



MEETINGS & EVENTS

Half Day

FRIDAY

JANUARY 5

11:30 DISMISSAL

Coffee with Susan

THURSDAY

JANUARY 11

8:30-9:30AM

Martin Luther

King Holiday

MONDAY

JANUARY 15

Family Meeting

THURSDAY

JANUARY 25

6:30 PM

ENCOUNTER: The Fourth Grade Opera Experience

by Nicholas Bleiberg and Isaac Brooks, Fourth Grade Teachers

In what unique way does opera help tell a story?

This is the question our fourth graders have examined in their work with the Lincoln Center Institute. The students worked with visiting artist Liz Norman throughout the fall semester, studying the creative and collaborative aspects of opera at work in the LCI production of Mozart's *Così fan Tutti* (renamed *Così Cosa* because of the liberties it took with the original). The LCI performance in November included not only the remarkable music and humor of Mozart, but also an under-the-hood look at the way the performers, stage technicians, conductor, and orchestra interact to bring a performance to life. The cast began the show in street clothes and added production elements as they went along.

We learned that opera is a sung stage drama set, usually, to continuous music. It combines all the great skills of song, instrumental playing,

drama, dance, and design to tell us things about human character, feeling, mood, and motivation that music or words on their own are powerless to express. Operas are concerned not so much with plots but with states of mind.

Now we are using the lessons we learned in studying *Così Cosa* to create our own opera. It is based on a single moment in history—the arrival of Christopher Columbus and the Spanish in the “New World” and their initial meeting with the native Taino people. It is a moment which altered the course of history.

Our reading program, which has run parallel to our opera study, includes individual and group readings of two wonderful fiction books about this time in history, *Pedro's Journal* by Pam Conrad and *Morning Girl* by Michael Dorris. The first is the fictional journal of Columbus's “ship's boy,” recounting the voyage of the *cont. on page 7*

Gala Reflections

by Bonnie Stetson

The Circus of Stars did indeed come to town on the night of December 9th. It certainly kept the Circus part of its promise, with color and lights and entertainment in many “rings.” But I remember it most for its star-like qualities that twinkled through all of that, the gentle glow of congeniality, the sturdy motion of shared purpose, and the beacon of community on a dark, wintry night.

Arriving in the cold, we found a warm, festive reception, filling the auditorium with many other

Manhattan School families to hear a delightful concert given by the Lower School Chorus. Under the gifted conducting of Eric Von Bleicken, their performance was outstanding.

Dinner followed, served in the magically transformed cafeteria. The menu of herb chicken, barbecue, rice pilaf, vegetable pasta and fresh salad was perfect and absolutely delicious, thanks to the miraculous work of Walter Boyd and his crew of dedicated parents and kitchen staff. Everyone enjoyed their meal in a lovely *cont. on page 2*

Medieval Presentations

It was memorable. At one point in the day, Debi was so tense that she told everybody not to talk to her. Parents started coming at about 12:00, and at 12:45, we started off our medieval presentation by having a delicious lunch, presented by the food groups. After we polished off the food, the groups started presenting. Some did dioramas, some did skits, some dioramas, and some did combinations of the above. It was a lot of fun. It was memorable.
Sarah Goldsmith-Greenberg
Debi's Fifth Grade

NEWSLETTER TEAM

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WITH CONTRIBUTIONS

THIS MONTH BY:

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FOSTER, DIANE

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MEREDITH SMITH,

BOB STEIN, BONNIE

STETSON, ELIZA

WICKS-ARSHACK,

DANIELLE WHITE, RAY

YAMPOLSKY, AND

LUYING YAN.

Next Newsletter

Deadline:

Friday, January 15

Arts Funding Challenge

by Diane Seymour Schoer

At the breakfast meeting on Thursday, December 14th, the twenty or so parents attending discussed with Susan the need to replace funding from the five-year Annenberg arts grant which is now in its final year. This money has been used for the Dalcroze and drama classes run by the Lucy Moses School personnel.

School Coordinator Claudine Jellison and Grant-Writing Chairperson Mary McKay recently met with representatives from the Lucy Moses school regarding a joint effort to identify sources and solicit replacement funds so that these classes, which have become such a valuable addition

to our curriculum, can continue. The grant-writing committee will be meeting in January (at a date to be announced).

Knowing that many of us have a vital interest in the arts, or are artists and performers ourselves, Mary is asking for our support.

Anyone who might have leads to corporations or other organizations that could provide full or matching grants for arts activities and/or anyone who has not yet signed up for the grant-writing committee but would like to participate in the actual grant-writing process, please contact Mary McKay at home: 663-8225, or at work: 854-2823.

Gala Reflections

continued from page 1

atmosphere of soft light with music graciously provided by John Naberezny, Mark Suozzo, Marc Puricelli, and Chuck Waldon. We were also treated to an inspiring performance by dance teacher Marcea Daiter and her dance troupe.

As dinner finished it was time to move on. To the tantalizing Silent Auction with more than 300 items available through the efficient organization of Bob Stein. The Star Bazaar—masterminded by Jodie Trapani, and the product of several very fun and social crafting parties with parents and children—was perfect for Holiday shopping. One could also choose Chair Massage, Fortune Telling, or select dessert at the Bake Sale tent. The lower gym was the place for children's activity tables and games courtesy of Rebecca White and Brad Taylor. All of our Upper Grade students pitched in to help wherever they were needed most to make the evening a success before going to enjoy their own party in the second floor gym. There they were hosted by DJ Teamu Bakot and very adequately chaperoned by willing parents and teachers, organized by Wilhelmina Waldon.

Concurrently with all this activity, John Hillner and Wendy Waring were conducting the Live Auction in the cafeteria, which produced some heated bidding for the class projects. Many thanks to all the teachers who worked with Art teacher Debbie Kleps to help the children create the fanciful lamps, curio cases, CD tower and cabinet. Special thanks must be mentioned for

the efforts of teacher Christina Choi who worked with her students to create beautiful journal books and cards and also hosted a children's activity table all evening.

Michael Chang seemed to be everywhere; a ringmaster extraordinaire! Behind the scenes, taking notes on everything and supporting it all, was Michael's co-chair, Vicki Abelson. We are also grateful to Ronald Daise, Sheldon Moore and Candida Rodriguez who are building staff and security and who joined in and worked with us all evening to keep everything running smoothly.

Last but certainly not least, there does not seem to be a big enough way to say thank you to Jane Hart whose endless work behind the scene and on the scene made this event possible. Jane, we love you.

My husband and I were infused with the energy and sense of community that surrounded us all night from the dinner table to the crowd bidding good-naturedly at the silent auction to the festivity of the Star Bazaar to the hopping Upper Grade party. It is wonderful to belong to a school community that is vibrant, creative, down to earth and truly lives as a family. My daughter Sorrel and I joined in two of the pre-Gala crafting nights (think of an old fashioned quilting bee) to help make Star Bazaar items. We are new to the Manhattan School but were welcomed wholeheartedly into the crafting with an enveloping warmth and comforting acceptance. The same warm feeling permeated the Gala evening. Our Manhattan School community should be nourished and cherished for it is unique and special and deserves our constant stewardship.

Letter from Susan

illustration by
Claire Daley
Sheri's kindergarten
class

Dear Families,

At MSC we are always seeking ways to meet the educational needs of our children. As a staff we regularly share with each other the different ways and techniques that encourage children to learn and to reach their full potential. Within our classrooms we have found it crucial to include “child focused” attitudes and approaches rather than solely thinking about the children by their assigned grade levels. In this newsletter I will begin a “chat” with you about some of the ways that MSC has acknowledged the challenge of working with children at a variety of levels within the same classroom while also ensuring that our practices are both developmentally appropriate and child sensitive.

As we work with students, there is one curricular and instructional strategy that has helped the staff and me better understand our students and it has also enhanced the quality of our teaching. This curricular strategy focuses on the idea that there are “different ways of knowing.” The “different ways of knowing” idea values that all children (and all people for that matter) have specific areas of both strength and weakness and that ability and intelligence exist not only in the traditional areas of language and mathematics but, also in five other areas of development. They are bodily kinesthetic, spatial, musical, interpersonal and intrapersonal. Educator Howard Gardner first articulated this theory of multiple intelligences and it is this theory that supports our belief that children are different and that each student is unique.

This overall idea is important to us in teaching our students because of the way that learning proceeds in MSC classrooms. While implementing the curriculum we don't just develop themes or units of study to teach

the children by simply sequencing teacher-directed activities that seem to go in a single specific direction. Nor do we focus our unit of study only on reading, writing or math. We do not demand that all the children do the same thing at the same time. In planning all learning we follow a particular learning cycle. First, we help the children to become aware of the idea or concept so that they can bring what they already know and have experienced to the topic enabling teachers to build on a child's prior knowledge. The students will ask lots of question, design ways to figure out answers and make decisions about the ways that they will find out and share what they learn and understand. Our teachers then allow children to experience a concept through reading, research, and books. Then students demonstrate their understanding using their own strengths by building a model, by interviewing significant people or by recording measurements based upon their studies in math, reading, writing and technology skills. All planning is time consuming and it always requires staff collaboration as grade team partners as well as collaboration across the grades with arts and literacy specialists. We'll continue this “chat” next month.

The staff and I wish you the best of everything in this New Year. As always, we welcome your thoughts and suggestions.

As always,

Susan



Coffee with Susan

Sponsored by the MSC Communications Committee.

And While We Played...

The Circus of Stars earned the Manhattan School for Children better than \$43,000 (net). \$33,483 of that has already been collected, with approximately \$10,000 still outstanding from the silent auction. What a wonderful gift to our children!

tee.

Do you have questions about MSC? Want to know the latest news? Would you like to meet another parent or two who has chosen to send their children here?

A Cheer for the Silent Team

The Silent Auction Committee would like to thank all those who participated in making this year's auction our most successful by far. Each one of you who solicited a donation, offered a service, donated merchandise, helped with set-up, staffed the table, and of course all those of you who bid generously on the nearly three-hundred items, are part of our winning team. Bob Stein would especially like to thank Susan Donovan for getting the ball rolling with phone calls and organizing Special Events dates; Vicki Abelson, Bonnie Stetson, Virginia Barbarin, Michael Chang, and Committee member Diane

Schoer for their invaluable help with data input; Gary Skeggs for his characteristically tireless work; and of course, Jane Hart for her usual commitment of time and energy that we will depend on until the last Special Event is over. If any of you still have unclaimed items, please contact Bob Stein 212-666-9322 or steinwei@aol.com.

Enjoy your items, please patronize those businesses that donated to our school, and thanks again for your participation. See you at the bidding wall next year!

The Silent Auction Committee

Sweet Treats

Our November 17th Bake Sale collected over \$500. Thanks to all who baked, staffed, and bought.

Two more are planned: Friday, February 9th and Friday, April 20th. Mark the dates and select your recipes.

Read All About It

MSC'S FIRST MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION SALE IS A SUCCESS STORY TO TELL. WE HAVE COLLECTED \$6,700 AND WILL LIKELY COLLECT SEVERAL HUNDREDS MORE FROM MAIL-IN SUBSCRIPTIONS AND RENEWALS. FORTY PERCENT OF EARNINGS ARE RETURNED TO US AS PROFIT.

ORGANIZER ANNIE KOLPIN SENDS SPECIAL THANKS TO VICKY KLEINMAN, JANE LEVITT, AND KATHLEEN MARSHALL AND ALL THE OTHERS WHO HELPED IN LARGE AND SMALL WAYS IN MAKING THE EFFORT POSSIBLE. AND THANKS ALSO TO ALL OF THOSE WHO PURCHASED OR RENEWED SUBSCRIPTIONS. IT WAS A GREAT START FOR OUR FIRST EFFORT.

IRS Letters

As you know, contributions to the Friends of the Manhattan School for Children are tax-deductible. PTA Treasurer Dan Arshack is pleased to provide a tax letter

HUNGRY FOR PIZZA?

WELL, YOUR KIDS ARE ANYWAY.

Famiglia

BROADWAY AT 111TH STREET

MONDAY, JANUARY 8TH

5:30 'TIL 8:00 PM

EAT IN OR ORDER OUT

JUST TELL THEM YOU'RE FROM MSC...

AND THEY'LL DONATE A PERCENTAGE OF YOUR BILL TO US. ENJOY AN EASY DINNER WHILE SUPPORTING MSC.

Involvement and Community

Spending time with other MSC parents, raising money for the school and having a lot of fun. Am I talking about the Winter Gala? No, I am talking about my shift at Barnes & Nobles a few weeks back gift wrapping with fellow first grade parents Vicki Abelson and Dana Moses, an event organized by Fran Grissom.

Right on the heels of this great activity was another, the Winter Gala. And although the final figures are not in, if everybody who came and participated had as much fun as I did, then it must have been a great success. Thank you to all who contributed their time and efforts in making this year's Winter Gala possible. Special thanks has to go to my co-chair, Vicki Abelson and especially to Ms. Winter Gala herself, Jane Hart.

Even though I hope Vicki and I will be as successful in organizing future Galas as Jane has been in the past, I know this will only be possible with both the continued and, dare I say, increased involvement from all MSC families. There are many ways for you to become involved with us and helping with all the work that is necessary in providing the best school for our children. There are numerous committees that have been assigned tasks which need more participants. Just reading this newsletter should present you with a host of possible activities. Just ask. And for those who don't ask, I am giving you a friendly warning as co-chair of future Winter Galas, Vicki and I will be doing a lot of asking. Watch out for the guy in the tall purple hat!

Besides involvement, I want to say a few words about community and knowing all those who comprise it. I have to admit, unfortunately I am the type of person that is lousy with names. This is my second year at MSC and, oh sure, I recognize a lot of faces, but I still am learning who is who in our big family. I am guessing that if I feel this way, then I am probably not alone. There are different ways to discover each other. I was fascinated to read the pieces that the teachers wrote in the last newsletter, introducing themselves. I am pleased to meet new people at the various committee meetings and workshops. I am trying to get to know as many members of our community as possible and to learn about them, their talents and attributes, which each person has. I think getting to know ourselves, our strengths and our resources is very important.

It is my intent and commitment to support our school in any way that Susan, her staff, our teachers, our children, my fellow parents and the community as a whole require and in which I am able. I hope you share this sentiment and will join in this effort. Now there's a resolution for this new year.

Best wishes to all for a happy 2001 and remember, Spring Fair is just around the corner!

Michael Chang
PTA Secretary

PTA PERSPECTIVE



Above illustration by Ray Yampolsky; Suzanne's Kindergarten. The class was asked to circle the words that rhymed and to circle the words that appeared more than once in the poem.

Natural History Museum

In social studies we were studying early man. We went to the Natural History Museum to wrap up the early man unit. There were some models of what the early people might have looked like. We had a few questions to answer and we answered them successfully. Overall, the trip was successful.

Many thanks to all the chaperones. We couldn't have gone without you.

Eliza Wicks-Arshack,
Danielle White,
and Meredith Smith
Anessa's Sixth Grade
Homeroom

Barnes & Noble: Act I

From organizer Fran Grissom to all who helped with the Barnes & Noble gift wrapping event in early December: Stella Kim, Barbara Dill, Deirdre Freeman, Kathleen Marshall, Tatiana Hoover, Dana Moses, Michael Chang, Vicki Abelson, Annie Kolpin, Stacey Rodkin, Jane Levitt, Loretta Daley, Polly Runyon, Sue Radmer, Carmen (sorry, Carmen, don't know your last name), Kim Serving, Caren Austin, Idee Simon, Gary Skeggs, and Sean Grissom—I applaud you!!

Lucy Remembered

Thank you to all of those in our community who have made contributions to the Lucy Wicks Fund for the Manhattan School for Children. Our contributions, combined with those from outside the MSC family, total \$20,540 so far. This fund, created in memory of founding parent and guiding light Lucy Wicks, will be used to support MSC's educational programs and to sustain its unique spirit.

Almost Flying

Two weeks ago we saw the Parson's Dance Company perform at the New Victory Theater. My class sat in the balcony, which is the top level. The company performed about eight dances. My favorite one was called "Caught," probably because they used a strobe light to make a woman "fly." It must have been quite a job for her to time the jumps so perfectly that the strobe light "caught" her every time.

Another of the dances looked like some kind of battle because of the costumes, which resembled Army and Navy uniforms.

I could tell that more than half of my class liked it because almost everyone was talking about it as we left the building.

Ezra Skolnik
Wendy's Third Grade

Fairway
A drawing
by Luying
Yan,
Suzanne's
kindergarten
after their
trip to the
market.



Home Sweet Home

We went to Ellis Island. We saw the immigrants' bags and boxes that they brought over from the countries that they came from. We did a test that grown-up immigrants did. The test was to make a square out of puzzle pieces. We learned that people had to answer questions to enter New York City. Some of the questions were what is your name and are you a criminal. If you told them things like you were a criminal you had to go back to your country. When we went to Ellis Island we passed the Statue of Liberty. You should go there. It is fun!

Rachel Alighieri Lippin-Foster,
Wendy's Third Grade

Barnes & Noble: Act II

Urgent Call for Volunteers

Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of Sean and Fran Grissom, Barnes and Noble has offered MSC a percentage of the proceeds from a cash register in their 66th Street store on Monday, January 29th. This is an opportunity to raise thousands of dollars from the community, not from our own pockets.

To succeed at this, we will need teams of parents to encourage customers to wait at our cash register as a way of supporting our public school. Fran is planning two-hour shifts from 9am to 9pm and she will need as many as 50 people. Yes, this is a workday for many of us but if your workplace can be flexible, this is the time to ask for it. Barnes and Noble is a valuable partner in this and other fundraising efforts and the benefit to our school could far exceed what we can contribute individually.

If you haven't made a volunteer contribution to MSC yet this year, this is the occasion to make it. Fran can be reached at 877-8146. And if you don't call her, you can count on a call from the class parents committee. Please make this day a top priority.

cont. from page 1 Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria. *Morning Girl* is a narrative of life on a Taino island in the days before the Spanish arrive. Both stories culminate with the meeting of the Spanish and Taino peoples, and the events that follow are described in the words of each narrator; the intimacy our readers develop with the characters in each book underscores the significance of the events of 1492.

Non-fiction books such as *The Log of Christopher Columbus* and *If You Were There in 1492*, as well as various Internet sites, provide us with valuable research tools. There is so much we can learn about these two very different cultures, from their relationship with their environment to the way they named their children.

Research is the underpinning of our social studies curriculum. It is essential for our students to find multiple “pathways” to understanding a group of people or a significant event in history, so that they can 1) establish a more intimate connection to people and events and 2) find the most effective individual learning strategies for themselves. As our students move on

to middle school, their research skills will become even more integral to their work.

Knowing the story is just the first step in creating our opera. This multi-media experience requires the efforts of many different people and many different skills to bring it to life. We are working especially closely with dance teacher Martha Cataldo-Casey.

How do different people, with different technical abilities, experiences, ideas and opinions work together to create one product? What are the advantages and disadvantages of using this medium? What are the advantages and disadvantages of collaborating with others?

For the fourth grade, our opera is the product of four special teams:

THE PLAYBILL STAFF is responsible for chronicling the opera project, for providing descriptions of each member of our company and their role in the project, and for creating a lasting curriculum guide for future fourth graders.

THE ENSEMBLE is a group of singers and actors who will be writing the lyrics to our ensemble piece and acting the parts of different Spanish and Taino roles.

THE LIBRETTISTS/NARRATORS will be transcribing all of the lyrics and stage directions so

that people in the audience can follow along. This group will also introduce the performance and narrate some of the non-speaking sections of the opera.



THE DANCE-AND-SCENERY TROUPE will be composing and performing movements that portray not only the events of our opera story, but the natural environment of the Caribbean as it affects the characters in the story.



We want our students not only to develop as artists, storytellers, researchers, and performers, but as collaborators—people who use their strengths to benefit a group of people while learning from the strengths of others. *The Encounter Opera* is planned to bring the vital skills of collaboration to the forefront of the fourth grade social studies experience. Look for our production later this month.



The three illustrations on this page, from *Encounter* by Jane Yolen, illustrated by David Shannon (Voyager Books, 1996), were given to the students to inspire their opera

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE WORK OF THE LINCOLN CENTER INSTITUTE, VISIT THEIR WEBSITE AT WWW.LCINSTITUTE.ORG

The Manhattan School is back on line. Check out the school website featuring the cafeteria menu, school calendar of events, and the MSC Newsletter in pdf form. Want to help? Contact Brad Taylor at 865-1523 or (more likely you're the type who will want to) e-mail him at brad@alldone.com

Communications Committee Meeting

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17TH, 7PM
AT STARBUCKS,
BROADWAY BETWEEN
110TH & 111TH

Want to talk about how we talk to each other? Want to help with the newsletter, website, morning coffees, notices? Want to just drink coffee? This is the meeting for you.

FOR QUESTIONS,
CONTACT KAREN
MOONEY, 663-7137,
MOONEYKL@AOL.CO
M.

Calendar

- January 1: HAPPY NEW YEAR!
January: Grade 8 will have extra math classes (Tues 8-8:50; Wed 3:50 - 4:40)
January: Grade 4 opera performance
January: Grade 1 singing performance
January: Grade 8's going to *Thirteen Days* movie
January 2: Welcome Back to School!
January 5: Half-day
January 5: Leadership Team Meeting
Week of January 8: Grade 7 to Dyckman Farmhouse,
January 10-12: Grade 5 to Frost Valley Environmental Center,
January 10: Grade 3 to Museum of Natural History - Eastern Woodland Native American exhibit,
January 11: Coffee with Susan
January 12: Parents' visit to Kindergarten's Marketplaces
January 15: NO SCHOOL, Martin Luther King Day
January 17: Communications Committee Meeting
January 18: Applicant Open House
January 18: Grade 5 to Metropolitan Museum - Arms and Armour exhib.
January 23: Grade 5 to Stock Exchange,
January 24: Photo Day
January 25: Family Meeting
January 26: Progress Reports
January 29 - February 2: Grade 4 State English Test
January 29: Barnes & Noble Cash Register Day
January 30, 31: Children's visits for prospective students
February 1,5,6,7: Children's visits for prospective students
February 2: Half day
February 2: Leadership Team Meeting
February 7: Pocketful of Wonders, Clark Theatre, Grade 2's
February 8: NO SCHOOL, Professional Development]
February 9: Bake Sale
February 12: Family Conferences begin
February 13: Half day for Conferences
February 16: Holocaust Museum, Grade 5's
February 19 - 23: NO SCHOOL, Winter Recess

Attention all Mac-ophiles!

Our Technology Committee continues to assist with keeping the school's sizable number of **Macintosh** computers up and running. Tasks include everything from physically cleaning computers, monitors, mice, and keyboards to updating systems and applications to troubleshooting and solving network problems. Work will be done during the school day (individual and classroom schedules permitting) or during organized evening work sessions. If you enjoy working on **Macs** (some of us do!) and want to help, contact Gary Skeggs at 866-4072 (home), work (675-7600) or via e-mail at skeggs@interport.net. Let's keep our kids computers up and running.

BULLETIN BOARD

Bulletin Board notices are free to members of our community. Business advertisements available at reasonable cost. Drop notices in the Newsletter mailbox in the fifth floor school office or contact Karen Mooney, 663-7137.

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