Winter Sports Report
One for the Record Books

Swimming
State Champs 2nd Year in a Row
The Swim Team won the T-Cal State Championship

Photo by Stephen Pink

Soccer
The Boys Soccer Team finished 3rd at the T-CAL High School Boys 1A/2A State Championships.

Parent Education Event

Book Discussion of The Yes Brain
By Dan Siegel & Tina Payne Bryson

Tuesday, April 10th at 7 p.m.

In this issue . . .

Winter Sports Report.................................1
Parent Education Events.............................1
Spring Cleaning as Brain Food .....................2
Around Campus ........................................4
Book List...............................................6
Middle School Human Rights March ..........7
Calendar..............................................8

Edited by Barbara Bends
Spring Cleaning as Brain Food

P. Donohue Shortridge

The holidays have come and gone and spring is just around the corner. This might be a fine time to consider sorting through your children’s possessions. If you take a close look at the sheer volume of your child’s books and toys, you may determine that just like adults he uses only a small percentage of them.

Thinning the herd, so to speak, offers much to recommend it. It’s a lot easier to find things if there are fewer things to find.

It’s a lot easier to find things if there are fewer things to find.

A place for everything and everything in its place is a cliché based on sound thinking. Our brains seek order, harmony and beauty in the world, your child’s brain seeks it out too.

Additionally, there’s an essential developmental incentive to clear the clutter out of your child’s life. Providing external order for your child allows him to organize his thinking. He’s already taken in so many impressions of the world and now he is categorizing, sorting, grading and matching all these impressions. (Cognitively grasping same and different as well as one-to-one correspondence are pre-math and pre-reading skills.) It’s confusing, harder to make sense of everything when, right here in his room the crayons are randomly hanging out with the dolly blanket and Tonka truck wheel, if you will.

Providing external order for your child allows him to organize his thinking.

So here are some strategies you might consider:

- Go through the books. If he has long since cared about *Pat the Bunny*, it’s time to remove it from his shelf. Likewise anything that is torn, tattered and colored on. What should remain are only those that he is now reading or is about to advance into. House the books on shelves just like in the library rather than piled one on top of the other or randomly scattered among other phylum such as toys and stuffed animals.

- The impediment to finding a toy when one wants it is the toy box. No matter how cute, inexpensive, convenient or cherished, the large universal receptacle does not lend itself to everything having a place. Shelving is best. Categorize the toys by type; each toy deserves a lidded box, then shelved.

- Discard or repair anything that is broken or missing a part. Wash the comfort-blankets and stuffed animals, otherwise discard them.

Your child wants to, and for his optimal development needs to become responsible for his own possessions.

- Four puzzles will be used more often than fifteen. Likewise dolls, toy cars, stuffed animals, Lego sets, board games and coloring books. You get the idea. Young children can easily get overwhelmed with too many choices.

- If your mom sent something that you may have determined is inappropriate, give yourself permission to remove it. You are the final arbiter of what is appropriate for your child.

- If you are having a harder time than your child letting go of some of his possessions, that’s ok. You get to cry about it, but certainly not in front of your child. . . . and pare them down anyway.

- Create a place in the garage for your child’s outdoor equipment such as balls, scooters and anything else you’d rather not have your child using indoors.
Here are a few more considerations:

Your child wants to, and for his optimal development needs to become responsible for his own possessions. Make sure that he can put every toy away where it belongs. Don’t make the tub for the blocks so heavy he can’t move it into place himself. Is there a home for his trains? Bags, totes and backpacks all deserve wall hooks hung low enough for your child to hang up by himself.

You probably already have a child-size table and chairs. A child-sized rocker and/or a reading chair might be nice. How about an easel for chalkling, painting and drawing? Generally, the younger the child, the more he wants to make large sweeping circular arm motions. You might even consider getting some butcher-block paper for large mural creation.

Every activity has a beginning, middle and end.

Sibling fights can be minimized if each person in the family, no matter the age has personal property rights. If your five year old doesn’t want to share some of his toys with your toddler, I suggest that that is his right. However, you might work with your five year old to go through some of his possessions and together determine which toys he might be willing to share. Further, many of his no-longer-used toys can be ceremoniously bequeathed to his younger sibling. His most prized possessions, however, should have a place in his room.

Sibling fights can be minimized if each person in the family, no matter the age has personal property rights.

Every activity (just like life) has a beginning, middle and end. Teach your child how to get something out, use it in the place designated for its use and then put it away. If he moves on to the next thing before putting the last activity away, you can say, “In our house, we always put our belongings away.”

And finally, the most effective way to gain his cooperation is to model what you teach. Maybe it’s time for some spring-cleaning of your own.

Donohue Shortridge, a Montessorian since 1980 speaks and write on topics related to children and their families in the American culture. pds@pdonohueshortridge.com
Around Campus

Happy faces on the Play Ground

High School Musical: Fiddler on the Roof received rave reviews
Evening of Learning
Students Teach their
Parents
Books Recommended by the Teachers

“Larry Gets Lost in Texas” by John Skewes  
Grades: Early Childhood – 3rd

Larry’s latest tale begins in the family’s car with a trailer hitched to the back—they’re off on a road trip to the Lone Star State! Follow Larry as he gets separated from his best friend Pete and searches for him all over Texas. Larry journeys through the major cities—Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Fort Worth, El Paso, Amarillo, and Corpus Christi—where he meets armadillos and snakes and even hitchs a ride from a horse in a trailer. He also visits the Cadillac Ranch sculpture, the NASA space station, and a rodeo before passing by pump jacks and the famous aircraft carrier, Saturn V. After stopping by the USS Lexington, Larry finally ends up at the Texas State Fair. But will he ever find Pete?

“Don’t Eat the Bluebonnets” by Ellen Leventhal  
Grades: Early Childhood – 4th

Don’t Eat the Bluebonnets is the story of Sue Ellen, a cow with a mind of her own, who loves the taste of bluebonnets. When she gives into temptation and eats every yummy bluebonnet, she must figure out a way to get them back. After several humorous attempts to make things right, Sue Ellen learns the importance of responsibility and decision making.

“Armadillo Rodeo” by Jan Brett  
Grades: Early Childhood – 4th

When Bo spots what he thinks is a "rip-roarin', rootin'-tootin', shiny red armadillo," he knows what he has to do. Follow that armadillo! Bo leaves his mother and three brothers behind and takes off for a two-stepping, bronco-bucking adventure. Jan Brett turns her considerable talents toward the Texas countryside in this amusing story of an armadillo on his own.

“The Original Adventures of Hank the Cowdog” by John Erickson  
Grades: 3rd – 6th

Hank has been accused of murder! In a fit of despair, Hank resigns his position as Head of Ranch Security and decides to join the outlaw coyotes. There he’s known as Hunk (that’s Hank in coyote language). Hank meets Missy Coyote, sister to Scrunch -- the meanest, roughest, toughest, most notorious coyote in the whole country. If Scrunch found Hank with his sister... Well, look out for trouble.
“Larry Gets Lost in Texas” by John Skewes
Grades: Early Childhood – 3rd

Larry’s latest tale begins in the family’s car with a trailer hitched to the back—they’re off on a road trip to the Lone Star State! Follow Larry as he gets separated from his best friend Pete and searches for him all over Texas. Larry journeys through the major cities-Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Fort Worth, El Paso, Amarillo, and Corpus Christi—where he meets armadillos and snakes and even hitches a ride from a horse in a trailer. He also visits the Cadillac Ranch sculpture, the NASA space station, and a rodeo before passing by pump jacks and the famous aircraft carrier, Saturn V. After stopping by the USS Lexington, Larry finally ends up at the Texas State Fair. But will he ever find Pete?

“Don’t Eat the Bluebonnets” by Ellen Leventhal
Grades: Early Childhood – 4th

“Armadillo Rodeo” by Jan Brett
Grades: Early Childhood – 4th

When Bo spots what he thinks is a “rip-roarin’, rootin’-tootin’, shiny red armadillo,” he knows what he has to do. Follow that armadillo! Bo leaves his mother and three brothers behind and takes off for a two-stepping, bronco-bucking adventure. Jan Brett turns her considerable talents toward the Texas countryside in this amusing story of an armadillo on his own.

“The Original Adventures of Hank the Cowdog” by John Erickson
Grades: 3rd – 6th

Hank has been accused of murder! In a fit of despair, Hank resigns his position as Head of Ranch Security and decides to join the outlaw coyotes. There he’s known as Hunk (that’s Hank in coyote language). Hank meets Missy Coyote, sister to Scraunch -- the meanest, roughest, toughest, most notorious coyote in the whole country. If Scraunch found Hank with his sister... Well, look out for trouble.

“Don’t Eat the Bluebonnets” is the story of Sue Ellen, a cow with a mind of her own, who loves the taste of bluebonnets. When she gives in to temptation and eats every yummy bluebonnet, she must figure out a way to get them back. After several humorous attempts to make things right, Sue Ellen learns the importance of responsibility and decision making.
# Calendar

## March

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Parent Education: Coffee with Dr. Betsy Coe, Middle School and High School Parents, Wirt Road, 8:45 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 - 23</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK / No Academic Classes - Child Care Available for Fullday Students (except MS &amp; HS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 - 28</td>
<td>Middle School: Achievement Testing for currently enrolled Middle School students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 - 29</td>
<td>High School: Intersession 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>GOOD FRIDAY / STUDENT HOLIDAY (No Classes in Session)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## April

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>All School: Spring Splash Planning Meeting, Wirt Road, 8:15 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 - May 31</td>
<td>Middle School: Cycle 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Parents Education: Book Discussion, 7:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 13</td>
<td>Elementary: Achievement Testing for currently enrolled Elementary students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 12</td>
<td>Upper Elementary: Achievement Testing for currently enrolled Upper Elementary students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 - 28</td>
<td>Upper Elementary: 6th-grade History Field Study to Williamsburg, Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>All School: Spring Splash, 12:00 - 3:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All Inclusive Admissions on sale the first week of April

Inflatables • Photo Booth • Kona Ice Truck • Face Painting • Great Food • Crafts • Fishing Pond • Raffle Drawing • Fun for All