



## Book-Making Project Inspires Young Washington Authors

By Washington Parent Nicole Achs Freeling

### CALENDAR

#### Late November

22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> - Thanksgiving Holiday

26<sup>th</sup> - Washington Fundraising Committee Meeting 6 p.m., Library

27<sup>th</sup> - African American Unity Group meeting, 5:30 pm, Library

27<sup>th</sup> - GATE Parent Meeting 6 - 8 p.m., location TBA

30<sup>th</sup> - Flag Football Game 3 p.m., Visiting team: Oxford School

30<sup>th</sup> - Fuerza Latina Meeting 6-8 p.m., Potluck dinner, childcare provided. Library

#### December

8<sup>th</sup> - Kindergarten Fair for new parents, LeConte Elementary, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

18<sup>th</sup> - African American Unity Group 5:30, Library

17<sup>th</sup> - School Governance Council Meeting. 5:30 p.m., Library. Childcare, dinner provided. All welcome

21st - Winter Recess Begins Back to School January 7<sup>th</sup>

#### January

8<sup>th</sup> - African American Unity Group 5:30, Library

The fourth graders in Ms. Bail's class are sitting in a circle, sharing their literary talents. Holding colorful, delicately-made books with titles like "The Spooky House" and "The Haunted Mansion" they describe scenes of thunder rumbling in the sky, blood dripping down walls, doors creaking on hinges, ghosts banging shut doors -- lines from Halloween stories they have written. When the reading is over, the kids celebrate with a snack of blood and eyeballs (actually lychees in fruit juice). It may be an unusual book-release party, but the young authors in the class couldn't be prouder of their work: books they have spent the last two weeks designing, illustrating and writing as part of a project with Center for the Book.

Center for the Book is a San Francisco-based non-profit dedicated to the art and craft of book-making. Among other things, it has a program to bring book-making projects to school children -- a great way to spark their creativity and encourage their



emerging reading and writing skills, according to the Center. Ms. Bail applied to work with the center after seeing a display at the San Francisco Library. "The quality of work inside was wonderful," she says. "I could see the kids were really motivated. Once they make the book, they're so excited about what goes inside."

C.J. Grossman, an instructor with Center for the Book, has become a common face inside Washington, wheeling around her cart of craft paper, colored pencils and other sundry book-making supplies. She will continue to come throughout the year to support the projects going on in various classrooms. The project allowed for eight classes to work directly with Grossman. The other teachers received training from the Center to do similar projects.

Ms. Bail's class chose a haunted house theme, making books that fold out into the shape of houses. Other classes have chosen other themes that tie in with subjects



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## Allergy Alert

On November 28<sup>th</sup>, grounds crews will be at Washington mowing the lawn (for parents who are concerned about allergies)

## Cell Phone & Ink Cartridge Recycling

You can support our school by bringing in your empty ink cartridges and placing them in the "Cartridge World" tall blue and yellow box across from the office. Cartridge World reuses the cartridge and gives our PTA \$1.00 for every ink cartridge we collect. We also collect used cell phones and accessories -- there's a box on the counter-top across from the office next to the PTA bulletin board.

## BUSD Events on Berkeley Cable 33

Did you know that Berkeley Community Media, Cable Channel 33, broadcasts BUSD performances and events regularly, as well as other important local programming? Check it out!

## Reaching Your Teacher's Voicemail

All school voicemail boxes have the same phone number, 644-4500. Each teacher's extension begins with the number 21 followed by the number of their classroom. For example, Mr. Fairchild, in room 112, would be 21112.

# Your School Governance Council

By Abigail Surasky, Washington Parent and Council Member

Where would you find a room with a criminal lawyer who defends immigrants, a Ph.D. in charge of handling disability discrimination complaints at Cal, the vice principal of a private San Francisco high school, a former Sandinista revolutionary, a top corporate executive specializing in governance, risk, and compliance, the immediate past president of the PTA, and the founder of Fuerza Latina, along with seven top school staff including teachers, the school secretary, and the principal -- all united to work for one common cause: our students?

At Washington's School Governance Council, of course!

And just like last year, those of you who voted elected a diverse group of parents: three Latina moms, one African American dad, one dad of Afro-Caribbean decent, and two Caucasian moms.

What is the School Governance Council? It acts like a board of directors -- half are parents, half are staff -- that decides how public monies from the federal, state, and city levels get spent at our school. As a public body, the elected members must study the school's data and poll the school to determine which programs will be funded.

This should be an exciting year for Washington and all Berkeley schools. Not only do we have a great team of people, but there is new support from the district to make sure School Governance Councils have the tools to be as effective as possible in assessing and meeting the needs of their schools.

All School Governance Councils are

expected to work collaboratively, to represent all stakeholders at the school, to make decisions by consensus, to understand and follow the law, to be transparent, and to have clear channels of communication with the rest of the school.

At various new district-sponsored trainings this year, we have also learned that following these parameters will not always be easy. Asking difficult questions and having difficult conversations will be an inevitable part of the process.

We have had just one meeting in October so far that primarily covered the logistics of the group. From here on out, however, we will finish selecting officers, begin reviewing student progress data, create a survey for the entire school, make decisions about how to spend any windfall money that may come through for this year, and develop a school site plan establishing the programs that will get funded next year.

If you are at all intrigued by what goes on in School Governance Council, please come visit. You can also participate, especially during the public comment period. The Governance Council serves and represents you, so please get to know your reps. They are...

Parent reps: Elena Condes, Derek Coates, Charlotte Worsley, Milena Montano, Robin Baker, Abigail Surasky, and Linda Navidad-Franco. Staff reps: Ms. Wash, Ms. Geminder, Ms. Bail, Ms. Fletcher, Ms. Moustakas, Ms. Shoemaker, and Principal Kimball.

The next meeting is Monday, November 19, 5:30-7:00 in the library.

## Halloween 2007 - Guess Who?



## Washington Authors ...

*Continued from page 1*

they're studying. Ms. Geminder's class is doing books on ancestors. Ms Wash's class is doing pumpkin-shaped books. Ms. Laurence, Ms. Talbot, Ms. Mitchell, Ms. Moustakas and Ms. McGoldrick are also working with the center. Next year, all the classes could participate, if the school can get a grant to fund it.

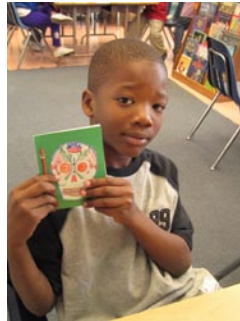
"I believe this has everything to do with literacy," Grossman says. "It's a way kids can learn about reading and writing and feel the power it gives them. Getting to create their own books and illustrate them is a lot more fun and immediate than being told, 'write an essay.'"

The kids in Ms. Bail's class agreed. Many said making and illustrating the books was their favorite part of the project. But they also picked up some fairly advanced writing skills. "We learned to show it was a haunted house, not just

by telling 'this is a haunted house,'" says Tara, one of the students in the class. "I did that by writing, 'My hands were trembling,' and describing all of the haunted stuff."

The kids cut out the books and put them together, then made a graphic design that sketched out how they would illustrate them. They brainstormed around the subjects that they were writing about, wrote a rough draft, revised it a few times and then, finally, copied the final draft into their book.

"Sometimes kids look at books as something that was created by someone else, someone they don't know, and they're intimidated," Grossman said. "But now they can look at books and feel a connection." It makes books less scary. Unless, of course, like for Ms. Bail's class, scary is just what you want.



### PTA Coffee Hour Every Wednesday

If you have a few minutes to an hour on Wednesday mornings at 8:15, please join parents in casual conversation at the PTA's coffee hour, directly across from the office.

### Stay Connected, Electronically!

Get the latest news and announcements from Washington School by email -- sign up for Washington Talk! To join wTalk, send a blank email to: [wTalk-  
subscribe@yahogroups.  
com](mailto:wTalk-subscribe@yahogroups.com).

You can keep up to date on all Washington School events and other information on our website: [http://washington.  
berkeleypta.org](http://washington.berkeleypta.org).

### Sign up for Escrip

Help the PTA meet its fundraising goals in the most painless way: Escrip! Escrip costs you nothing except the 5 minutes it will take to register your ATM and credit cards. After that, retailers contribute money to Washington every time you use your plastic through a secure electronic system.

Go to [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com) (then click "welcome" and "sign up") or pick up a form at the PTA corner across from the main office, fill it out, and drop it in the white PTA lockbox in the main office.

## PTA Officers

Please contact any one of the officers if you have ideas, questions or concerns.

**Andrew O'Shea** - President.  
Phone: 415-971-4322, email:  
Andrew.O'Shea@pearsoned.com

**Joal Arvanigian** - Vice-President.  
Phone: 843-3085, email:  
arvanigian@yahoo.com

**Lisa Rock** - Secretary. Phone:  
847-5150, email:  
rock.lisa@sbcglobal.net

**Thien Phan** - Treasurer.  
Phone: 229-0317, email:  
tphan1969@sbcglobal.net

**Acorn Coordinator** - Nancy Rader, phone: 845-5077, email: nrader@igc.org. Ideas, information and articles for *The Acorn* are welcome!

**We're on the Web!** <http://washington.berkeleypta.org>

## Washington Elementary

2300 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, Berkeley, CA 94704  
Phone: 644-6310  
Fax: 644-7718

**Rita Kimball**, Principal.  
Email: rita\_kimball@berkeley.k12.ca.us

**Roquael Baham**, Secretary.  
Email: Roquael\_baham@berkeley.k12.ca.us

## Berkeley Unified School District

2134 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, Berkeley, CA 94704  
Phone: 644-6348

**Next BUSD Meeting:**  
December 12 at 7:30 p.m.

# Washington News Shorts

## First Walk-a-thon a Success!

What an amazing success our first walk-a-thon was! Thanks to all of our enthusiastic students for getting so many pledges, walking so many laps, and then getting the sponsors to fulfill their pledges. So far, we have raised just over \$12,500 for our school! If there are any more pledges to retrieve, please get them in -- we will announce the final class winners very soon. Highest class totals so far include, in the K-2 group, Mr. Armes' Kindergarten class with \$1,411 and, in the 3-5 grades, Ms. Bail's 4<sup>th</sup>-grade class with \$956. We will be taking an average to make it fair for the smaller class sizes to compete. So good luck!

Thank you, thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers for this event: Emily & Jeff Smith, Amelia Fernholz, Elena Condes, Brian Mohr, Tamara Madison, Joal Arvanigian, Ari Arusha, Susan Goldstein, Erika Mills, Macwain & Chandra Phillips, Andrew O'Shea, Judith Fairchild, Erica Franco, Jamie Greenblatt, Alice Yee, Dorte Christensen, Dana Arkinzadel, Coach Don, Principal Kimball and everyone else that helped including all of our wonderful teachers. And an especially big thank-you to the event coordinators, Linda Currie and Eve Graham-Mohr!

## Washington Green Committee Forming

Did you know that Washington will be getting solar panels installed next summer? What are some other ways we can help our school and community become more sustainable? Let's form a **Washington Green Committee** to discuss our ideas. Contact Linda Currie if you are interested at 510-851-2552 or [lindamurphydog@aol.com](mailto:lindamurphydog@aol.com).

## Group Forming to Lower Household Carbon Emissions

Did you know that the typical American household generates 55,000 pounds of carbon dioxide annually? By contrast, German households generate about 27,000

pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>, which causes global warming.

Many of you are interested in doing what you can to help the planet and lower your carbon emissions, but may not know how to, or may need some inspiration to take the first steps. Or you may already be on the path, but are looking for more ways to live more sustainably.

Small groups around the City of Berkeley are forming to take on "The Low Carbon Diet: A 30-Day Program to Lose 5,000 Pounds." The workbook provided is very simple to follow and fun to use in a group. Groups of five to 10 people will meet four times to figure out your carbon footprint and to discuss ways your household can lower its carbon emission. At the last meeting, you tally up your total emissions savings in pounds.

It's really fun and rewarding and easier than you might think. Washington will be starting one or more group in January. Days and times for our meetings will be determined by the group members.

If you are interested in participating, contact Linda Currie at 510-851-2552 or [lindamurphydog@aol.com](mailto:lindamurphydog@aol.com).

## New Acorn Team

As you can see, the *The Acorn* continues for a fourth year in full fashion, thanks to a group of parents who have volunteered to report regularly on Washington's activities. Thanks to Nicole Freeling, Valerie Gilbert-Perens, Jennifer Ward, June Weintraub, Eli Cochran and all of the PTA officers for stepping in to help. We welcome your guest articles, ideas and information, too. Please contact any of the "reporters" or send an email to *Acorn* Coordinator Nancy Rader at [nrader@igc.org](mailto:nrader@igc.org). Check out *The Acorn* in full color on Washington's website (see left).

## More Event Updates

*The Acorn* will report on the two book fairs and the yard sale in the next issue.