

Pamela Gilbert-Snyder, PTA President

The '08-'09 school year began in the midst of a history-making election campaign. Now-president Obama inspired millions with his message of hope and change, and his inaugural address on Jan. 20 was a call to service, echoing the words of his Super Tuesday speech: "We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change we seek."

As I juggled sometimes overwhelming work, family, and school commitments this year, and asked myself, "why am I doing all this?" these words came to mind. I've been around long enough to know that no one is going to come along and champion my causes, and that if I believe in something, it's up to me to help bring it about. There is no "they" who will take care of it, and time does not stand still while everything lines itself up so that there will be time for volunteering. "We" must simply take it on - or stop complaining!

But complain we do. I have received calls that begin, "I don't want to be the one to take this on, but maybe PTA could..." While I welcome the raising of any issue, and never second guess decisions regarding commitments of time, I wonder if most of us realize that "we" are PTA. There is no "clique" of non-working parents with empty time they need to fill. Just a group of tired, working parents who woke up and realized that if they want the things they believe in to happen, it was up to them.

This has been a tough year for our schools, and it's going to get even tougher. PTA provides a way to confront the challenges our children face and work toward a better future (with some fun thrown in along the way!). It can't happen without us. Thank you to all who are already involved!

If you want to get your feet wet, the following committees are a way to begin: Room Parent Coordinator, Art Night, Art Show, Assembly, Kenvue, Quilt, Room Parent Coordinator, Traffic (Walk to School), Yearbook... and more! See the school website for a list and description of all the committees at <http://kensingtonhilltop.org/pta>.

Spotlight: Hilltop's Sister School Progress Elementary

Second grade teacher **Janet McKnight** was determined to do something to help Hurricane Katrina victims in late August 2005. With the assistance of parent **Tre Curran** and Volunteers In Public Schools, Kensington Hilltop School was partnered with our sister school in Baton Rouge, Progress Elementary. Located in East Baton Rouge, the majority of Progress students are low income. In the aftermath of Katrina, Progress grew from 350 students to 500 students.

In the four years since the partnership formed, Kensington students have raised over \$20,000 for Progress. Fundraising activities have varied from sales of holiday cards designed by students to donations at Ms. McKnight's class plays, such as *All That Jazz* and *Harriet Tubman*. The Acme Bakery donated loaves of bread to sell at one school play. Music teacher **Jan Jones** "goes above and beyond to help the class with the music, which is always such a huge part of our program," says Ms. McKnight. Parents **Patty Coluse** and **Kathleen Beachamp** have consistently supported Ms. McKnight's plays. Hilltop has also collected and sent books to Progress each year.

On March 30, 2009, Ms. McKnight, with art teacher **Karla Clement**, and retired teacher **Linda Bekes**, visited Progress Elementary for



See page 4 for more photos from our sister school in Baton Rouge, LA

the first time. They were promptly greeted upon their arrival by Progress' principal, **Ms. Sarah Henry**. Equipped to facilitate an art project, Ms. McKnight, Ms. Clement and Ms. Bekes spent some creative time with 18 students from kindergarten through 5th grades. They also visited classrooms and met staff members. Ms. McKnight cannot say enough about how much she enjoyed the lovely, gracious and kind people at Progress. She was extremely impressed with the polite students dressed in maroon polo shirts and blue slacks calling them "Ma'am." For Ms. McKnight, that morning was "the most wonderful experience."

For her students, Ms. McKnight hopes to help teach them "...to think outside of themselves. The kids have so much love to give." After visiting Progress Elementary, Ms. McKnight, Ms. Clement and Ms. Bekes spent four days in New Orleans building homes with Habitat for Humanity for local Katrina victims. "There is so much need there, still," she says. We appreciate Ms. McKnight's continuing efforts to let our community help Progress Elementary, as well as the example she sets for her students as a community volunteer reaching out to those in need.

May Volunteer of the Month



The PTA will have a special pizza happy hour celebration for **Felicia Robertson** Friday, May 8, starting at 6:30 pm on the MPR Patio.

Felicia Laysa Robertson grew up in Kensington and graduated from Hilltop, Portola and El Cerrito High. As a Hilltop parent of third grader **Connor**, now in Room 15, she is the current PTA Spring Carnival Chair. She has been on the KEF board for three years, room parent coordinator, carnival committee coordinating the room parents/booth volunteers, and she has helped pour wine with her husband, **Sean**, at a few Garden Parties. In the classroom she has done stations, driven for field trips, acted as Teacher / PTA Liaison, and enjoys selling food at Movie Nights. Her daughter, **Ava**, will start kindergarten in the fall. "I have always done volunteer/charity work probably starting with Girl Scouts at Hilltop and I feel like it is what I have to do as a contributing member of society. I'm off balance and unfulfilled without it," Felicia tells us. "At school it has been a great way to get to know the kids and the families that Connor likes to spend time with. My parents are retired WCCUSD teachers and I like to support the teachers as best I can. I'm also shy and volunteering is a great way to get to know folks without having to be outgoing. It's been especially great this year as so many more hands have gotten in the mix and it makes it more fun/less time for everyone." Felicia also accepted the chair position for the PTA Nominating Committee to help fill board positions for next year's PTA. Thank you Felicia for all that you do for our school!

June Volunteers of the Month - Parents of Graduating 6th Graders

Departing our school with this year's graduating sixth graders will be some parents who have gone above and beyond during their years at Hilltop. All of our many parent volunteers are due a big **Thank You**. What sets these parents apart from all of the other parents who have pitched in to help with the Garden Party, Dads' Club, Carnival, field trips, work parties and the other usual volunteer opportunities, is that they have taken on leadership roles and shouldered major responsibilities among the parent community. We want to thank **Camille Mulligan** and **Karl Hans** for all of their work on the popular Art Nights, **Karen Shebek** for her KEF leadership, **Debbie Reed** for coordinating the Garden Party, **Bo Nolan** for all of the work he did to assist with traffic both on our campus and on the Arlington, **Nette and Mike Barry** for their Dads' Club and KEF Board leadership, and **Karen Whittemore** for coordinating our teacher appreciation luncheons for many years. These parents, along with others whom we have already recognized in the *Kenvue*, will be sorely missed and we wish them well as they (and their children) move on to middle school!

Celebrate our 6th Grade parent volunteers at 269 The Arlington Friday, May 29, starting at 6:30 pm!



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The Sky's the Limit!

We're on the Web!
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www.wccusd.k12.ca.us/kensington

Save the Dates!

AUGUST

25 - First Day of School

SEPTEMBER

- 3 - PTA General Mtg.
- 7 - Labor Day - NO SCHOOL
- 8 - Dads' Club & KEF Mtgs.
- 17 - Back to School Night

KENVUE

Editor: Kim Paige

Kenvue is the newspaper of the Kensington Hilltop Elementary School PTA. Submissions are welcome from parents, staff, and students. Please send your contributions to kimpaige@earthlink.net ten days prior to the first of the month, or leave them in the Kenvue mailbox at the school office (if leaving in mailbox, please provide contact info).

You can find archived PDF documents of Kenvue online at www.hilltopschool.org in the School News and Information >more section.

Hilltop's Read Naturally Program

Allen Meacham

Read Naturally is the school's reading intervention program, serving 100 to 120 of Hilltop's students who need assistance in meeting grade-level standards in reading as well as reading at the level of their classmates. The premise of the Read Naturally program is that reading comprehension is reached only once a student has achieved reading fluency. To build fluency, the program emphasizes a "whole word" approach to reading.

The program is organized into a number of increasingly-difficult levels, each level consisting of 24 non-fiction stories from which the students pick 12 to complete. Students first read a story, then listen to it on tape, and practice reading it at increasing proficiency and fluency levels. Each story is accompanied by questions and writing exercises designed to improve and test comprehension.

The program is directed by Anne Forrest, who is assisted by two trained, paid aides. With three instructors present, each student gets one-on-one attention, checking for comprehension, helping with hard words and the writing exercises. Anne's goal is to have every Read Naturally student attend a minimum of three 50-minute sessions a

week. The cost of Read Naturally instruction and supplies is funded jointly by the District and by the Kensington Education Foundation, which has paid a disproportionate share of the cost due to the District's fiscal crisis.

Anne puts the program and its students in this context: "I'm sometimes asked 'how can Hilltop have so many students in the program, given the school's high test scores?' The answer is the large numbers of students here who read above grade level. Many of the students in Read Naturally would probably be considered "average or above average" readers, on a state-wide basis. Read Naturally helps these students reach the proficiency of their classmates, and so feel comfortable and successful in their Hilltop classroom."

Mrs. Sanders says, "Read Naturally is a key part of meeting the needs of all students at our school. It complements our classroom instruction; students enter Read Naturally struggling to read, and leave as confident, comfortable readers! Who can ask for more from a program?" For more information on Read Naturally, visit kensingtonhilltop.org/ReadNaturally.



Progress Elementary School
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

See Spotlight on page 3 for more information about Hilltop's sister school!