



Besant Hill School Parents Newsletter

COMING UP
IN
JANUARY:

- BHS Admissions Open House. January 18, 2010. See page 5 for more details.
- **"Schools Going Green" Conference.** January 23, 2010. See page 3 for more details.
- Actors Festival. January 30, 2010. See page 7 for details.

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VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

DECEMBER 2009

Message from our Head of School

Several years ago when my big children were still small children we anxiously awaited the first snow of the season. For those who may not know this, until we arrived at BHS, we lived most of our lives together in New England where snow was deep and often sticky enough to make great snow angels. My son Colton and I began a strange and delightful tradition together that has carried through to this day. It involved snow and jumping head first into the white to make snow angels in our swimsuits. Over the years Donita, Natalie and Galen stood on the stoop and applauded our lunacy. I cannot recall the reasoning - but it doesn't really matter. It was, as Tevye said in *Fiddler on the Roof*, "A tradition!" Our fam-

ily's own tradition and one that usually ended with us all cuddled up in front of a fire with chocolate cocoa mustaches. When we moved to Ojai four years ago, we realized we needed to find ways to continue and create traditions that were better suited for the climate. Leave it to my wife Donita to decide that since there was no snow - and never likely to be snow on the ground - that we should continue our tradition of snow angels in our swimsuits on the beach on Christmas Day. We have rounded it out with drawings in the sand, games and a cookout. It is as the kids today say - AWESOME! I consider myself lucky - I know I am lucky! Our kids still find some kernel of interest in

hanging out with us old fogies and I think the traditions we share will keep them coming back for years to come.

As I write this I am witnessing my rock and roll life go by as I watch the Rock and Roll Hall



of Fame's 25th Anniversary Special. Aretha, Crosby, Stills, Nash, U2. Bruce Springsteen, Stevie Wonder, Sam Moore, Mick Jagger and Simon and Garfunkel. I am constantly jumping up and down smiling and remembering each funkadelic moment of

(Continued on page 5)





Photos by Marie Samson

Family, Food, Nature, Friendship, Art, Theatre, Dance, Music....

On October 23rd and 24th students, parents and faculty joined together at Besant Hill School for a weekend honoring the school's beginnings and celebrating the accomplishments of its community today.

With a beautiful dedication of a new Grape Arbor, parents and faculty paid tribute to Dr. Guido Ferrando, one of the school's founders and teachers, who is still remembered by many alumni as "the most inspirational professor I ever had." His vision, 50 years ago, of a school that would focus on the Arts and the Socratic Method was evident on campus throughout the weekend.

At the opening reception in the Beatrice Wood Center, an impressive collection of whimsical paintings by BHS alum Chi Birmingham transported us to magical places in this gifted artist's imagination, reminding us of the story-telling power of painting; while on the other side of campus, the Zalk Theatre had standing-room only for its annual Fall Talent Show. With an array of musical performances, graceful aerial dances, soulful monologues and comedic skits, this year's Fall Talent Show exemplified the passion and creative talent of our BHS students and left us all elated and awed by what these young artists can achieve.

No doubt, Dr. Ferrando and his fellow founders would be proud to see how their mission continues to inspire our kids today.

BESANT HILL STUDENTS VISIT SAN RAFAEL

Faculty also attend 2009 Bioneers Conference, meet visionary heroes

In October, Besant Hill School of Happy Valley students and faculty attended the 2009 Bioneers Conference in San Rafael, CA. The conference takes place at the Frank Lloyd Wright designed Marin Center.

Each of the students and faculty attending applied for and received either a group or individual scholarship. The students attending, led by BHS Director of Sustainability Tod Cossairt, were Lily Brown, Georgia Metz, Griffin Davis, Victoria Pollack, Charlie Wannagat, Lily Jensen, Willow Anwar, and India Maxwell.

“Sustainability education will come to play an increasingly critical role in our schools primarily because it is an educational curriculum designed to model a creative vision for positive change and hope for future generations of students,” said Cossairt. **“This is an educational movement that resonates with the natural and cultural resources of Besant Hill School: resources that, for generations, have combined to offer our students a perfect opportunity to develop an experiential awareness for environmental principles, while providing them the framework for envisioning the prospect of a sustainable future.”**

Celebrating their 20-year anniversary, Bioneers has created a forum of diversity, inspiration, and opportunity to hear and meet the people that are considered the visionary heroes of the sustainability movement. This is the fourth year that BHS students and staff have participated in the Bioneers conference.



Second Annual “Schools Going Green” Conference

Theme:

Sustaining Sustainability

Saturday

January 23, 2010

Besant Hill School

*Look for more details in
January’s issue or on the BHS website:*

<http://www.besanthill.org/>

Green Tips

By
Todd Cossairt



It takes 26 fluid ounces of oil (over three 8 ounce glasses) to make a McDonalds Double Quarter Pounder, from the cultivation of the corn that feeds the cattle at the factory farm to the packaging the burger is in when the salesperson hands it to you. This same burger puts 13 pounds of Carbon into the atmosphere, the equivalent of burning 7 pounds of Coal or driving 13 miles in your car. Interestingly, most people in Ojai will put less Carbon into the atmosphere driving to McDonalds than they will by eating the Double Quarter Pound Burger.

Source: Michael Pollan, Bioneers Conference Speech



Vintage Recipes

The following story and recipe were submitted by Radha Sloss. Radha's mother, Rosalind Rajagopal, was one of the original founders and longtime Headmistress of Happy Valley School.

THE STORY

In 1936, William Dieterle invited the great Austrian director Max Reinhardt to Hollywood to co-direct *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Dieterle was a good friend of my mother, Rosalind. He persuaded her to let me play the role of the little changeling prince much to my grandmother's dismay, who was very pleased when I came down with a mistakenly diagnosed case of mumps and had to be replaced. However, I recovered in time to be invited to watch the entire screening, a never to be forgotten experience, even at the age of five. That was the end of my film career but our association with the Reinhardts continued. Max's son Gottfried was a friend of the Ojai Players and Iris Tree. One of Max's grandsons attended the Happy Valley summer camp that Jimmy and I started in 1951.

Max was an inventive cook and shared the recipe below with Rosalind.



BHS Parents: Join us for coffee

every Tuesday morning after drop-off for our weekly gatherings at the Ojai Coffee Roasters on Ojai Avenue. No need to RSVP. Just drop in. At least a few of us are there every Tuesday after 8:15.



Chilled Figs in Cream and Bittersweet Chocolate

- *Slice appropriate number of unpeeled fresh black figs*
- *Whip enough heavy cream to smother*
- *Flavor cream with powdered sugar, cinnamon, port or vanilla*
- *Toss in figs and grate a thin veil of bitter sweet chocolate on top.*
- *Chill.*

BHS Vintage Recipes

December 2009

(Continued from page 1)

Message from our Head of School

my teenage and young adult life through each song. I am reminded that each of my family's birthdays include the song Birthday by The Beatles. Tradition. I think of John Lennon and I remember being four and watching The Beatles on Ed Sullivan with my mom and dad. I can still see my mom clapping her hands and shrieking with each "yeah, yeah, yeah!" My dad sang (badly and out of tune) - but the photograph remains. My family watched Ed Sullivan together every Sunday night from that point forward until Ed went off the air. Tradition!

BHS has traditions too. Fall Trips; Opening and Closing Council; music, readings and silence at Morning Meetings; Junior and Senior Retreats; Senior Speeches at Commencement; Variety Shows; 100 Nights; Candlelight Ceremony and International Day, to name a few. While some of these traditions are young, several had their inception back with our founders. Old Tevye may have been right - we don't always know why we do things over and over again - but they are traditions. And more often than not, the meaning becomes clearer and clearer the more we embrace each moment. Last month, that feeling was echoed by a visiting alum -

who, after attending Morning Meeting, said to me, "This is the same place I attended forty years ago. The same feeling. Yippee!" The beauty of traditions is they can begin anytime. Don't wait for snow to fall in Southern California. My hope for all of you is that you have your own traditions to hold close this season and when you have your son or daughter at home during this time, if all else fails, spend a little time in your bathing suit and head to the nearest beach or snow pile.

Wishing you warm tidings and peace!

Warmly,
Paul



"Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day with a great teacher."

Japanese Proverb

From the Admissions Office

BHS Admissions Open House for prospective students will be Monday, January 18th, 2010 from 9:00am-3:00pm.

Register online at www.besanthill.org or call the office.

Please spread the word to your friends or anyone who might be interested in attending BHS!

Need-based financial aid available.

RE-ENROLLMENT DEADLINE

Re-enrollment contracts for current students will be sent out by the end of January. The deadline to secure your space for next year is Friday, February 19th, 2010.

Local Families with Fruit Trees . . .

I would like to mention to local families that may have fruit trees (citrus) that the kitchen would love and use that fruit. It seems like so many of us have land and trees in the Ojai Valley and do not really pick or use this fruit. Well if it is pesticide free we would love it! This time of year lemons, oranges, tangerines and avocados are in season... So if anyone is looking at a fruit tree in their yard busting with fruit thinking "What a shame, someone should eat that," we will...

Alex Smith
BHS Business Office



SMOOTH AS GLASS

by Kathryn O'Loughlin

This is a visceral production of Tennessee William's *The Glass Menagerie*. The story is set in times much like our own with shattered families and dust bowl prospects. The characters twist and turn in a failed economy, and despite the palpable love between them, cannot escape their fates. Director Scott Campbell is playing all the major keys flawlessly but also, more importantly, the shifting minor keys that illuminate the haunting beauty of each character and the cruel trap that is their lives.

Betsy Randall is a revelation. This is not the mother we are familiar with from *Boy Meets World* or *Home Improvement*. Under her shimmering and mesmerizing charm, beats the heart of a mother who loves her children deeply yet cannot direct them. However, she is far from the impervious "smother": she is playing her cards as best she can, with verve and tenacity, but she is holding the wrong cards in the wrong time and her failure is heartbreaking. Randle's characterization is like watching light play on a beautiful tapestry; the whispering pastels skitter across this Amanda's grace only to reveal the deeply saturated primary hue and cry inside.

Alex Neher is also not the apple cheeked crowing rooster of last season's *Chantecler*. His is a world weary Tom with the pallor of a prisoner. He is at the end of the rope that is strangling him with frustration and claustrophobia yet his love for his sister and, yes, his mother is just as apparent as his desire to escape them. He tackles the poetry that is Tennessee Williams's script with the precision of an ice pick – sometimes chiseling delicately, sometimes stabbing in heartless self-defense.

Brett Baxter is as well not the saucy coquette of *Chantecler* and this season's *Playwrights Festival*. Hers is a quiet, ethereal Laura who drifts painfully through a world that is too loud, too bright, too overwhelming. Her moments of beauty and warmth in the second act only underscore her self-imposed seclusion. I believe Tennessee Williams once used the words "A garden enclosed is my sister" from the Songs of Solomon to describe his sister Rose upon whom the character of Laura is based. It is his and his characters' tender treatment of Rose/Laura that is so touching and so ahead of its time. The phrase "Nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands" (E.E. Cummings) aptly introduces the 1949 New Classics edition of the play. Ms. Baxter has such hands.

Dan Grosbach, as the all important gentleman caller, is a fine and gentle man in the best sense of the word. His brings a deep but gracious masculinity to the role. His sensual alto voice and seductive sensitivity towards Laura make us hope against hope that just this once ...

Why should we visit this play again and again? Because Tennessee Williams is a master poet and playwright who treats his subjects with such delicacy and depth and artistry of words that it is impossible to imagine a life in the theater without him. And what has luckily become the Besant Hill team of producers, Sandi Mikkelson and Alex Key, and set design, Scott Campbell, and lighting, Alex Neher, and costumes by Maddie Mikkelson, and actors and director, Scott Campbell, have again achieved a melding of truth and magic that becomes living, breathing, soaring theatre.



The cast and crew of "*The Glass Menagerie*" performed at BHS on November 12, 13 and 14, 2009

To order professional pictures of the show taken by photographer Dean Zaitkowsky, go to: <http://www.snapizzi.com/galleries/0017-SIPS/public>

Actors Festival at BHS

January 30, 2010



This year's Actors Festival will take place on Saturday, January 30, 2010. It's a wonderful day of theatre for any student living in Ventura County who wants to be involved in any aspect of theatre entertainment. Pass the word to any students 15-18 who would be interested in attending this amazing event: www.theactorsfestival.com

Theatre Department Wish List

- ETC Express 48/96 Light Console
- ETC Source 4 Pars, Parnels or Ellipsoidals
- 2 12-Set Dimmer Packs
- Color Scrollers
- Pivoting Lights
- Lapel Microphones for Musicals
- High Quality Vocal Microphones for Concert
- High Quality Ambient Microphone for Concert Recording
- Bank of DMX Controlled Black Lights
- Surround Sound system
- Macintosh G-4 or greater for DMX/Video Control

BHS

DEPARTMENT WISH LISTS

In this and future issues you will find Department Wish Lists. If you have any of the items listed, or know someone who does and would like to donate them, please contact the school; or, if you have similar items that you think the school could benefit from, please let them know.



Music Department Wish List

The Music Department could use any instruments, for example:

- Guitars
- Keyboards
- Trumpets
- Violins
- Saxophones
- Flutes
- Instrument cables
- Microphones
- Old speakers
- PA equipment

Happy Birthday To....

Ana Bostwick-Singer
December 4

Jacob Lashly
December 14

Yang Zheng
December 23

Ryan Kolakowski
December 28

And a Very Special
HAPPY
HALF A CENTURY!!
To Our
Head of School
Paul Amadio
December 9



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS WELCOMED AT OJAI VALLEY MUSEUM

How fortunate we are in Ojai to be in a community where art and history are shared and appreciated. On Thursday, September 3rd, this year's new international students from Besant Hill School of Happy Valley were welcomed to the Ojai Valley Museum for a tour of their permanent historical exhibits and a memorable tour of Sergio Aragones' exhibit guided by the world-famous cartoonist himself. One of our students remarked, "This man is a genius." Moreover, Sergio was so generous with his time. Our new students from all over the world were thrilled to see his books translated into all their languages and to hear his stories and ideas. It was truly a special welcome to the creative world of the Ojai Valley for our students. Thanks to the Ojai Valley Museum and to Sergio.

Sarah White
ESL Director

BHS Hospitality Project

So far we've had several day students & their families invite international students to their homes or to share an activity. This project is off to a successful start! Thanks to the parents who have already engaged in this project. We'll be continuing to match international students & day students for hospitality get-togethers throughout the year. We'd love to have all day students & families participate. Please e-mail (swhite@besanthill.org) me or phone (805-798-2809) anytime. Let's share this lovely valley with the international members of our BHS family!

Sarah White
ESL Director

COMMUNITY SERVICE CORNER

Maddie Mikkelson is busy finishing up her 'Besant Beansies' project -- she formed a club to knit hats for cancer patients and they'll be delivering them to the Cancer Center of Santa Barbara before the winter break.

Getting involved in community service projects is invaluable to our kids, not only because it has become a must for their college application resumes, but, more importantly, because it helps them discover the satisfaction and pride that comes from helping others.

Like Maddie, several other students at BHS have been volunteering in community service projects in Ojai and beyond, and in this "Community Service Corner" we would like to highlight how they are getting involved, their observations and their accomplishments.

Students: Send us your stories (email: Ineher@bak.rr.com) and let us know how you're helping your community locally, or abroad.



PBS series Art 21 at Besant Hill

PBS series Art 21 came to Besant Hill on Monday, November 16 and spent the day filming the advanced visual art class as they presented the first part of a 2 part assignment focusing on Change: Uses of chaos, chance and the unpredictable in art.

This assignment was designed during an Art 21 workshop in NY last summer and is an exploration of the nature of change as an entropic dissolution of existing order into chaos and unpredictability which is part of a cycle inviting new emergent orders to arise. Students were

to come up with strategies to apply a primary paint layer on their canvas by harnessing forces that are not in their control. The second step will be to see into these textured surfaces and release the painting that is in there.

The film will be released sometime next year as part of the Art 21 education initiative.



ART
DEPARTMENT
WISH LIST



- Etching Press
- Artists' flat files

BHS YARD SALE

It's never too early to start planning your Spring cleaning!

Is your garage cluttered with stuff that is gathering dust? Is your closet bursting at the seams with clothes that —let's face it— just don't fit you anymore? Are you really saving all those stuffed animals for your future grandchildren?

We're looking into having a yard sale in March so, if you are planning to get rid of items that are still in good condition but you have no use for anymore, box them up and set them aside for a couple more months and consider donating them to BHS for our first multi-family BHS yard sale.

We'll provide you more details in the upcoming months but, for now, hold on to those "gently-used items" for a while.

TENTATIVELY PLANNED FOR
SPRING 2010



Staff / Faculty Highlights

Katrine Edwards

School nurse



Where were you born?
Pasadena, CA.

Where were you before coming to BHS?
Living in Ojai with my family and working at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital.

Where did you go to school? What was your major in college?
BA from UCSB and ADN from Santa Barbara City College.

How/when did you first hear about Besant Hill School?
A friend of mine was working at the school last year and gave me Megan Walton's card.

How long have you been working at BHS?
I have been working for BHS for one year. I started last October.

If there was one piece of advice Katrine would give students at BHS, it would be:

«Wash your hands.»



Tell us the ONE thing you like best about BHS.

I like the way the students are treated and educated as individuals.

What do you want to accomplish at BHS? What is your mission?

I would like the students to see their health as a connection between body, mind and spirit. They can look at what is going on in their lives and find answers to the way they are feeling.

Who is someone you admire? Why?

My friend Diane Kinzek. She is an amazing nurse midwife that is full of knowledge, kindness, self confidence, and a desire to never stop learning.

What would you like to see the school accomplish in the future, short term or long term?

I enjoy watching the changes BHS is making in education. I enjoy witnessing the successes of the students when they push themselves past their comfort levels to new heights. I would like to see the school continue on the path it is on.

Staff / Faculty Highlights

Nestor Geronimo-Anctil

*Spanish Instructor, Chair of Language Department
and Cross Country Coach*

Where were you born?

Uruapan, Michoacán; México.

Where were you before coming to BHS?

Colegio de Bachilleres - Instituto de Idiomas; México (5 years); E. P. Foster School in Ventura, California (16 years); VCMC Teaching Medical Spanish (10 years).

Where did you go to school? What was your major in college?

Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo In Morelia, Michoacán; México B.A.; Major: Medicine.

How long have you been teaching / working at BHS?

This is my second year.

Tell me the ONE thing you like best about BHS.

Students can do what they love to do and at the same time they are encouraged to try new things.

What do you want to accomplish at BHS? What is your mission?

I want BHS students to be fluent in another language. Not only to fulfill a requirement for college, but to gain a skill they can use for life.

Who is someone you admire? Why?

My parents, because they taught me to be fair with everyone, to accept people just the way they are and to be optimistic no matter what.

Is there anything else you would like to mention?

I have a wife who is also a teacher and three daughters, ages 13, 11 and 9. My oldest daughter, Alexia, is a freshman at BHS.



If there was one piece of advice Nestor would give students at BHS, it would be:

«Put your heart in whatever you do and don't do anything half way. If you start something, you must finish it.»

BHS Calendar of Events

December 2009

Friday, December 11
7:00—10:00 pm
Winter Concert
Students and Families welcome
Admission: No charge
At the Zalk Theatre

Tuesday, December 15
Wednesday, December 16
Thursday, December 17
8:00—3:00 pm
Finals / Assessment Week

Thursday, December 17
Commendation Awards Dinner
5:00—8:00 pm
At The Commons / Zalk Theatre
(Student / Staff attendance mandatory)
Holiday Desert Gathering
8:00 pm
At The Commons
(Parents invited to join)
Resident students permitted to leave w/
parent or guardian following desert

Friday, December 18—
Monday, January 11
Winter Break
NO CLASSES

Monday, December 28
End of Term Evaluations and
Grades sent home

2010

Friday, January 1
Happy New Year!

Monday, January 11
By 5:30 pm
Dorm Students Return

Tuesday, January 12
Classes Resume
Second Semester begins

BHS SPORTS SCHEDULE CONDOR LEAGUE				DECEMBER 2009	
<u>BASKETBALL:</u>					
Date	DAY	VS	Place	Time	
12/2	Wednesday	Bishop Diego Tournament- BH vs New Roads	Bishop	5:30PM	
12/3	Thursday	Bishop Diego Tournament-BH vs North Country Christian	Bishop	5:30PM	
12/4	Friday	Bishop Diego Tournament- BH vs Bishop	Bishop	7:00PM	
12/5	Saturday	Bishop Diego Tournament	Bishop	2:00/3:30PM	
12/8	Tuesday	Oak Park Eagles Varsity Basketball Tournament	Oak Park High	4:30PM	
12/9	Wednesday	Oak Park Eagles Varsity Basketball Tournament	Oak Park High	4:30PM	
12/10	Thursday	Oak Park Eagles Varsity Basketball Tournament	Oak Park High	BI	
12/11	Friday	Oak Park Eagles Varsity Basketball Tournament	Oak Park High	1:00PM	
12/12	Saturday	Oak Park Eagles Varsity Basketball Tournament	Oak Park High	TBA	
<u>GIRLS' SOCCER:</u>					
Date	DAY	VS	Place	Time	
12/5	Saturday	Midland School - CANCELLED	BHS	2:00PM	
12/9	Wednesday	Thacher School - Moved to 2/13 @ 1:00 pm	Thacher	3:00PM	
12/12	Saturday	Oak Grove School	BHS	1:30PM	
<u>BOYS' SOCCER:</u>					
Date	DAY	VS	Place	Time	
12/5	Saturday	Dunn School	Dunn	3:00PM	
12/9	Wednesday	Anacapa School	Elings Park	3:00PM	
12/12	Saturday	Cate School	BHS	3:00PM	

Parent Liaison Committee

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Welcome to the first Issue of our New BHS Parent Newsletter!

As part of our attempt to foster communication between parents and the school, this monthly newsletter is designed to help inform you about past and upcoming events at the school, and provide some fun articles and photos to give you some snippets of **our BHS community and our kids' lives on campus.**

I would like to thank Paul, Donita and Brian Walton for giving me the opportunity and their assistance to launch this project, as well as all the staff and faculty who provided me the information included in this first issue.

On that note, I want to encourage all parents to participate in future issues of this newsletter by sending us your questions, comments and suggestions, as well as any interesting articles, stories or entertaining anecdotes that you would like to share with our BHS community.

This is a work in progress, so your feedback and ideas are not only welcome, but most appreciated! Aun Aprendo.

Wishing you all a peaceful and joyful season with your loved ones!

Luisa Neher
 Parent Liaison

Look for our...

“Senior Highlights”
 Section

Starting in
 January

CLASSIFIEDS

SAT STUDY GUIDES FOR SALE

I have a number of SAT and SAT II (Subject Test) Study guides. (CollegeBoard, Kaplan etc). Some used, some in mint condition. If interested email Luisa at lnheher@bak.rr.com. I will send you a list w/prices. (Proceeds will be donated to BHS Theatre Department.)

FURNITURE FOR SALE

- Twin Pine Captain's Bed with 5 drawers \$175
 - Large Overstuffed Chair—horse pattern \$50
 - Large Country Pine Coffee Table \$150
- Contact Eugenia at: ebsinger@mac.com

YOUR AD HERE

If you wish to place an ad in this Classifieds Section please submit your information, your name and telephone number via email to Luisa at lnheher@bak.rr.com by the 25th of the month prior to publication.

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