

The Columbia Cardinal

Volume 2 - 2006

A Publication of the Columbia Parent Association and School

November

Principal's Message

As we approach Thanksgiving, I think about how fortunate I am to have a loving family, supportive friends, and to work in a profession that is making a difference in the lives of children.

Sometimes we can get so wrapped up in the day-to-day events, that we lose the "big picture" of all the wonderful things in our life. I recently read a book that reminded me to slow down and look around. It was one of the many great books from our Columbia Book Fair. Patrick McDonnell, the author, calls it *Just Like Heaven*. The illustrations and humor throughout the story add to its powerful message. The following is a summary of this delightful story.

Mooch, the cat, fell asleep under his much-loved tree. When he awoke from his nap, the fog had tiptoed in and covered the town. The visibility was limited and Mooch wondered where he was. He thought to himself, "I must be in heaven!" As he ventured off to see the sights, everything seemed so ideal to him. He saw children playing, welcoming neighbors, and even his own loving home. To Mooch, this was the perfect place. He became exhausted from all of his travels and took another nap. While he slept, the fog burned off and the big, yellow sun sparkled through. Mooch awoke and found the birds were chirping, the flowers were blooming and his friends and family were all around. "Wow, this is a great place!" he thought. **Just like heaven.....**

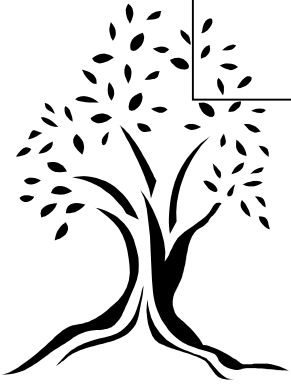
Look around and see all that you have. You can't help but be thankful! Happy Thanksgiving, Columbia!

Important School Dates

- Early Release Days – 11/9 (12:30 dismissal)
- Veteran's Day – 11/10 (no school)
- Parent/Teacher Conferences – 11/22, 12/13, 12/14, 12/15, 12/18, 12/19 (12:30 Dismissal)
- Thanksgiving Break – 11/23, 11/24 (no school)
- Teacher Workday – 12/1 (no school)
- Site Council Meeting – 12/12 (5 PM)
- Winter Break – 12/20 – 1/2 (no school)

Important CPA Dates

- **Elliot Bay Order Forms Due - 11/13**
- **Reptile Man Assembly - 11/17 (7PM)**
- **CPA Meeting – 12/7 (7 PM)**



Reading Rainforest

Wow...what a wonderful, colorful rainforest in the hallway at Columbia! Thank you to all that read and gathered pledges for our read-a-thon and thank you to Amy Holtorf for coordinating the event! This year our read-a-thon raised over \$4,200 for assemblies, field trips, art projects, playground equipment, teacher support, and more. Great Job, Columbia Readers!

Our book fair was another wild event! The books were wonderful and the family night book walk proved to be fun for all! Please notice all of the new classroom & library books that were provided to Columbia with the proceeds of this great event. Thank you to Diane Reardanz and all who helped with the book fair! It was a rainforest of reading and fun!

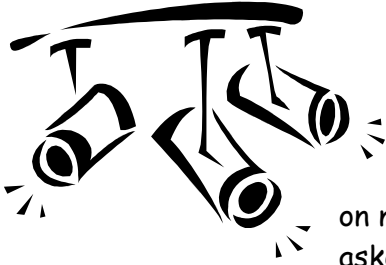
CPA Meetings

I would like to cordially invite all Columbia parents to join us the first Thursday of each month for our parent association meetings. Meetings start at 7:00PM and are generally over about 8:15 PM. We discuss CPA events, after school activities, fundraisers, projects, and general school information. Free childcare is provided on site and everyone is welcome. Our next meeting will be held Thursday, December 7 @ 7:00 PM in the music room. If you have questions or ideas, please contact Susan Hofstetter. Thank you!

December Books and Breakfast



We are planning an early morning event in December. We will gather in the cafeteria at 8:15 AM for muffins and juice and have a community "celebrity" read a book to us. We will get up early and have a great time! We will also have a chance to win a book in our raffle. If you would like to help with planning this event, please contact Susan Hofsetter. More details to follow!



Stage Challenge 2006 Sale in Progress

Our Stage Challenge 2006 Elliot Bay Product Sale is going on now! Each child was given a catalog and an order form and was asked to try to sell a few items to family, friends, neighbors, and parent co-workers. If families choose not to participate in the sale donations can be made directly to the CPA. We hope to earn \$3000 in order to fix up our stage. We hope to earn money for a backdrop, side curtains, lighting, and more. This project will improve our school and benefit all Columbia students and families. Order forms must be turned in to teachers on Monday, November 13 and orders will be filled before the Holidays. Should you have questions, please contact Susan Hofstetter. Thank you for your support and for helping us meet the challenge!

Reptile Man



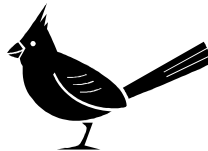
Kids and adults alike love Reptile Man! Reptile Man will be coming to Columbia on Friday, November 17 with his snakes, lizards, crocodiles, and more. There will be an afternoon assembly for students to enjoy and Reptile Man & his friends will be back again in the evening for families. The evening show will start at 7:00 PM and will cost one dollar per person. Reptile Man always puts on a good show. He and his creatures are interesting and entertaining. Hope to see you there!

Columbia Road Trip

We are traveling across the United States by calculating the distance traveled each week by kids who walk and roll to school. We are on our way to visit Bellingham, Massachusetts. We are currently making our way across the huge state of Montana. Did you know that Montana is the fourth largest state and it's capital is Helena. Lewis and Clark first explored Montana in 1805-6 and Montana became a state in 1889. Keep on Walking!



Welcome Back, Columbia Fundraisers!



Congratulations on a very successful year "raising funds without opening up your wallets!" Last year we raised a lot of money for our students by participating in various community programs that provide schools with "bonus" money. Because of your participation in these programs, our students were able to have many *extras* without parents feeling the pocketbook pinch!

These community opportunities are sometimes as easy as signing up one time for a yearlong program of money coming into our school. Just go about your normal daily activities and raise money for our cardinals!

Here are the programs that have traditionally provided money to schools who participate. Last year they paid us over \$3,000. That's two trips to the Mount Baker Theater for several classes!

HAGGEN SCHOOL BUCKS ~ A wonderful program that contributes 5 cents to Columbia every time a "school bucks" item is bought at Haggen Market. Just fill out the attached Haggen form, turn it in to your child's teacher, and you are enrolled. Call Lizanne if you'd like extra forms for your office or family members.

BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION ~ By clipping the coupons off your box tops, you earn cash for Columbia. 10 cents per box top! Turn them in to the big cereal box in the entrance hall of the school anytime.

WAMOOLA FOR SCHOOLS ~ Any time you use your Washington Mutual Visa Check Card, you can raise money for our school. Every purchase earns a point. At the end of the year, your points are converted to dollars and donated directly to the school of your choice. (Each point = 5 cents). You pay nothing extra, they make the donation. Next time you are at the bank, just mention that you'd like the money to go to Columbia. Or enroll online at wamoolaforschools.com. You can even refer friends, family and neighbors that don't have a student here.

CARTRIDGES FOR KIDS ~ Our newest opportunity to earn money! Bring your old ink cartridges and cell phones to the box in the entrance hall of the school and we can trade them in for cash! This is another good one to tell family and friends about! You can even get a collection box for your home or office, if you'd like. Just call Lizanne at for delivery.

It's because of *your* generosity that our students here at Columbia have an exceptional elementary school experience. You give your time, your special talents, and even your hard-earned money! These community fundraisers are just a few ways that Columbia benefits without *you* having open up your wallet again.

Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions or need an application brought to you, please call Lizanne Schader.

Columbia's Emergency Preparedness



At Columbia, we have procedures in place to ensure that we are prepared to respond appropriately in case of an emergency. The district has provided every classroom with "*Emergency Procedures for School Staff*" flip books which list procedures for evacuation, lockdown, shelter in place, earthquake, and emergency contacts. These procedures are reviewed yearly and practiced with staff and children throughout the year.

Along with the flip booklets, every class has an emergency backpack with needed supplies and a two-way radio. Our site council, created a "Columbia Emergency Response Team Manual" which is also placed in the emergency backpack. It contains specific information for different response teams in emergency situations. Supplies for first aid stations, search and rescue, and student release are stored, labeled and ready to go if needed.

We know that in the event of a school emergency, parents will want immediate access to their children. We understand this need, but hope we can work together to ensure safe and accurate monitoring of all students. In the event of a major incident at school, we need you to:

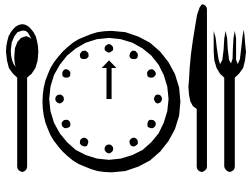
- Remain calm - don't panic. Remember that we have your children's best interests at heart and will be doing everything possible to keep them safe.
- If the school needs to be evacuated, we will organize students on the south play field. School personnel will supervise classes.
- If the school is evacuated, the student release station will be located on the grass area in the southwest corner of school property.
- If the school is not evacuated the student release station will be in the office.
- It is important that all adults remain calm and patient so that we can get students connected with their parents as quickly and efficiently as possible. We need to be sure that all students are accounted for and are released to appropriate adults.

If you have not returned your emergency release form, please do so. This form asked for adult designees that could be readily available to pick-up your child in an emergency, if you were unavailable. The safety of your child is our number one priority and with your assistance at such a critical time, we can secure the safety of every child.

Site Council Minutes From October Meeting

In attendance: Mona Aarstol, Kathy Norwood, Bill Palmer, Michelle Smith, Amy Holtorf, Erin McEachern and Missy Ferguson

WASL scores for Columbia were reviewed for grades 3rd, 4th, and 5th. Columbia's scores were higher than the district and state averages. Assessment data (state and district) was used to develop the school's strategic plan, which was reviewed by the committee. Looking into educational grants to support learning at Columbia will be a goal of the Site Council for the 2006-7 school year. The committee talked about the safety and security of the school: having parents and visitors enter the building through the front door, check-in at the office, and wear a visitor's sticker or Columbia ID badge will help provide a more secure and safe environment for the children. Looking at ways to monitor the front door was discussed. Also on the agenda was the district's parent survey. The survey will again be given around parent-teacher conference time. Parents can take the survey online at school or home. Paper/pencil surveys will be available in the office. The next Site Council meeting will not be until December 12, as all members will be attending the Ruth Parker math presentation in lieu of the November meeting.



Lunch and Recess Schedule During Early Release Days and Parent-Teacher Conferences (Dismissal at 12:30)

Primary Lunch and Recess Schedule

No Morning Recess

Primary Lunch: 11:00 to 11:20

Primary Recess: 11:20 to 11:45

Intermediate Lunch and Recess Schedule

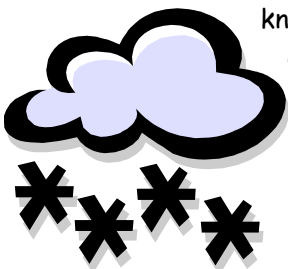
No Morning Recess

Intermediate Lunch: 11:35 to 11:55

Intermediate Recess: 11:55 to 12:20

Winter Weather Information for School Closures, Delays, Snow Routes

Decisions about school schedules and bus route changes almost always are made in the early morning before school, not the night before. This allows for the most current weather information to factor into the decision. This information is communicated immediately, generally before 6 a.m., by local media, on our Web site and on our phone line. **Bookmark the Web site www.bsd501.org and sign up, if you haven't already, to receive notices by e-mail. Call 676-6400 for a recorded message in English. For Español and translations: 647-6815. Please do not call the Transportation Office because it is important to keep these lines open for emergencies.** We understand these decisions have an impact on our families and appreciate your patience during these severe weather situations. While we know that our students and families are best served when we are open, our top concern is the safety of our students and staff. Depending on weather



conditions, schools will close for the day, open two hours late with regular bus routes or snow routes, or open on time with snow bus routes.

What does it mean when I hear that "snow routes" are in effect?

It may be necessary to limit transportation due to road conditions in areas where buses have difficulty maneuvering in ice or snow. If snow routes are in effect, students must catch their bus at alternate stops. On these snow route days, students are returned after school to their snow route stops regardless of changes in the weather. It is the responsibility of families to know if they live on a snow route. Bus drivers may also remind students if they live in a snow route area.

SNOW ROUTES: Are you in A, B or C?

New this year, snow routes are divided into three groups: A, B or C. Tune to media, go online to www.bsd501.org or call 676-6400 to know if all snow routes are in effect or only a specific group. This allows us to run snow routes in the areas most impacted by winter storms. The Transportation Office will make individual arrangements for special education buses, which do not follow the snow routes. To find your group (A, B or C) and your snow route, keep the purple flyer that you receive in the mail during the week of Oct. 30 or view snow routes online at

<http://www.bham.wednet.edu/departments/transportation/snowroutes.htm>

What if a winter storm begins during the school day?

We try, if at all possible, not to dismiss school early due to weather, except in rare extreme weather conditions. Young children cannot be dropped off at bus stops without an adult and releasing early is problematic when families are not expecting it. Families may choose to pick up their children early. We do our best to monitor and anticipate conditions. In severe weather, use the above methods to stay informed.

What happens when school opens two hours late?

Students catch the bus about two hours later at their regular bus stop or at their snow route stop if snow routes are in effect:

- ◆ 9:45 a.m. start for high schools and 10:50 a.m. for Options/GRADS
- ◆ 10:30 a.m. start for middle schools
- ◆ 11 a.m. start for elementary schools
- ◆ Students that stay all day for the KIDS program will start at 11 a.m.
- ◆ A.M. preschool and A.M. kindergarten classes at all sites are cancelled
- ◆ P.M. kindergarten begins at its regular time of 12:55. Afternoon preschool begins at 1:30 p.m.

FLAN
Spanish Teacher for Columbia

My name is Liz Stuart. I began my Spanish Language adventure when I was in Elementary School in California and fell in love with communicating in Spanish when I spent a summer in Ecuador during high school. I graduated from Purdue University in 2000 with a minor in Spanish. Since then, I have used Spanish to tutor and teach middle and high school students, communicate in my work as a social worker, and to dive into foreign cultures. I have traveled to Spain, Honduras, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Mexico and other non-Spanish speaking countries and hope to visit more. I love to incorporate music and movement into my lesson plans and I believe that laughing and asking questions are essential to learning.

In my class, I hope to incorporate many aspects of Latino and Spanish culture. The students will sing and move, learning basic vocabulary in the process! I look forward to working with your children and hope I get the chance to meet you soon!

Be Careful When Driving in Our School Zone

When dropping off or picking your child up from school, please be careful. We have many children walking to and from Columbia and having to cross many busy streets, especially during the opening and closing of our school day. There are "no parking" zones in the front and back of the school. Drivers are allowed to drop off or pick up students in these zones, but not allowed to park or stay to chat with friends. If children are dropped off across the street from the school, they are to use the nearest crosswalk to walk to the school side. Our streets are narrow and crowded, please be observant and drive slowly for the safety of all our children. Thank you!

Dogs on School Grounds

When bringing or picking up your child from school, please do not bring dogs with you, even if they are on a leash. In the past, we have had some incidents with dogs and one resulted in a bite to an individual waiting to pick up a child. For this reason, dogs, with the exception of service dogs, will not be allowed on school grounds from 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM when school is in session. Signs are posted around the school for friendly reminders. With everyone's cooperation, we can avoid such accidents. Sharing pets in individual classrooms should be arranged in advance with classroom teachers. In this way, teachers will be prepared for the visit and will let you know if any children have allergies to certain animals.

**The health care system can be
confusing and time-consuming.**

Have questions?

Need health insurance?



for

Healthcare Access

**a community-based,
non-profit can help.**

715-6594

www.whatcomalliance.com