



## CALENDAR

### May

**12th - PTA Meeting,**  
Cafetorium, Dinner at 6  
p.m., meeting at 6:30 p.m.  
Childcare Provided

**14th - Spring Open House**

**14th - Latino Family  
Literacy Workshop,** Library.  
Dinner at 6 p.m., workshop  
at 6:30 p.m. Pre-register

**16th - Incoming Family  
Picnic,** Details TBA

**18th - Malcom X's birthday**  
- No school

**21st - Latino Family  
Literacy Workshop,** Library.  
Dinner at 6 p.m., workshop  
at 6:30 p.m. Pre-register

**21st - AAUG Meeting,**  
Library. 5:45-7:30.

**25th - Memorial Day - No  
school**

**25th - Downtown Berkeley  
Music Showcase,** 5-7 p.m. -  
A benefit for Washington's  
Educational Equity Alliance  
See page 4 for details

**27th - BUSD's Mind & Brain  
Night,** Cafetorium, 6-8 p.m.

**28th - PTA Steering  
Committee,** Library, 6-8  
p.m.

**30th - Washington Spring  
Fair,** School Yard, 11 a.m.- 3  
p.m. Come for food, fun,  
the raffle, and the silent  
auction!

### June

**12th - Last day of school**

## Farewell to Washington heroes Ruth Bossieux and Jim Newton

By Tom Fairchild, in conversation with Ruth Bossieux and Jim Newton



Photo by Tom Fairchild

Ruth Bossieux and her co-teacher Jim Newton have been teaching dance in the public schools for 25 years, the last 10 at Washington, where the duo has been a perennial favorite in the school-wide survey. In January 2009, at 72 years young, Ruth decided to retire.

We will miss them; Ruth has a rich understanding of children and movement and hopefully will continue to be a resource to teachers in the future. As a teacher, I consider them to be true masters, and am grateful for having been able to share the experience.

In March, I had the pleasure of sitting down with Ruth and Jim. Below are some excerpts from the interview.

**Ruth:** I want to talk about what it was like to be at Washington School. It was ideal in every way: Ideal principal, ideal teachers, ideal custodian, ideal secretary, ideal librarian, ideal children, ideal space. I couldn't have asked for a more perfect place to finish teaching.

**T:** How did you and Jim meet?

**Jim:** I was -

**R:** A wee boy.

**J:** Nineteen. I was probably 19 years old. (Jim is now 46.)

**R:** Jim and I were in the same dance class at Shawl/Anderson Dance Center. We started teaching the three and four-year-old preschoolers at the studio.

**R:** I told Jim studio teaching is fun, but the best fun is teaching in public schools.

**T:** Had you done a lot of teaching in public schools?

**R:** I was 52 when I met Jim. I'd been teaching since my thirties. I had already created an outreach program for S.F. Ballet that went into S.F. Public Schools (it still does). I taught in elementary schools in Richmond and for the late Robin Gorton in the Berkeley Adult School nursery schools.

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## Farewell to Ruth and Jim

*Continued from page 1...*

She was an extraordinary teacher and my childhood friend.

**T:** So that's like your 2nd or 3rd career when you and Jim started teaching together?

**R:** At least. First Jim and I taught at Oxford School then at John Muir where we met you, Tom, and because of you we were invited to Washington School.

**T:** Explain how the classes were created.

**R:** I never took a class on how to teach. I learned from the kids who taught me what to teach them. The key is to know what you're looking at, what activity - energy you are seeing. After you identify it, it then becomes possible to give it a form; that's the intersection.

Underlying what I've just described is that Jim and I are movers. So we connected with the kids' glee of what it's like to be a mover. We understood the freedom, but we also understood the prison of movement which happens when movement is subjected to technique; that's being in a dance class.

**J:** We love that too. Ruth's lesson plans and her understanding of where kids were coming from was the structure. That was what the class was all about. Ruth gave me the freedom to tweak and play with her ideas.

**R:** I would set the class plan, the direction, score the class musically but once we were in the teaching arena, we were co-teachers because so many things happened on the spot.

**T:** Interactive

**R:** Absolutely

**T:** Scootchy car. I remember that activity from John Muir. Tell us about Scootchy cars!

**R:** It starts with an image that becomes alive. A good image tells you its story. You listen to it and watch it unfold in your imagination. Scootchy starts with a car. What kind of car? Fire engine? Pizza truck? Ambulance? There's the windshield wipers, flat tires. "You've run out of gas? You need a mechanic! That'll be five cents please. When you hear the music, open your car door and roll anywhere you want. When the music stops, roll back

into your car and slam the door. Say "SLAM!" when you close the door. Brakes, Parking tickets! No collisions please!"

**J:** That was our diagnostic for stopping.

**R:** Exactly. It's essentially the game of red light/green light which children use to master stopping. Our teaching was related to the playground.

**T:** The way you spoke to children was appropriate. You talked to them very precisely.

**J:** We were talking to the activity, but it was not at all scripted. It was alive; that's being in the moment.

**R:** Tom, when Jim and I would visit your classroom we always saw breathtaking displays of movement coming from your children. They were responding to your own movement voice which was authentic and clear in its instructions.

**T:** So much of my movement voice comes from my experience with both of you. Have you always been movers? Is that something you've always had?

**J/R:** Yes

**J:** Before dancing, I was a diver and a swimmer.

**R:** Movement has always been our element and it's a natural element with children. Children have to learn not to move. We wanted our classes to be a place where movement was celebrated and gleeful.

**J:** I love technique and I like training, but I really like improvisation.

**R:** Jim and I have bodies that are technically trained. It means that Jim has also increased his ability to improvise. Children in Indonesia are physically manipulated by their teacher in order to become accomplished dancers by the age of ten.

Technique allows an Indonesian child, or any dancer to faithfully refer to the same physical place again and again. Dancers use their skill to craft a desired performance.

**J:** Kids also do what's truthfully going on inside themselves. I'm fascinated by that as an artist. I watch children take in information during the class, put it into their world and, into their vocabulary.

**T:** How does that affect you as a dancer?

**R:** Very astute question-

**J:** Oh it keeps me honest.

**T:** What about the Monkey story?

**R:** The Monkey Story appeals to children because it turns their issue with separation into a scary adventure. It begins when the monkeys are in their clubhouse up in a tree. They boogie down and decide to run away and hide. Where they hide becomes all about prepositions: In the toilet is very popular!

The daddy monkey tells them to come home. He pleads, he bargains, he cajoles, he demands. He gets angry. He gets sad. The monkeys return home but only to eat before they run away again. There is a big storm with scary sound effects. A bell announces midnight. The monkeys miss their beds. They roll back home and stay asleep until the daddy and mother monkey wake them and find out their hiding places.

The children enact the story. Jim was the Daddy Monkey, the Storm Maker and Mister Midnight. I was the narrator and the mother monkey. All of this becomes REAL. The story just stands up and walks about.

**J:** It was just at the moment; for the moment.

**R:** True, but on another level you have to understand "that moment" lasted for 25 years of our commitment to co-teaching.

**T:** Skill and commitment, that's the art of it; Thank you Jim! Thank you Ruth!

**R:** One last thing: I have an abiding memory of Rita greeting, really greeting her students as they arrived on the morning bus. Her greeting was so genuine. It always made us happy. We were very lucky to have taught at mighty, mighty Washington!

***"Kids do what's truthfully going on inside themselves. I'm fascinated by that as an artist."***

## Fundraising news

# Gearing up for the raffle and silent auction

By Samantha Swor, Kindergarten Mom

Our yearly PTA Fundraising Raffle is coming up! The Raffle drawing will take place at 3 p.m., Sat., May 30, as the finale of our annual Spring Fair. (The fair is from 11 a.m.-3 p.m.) Raffle tickets will be on sale during the Spring Fair.

On Monday, May 11, students will get tickets to begin selling. Each child will get an envelope with 20 tickets (2 sets of 10), an instruction sheet, and some information about the raffle prizes.

Tickets are only \$1, so get ready to sell, sell, sell! We're working on an online payment option for those friends on Facebook and family far away.

From Fri., May 15 through Fri., May 29, parent volunteers will be outside at school each morning to collect ticket stubs and money from students and hand out more tickets to be sold. We encourage students to turn in tickets in the bundles of 10 to get another bundle of 10 to sell.

We'll keep track of all ticket stubs and money to determine the K-2 and 3-5 grade classes with the most participation and tickets sold. (Check out your child's ticket envelope to see the prizes for classes.) There will be some small prizes for selling 20 and 40 tickets each and also for the highest individual ticket sales.

## And a Silent Auction, too?

Along with the Raffle on Sat. May 30, the Spring Fair will host a silent auction to raise money to support

valued programs at Washington School. Bring your checkbook or cash, and bring friends with their checkbooks or cash!

You'll get some great deals on a wide variety of incredible items and services--ranging in value from \$10 to \$380--donated by our local community.

Sign up at the Silent Auction booth to get your very own secret number and bid, bid, bid. The auction will end at 2 p.m. so people can pay their totals and get their winnings before leaving the Spring Fair. To make it easier to process the auction items at

the end, there will be some items with a "buy it now" price. If you really want one of these you can buy it on the spot. Come early before these items are gone.

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Donations to the Silent Auction include:

### RESTAURANT GIFT CERTIFICATES:

Bette's Oceanview Diner, Picante, Saul's, Cafe Fanny, Bakesale Betty, Cesar, Chez Panisse Cafe, Juan's Place, La Note, Magnani Poultry, Poulet, and Venezia

### RETAIL/SERVICES GIFT CERTIFICATES:

Albany Bowl, Builder's Booksource, California Canoe and Kayak, Grove Street Kids Resale, Hannah's Children's Resale, Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Studio Grow, Sugar Bowl Skiing, Berkeley Horticultural Nursery, Habitot, Kids 'N' Clay, Moe's Books, Rockridge Kids, Snippet Crickets,

Stonemountain & Daughter Fabrics, The Gardener, and Velo Sport.

**SPECIAL ITEMS:** Sungevity Juice Bags solar charging messenger bag, and from Jen Zuzak(Kai R, K) an Infinite Circulon portable induction burner and a Martha Stewart 7 qt. enamel cast iron oval casserole.

### THEATER AND SHOW PASSES:

Landmark Theatre, Beach Blanket Babylon, Aurora Theater, Ashkenaz, La Pena Cultural Center, Shotgun Players, a Cal Football game, California Shakespeare Theater, Cerrito Speakeasy Theater, Elmwood Theater, Freight & Salvage, Golden Gate Fields, Grand Lake Theater, UC Pacific Film Archive

**MUSEUM & GARDEN PASSES:** Bay Area Discovery Museum, Fine Arts Museum of SF, Lawrence Hall of Science, SF Moma, Asian Art Museum, Gilroy Gardens Family Theme Park, Blackhawk Automobile Museum, California Railroad Museum, Cartoon Art Museum, Children's Fairyland, Filoli House and Gardens, and a UCB Botanical Garden membership

Donations from the **WASHINGTON COMMUNITY** include:

- Acupuncture & Integrative Medicine College gift certificates from Benjamin Dierauf (Emma, 3rd)
- dma Organizing home organizing needs assessment from Dana Arkinzadeh (Maya, 3rd)
- Learn to Ride bike lessons from Jamie Greenblatt (Raviv, 5th)
- MK Designs orchid plant from Magi Kiurciev (Kira, 3rd)

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## Washington PTA raffle prizes

**Grand Prizes include:** iPod touch 8 GB \* 4 Disneyland passes + \$\$ to help you get there \* 4 Monterey Bay Aquarium passes \* Night on the Town (2 Berkeley Rep tickets and \$100 gift certificate for Downtown Restaurant) \* Peet's Coffee or Tea for a Year \* 4 California Academy of Sciences passes!

**Additional prizes:** passes to Bay Area Discovery Museum, Elmwood Theater, Freight & Salvage, Grand Lake Theater, Landmark Theaters, Lawrence Hall of Science, Lindsay Wildlife Museum, Oakland Zoo, and UC Berkeley Art Museum \* Gift certificates for Spun Sugar, Pegasus & Pendragon Books, Monterey Market, Juan's Place, and Five Star Video!

## WELCOME, NEW PARENTS

### *A note from Washington Principal Rita Kimball*

Washington's Staff and I welcome you to Washington School. We are delighted to have you as one of the Washington Families and invite you to visit us. Mondays and Tuesdays are the best days to visit—arrive at 8:20 a.m. on Monday morning to witness our inspiring student assembly. Or, feel free to swing by our parent coffee hour in the main hallway every Thursday morning at 8:15.

You and your children are also invited to attend our Spring Open House on Thurs., May 14 from 6:30-8:00 p.m. Visit the classrooms and talk to the teachers and principal.

Our very fun Spring Fair is held on Saturday, May 30. To learn about many more Washington events, visit the PTA Web site at [washington.berkeleypta.org](http://washington.berkeleypta.org). Also, feel free to send me e-mail at: [rita\\_kimball@berkeley.k12.ca.us](mailto:rita_kimball@berkeley.k12.ca.us)

Join us as a partner in working with your child. Parent groups including the PTA and African American Unity Group support all our children and events. Teachers support these groups, and ask parents to represent their classes and become active classroom helpers. We look forward to your participation and support.

### Sign Up for WTalk!

Get the latest Washington news - sign up for Washington Talk! Go to: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wTalk/>, or send a blank email to: [wTalk-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:wTalk-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

## Raffle and silent auction news

*Continued from page 3 ...*

- Handknit 100% cotton toddler/baby fruit and vegetable Hats: strawberry, blueberry, pumpkin, eggplant and apple and a Child's Poncho in super-soft faux fur yarn from Julie Bussgang (Andrew & Alex, 1st)
- Ring of Fire objects for the home and garden, gifts for the body and soul from Jerry Alcorn and Ketut Trima, (Wayan, 5th & Made, 1st)
- Robert Cruikshank Landscape Construction one hour consultation (Luciano, 2nd & Gabriela, K)
- A Luscious Thing jewelry from Barbara Barnaby (School Nurse, K)
- a Santa Cruz Get-a-Way from Katy Kearney-Parker and Glen Parker (Charlie, K)
- Two Nights in a Classic European Style Cabin in the Sierras from Jane McCall (Ada, 5th)
- Chiropractic care from Laurie Wonnell, D.C. (William, K)
- Montana Made napkin/tablecloth sets from Bonnie Bowler, grandma (Olive, K)

...and other donations pending—come see at the auction!

Bid early, bid often, and know that your money is going to help your school better support its children, families, and teachers.

## Downtown Berkeley Music Showcase

The Downtown Berkeley Music Showcase is a new fundraiser for Washington School, organized by the PTA's Educational Equity Alliance.

We know parents at the school give in many ways throughout the year. But if you or your friends, co-workers or relatives were planning to spend some money on a fun evening anytime in the next month, here is your/their chance to do so in a way that will substantially benefit the Washington community, at a time when budget cuts threaten so many important programs at Washington.

### The Details:

**When:** Memorial Day, May 25<sup>th</sup>, from 5 to 7pm.

**Where:** JazzSchool, 2087 Addison Street in downtown Berkeley.

### Featured performances:

local jazz singer Amanda King, as well as Beth Voge, Maya Rath and Kristin Davidman - Flutes from the Community Women's Orchestra, and our own Kidz Club Assistant Director Todd Shipley, a talented musician who is performing for free to help our school.



**Cost:** Tickets are \$100 apiece, but we are offering Washington families and friends a discounted price of \$50 per ticket.

Food and drink included in ticket price. Enjoy appetizers, beer and wine.

Free childcare is available. Make sure to mention to Elena or Ari if you want free childcare during the event—this makes it an even bigger bargain.

For tickets, please call or email Elena Condes, 510-910-1383, [elena@lmi.net](mailto:elena@lmi.net) or Ari Krantz, 510-612-1010, [akrantz@leonardcarder.com](mailto:akrantz@leonardcarder.com).