



NIXON NEWS

Nixon PTA Newsletter—Vol. 2005-2006 Issue No. 14—April 28, 2006
The L.M. Nixon Elementary School, 1711 Stanford Ave., Stanford, CA 94305 (650) 856-1622 <http://www.nixon.pausd.org>

CALENDAR

Mon. May 1
Site Council Meeting
2:40 p.m.

Tues. - Thurs. May 2-11
Star Testing

Fri. May 5
PTA Executive Board Mtg.
8:15 a.m.

Fri. May 5
Just for Fun Mom's Pamper
Party, 6:00 p.m.

Sat. May 6
May Fete Parade
9:40 a.m.

Sat. May 13
Just for Fun Australian BBQ
11:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Mon. - Fri. May 15-19
Staff Appreciation Week

Mon. May 15
Staff Appreciation Week
Brunch

**NEXT PUBLICATION
DATE:** May 12

DEADLINE:
Friday, May 5 at 5 p.m.

Principal: Barbara Welch

PTA President: Tracy Stevens

Editor: Sharon Dally
Layout: Liz Fendorf

Principal's Corner by Barbara Welch

Dear Nixon Families,

I hope that you all had a great Spring Break. For those of us that stayed in town, counting raindrops became a daily event. These last few days of sunshine have given all of us a brighter perspective. It was great to see so many of you at **Curriculum Night** this week. I hope you enjoyed it as much as the staff and I did. There are so many great activities on the Nixon calendar between now and the end of the year. The next is our **Dance for F.U.N.** tonight. The fifth graders will perform the **maypole dance** and The DooDads band will provide us all with a chance to kick up our heels. You may either bring your own dinner or purchase from one of three vendors. Dinner will be served from 5:00 p.m. on, and the maypole dance starts at 5:15 p.m. We will dance until dark. Don't miss this great evening of family fun.

STAR Testing

All students in grades second through fifth will begin state standardized testing on Tuesday May 2nd. We will complete the process on Thursday May 11th. Make-up tests will be given from May 15th to May 18th. Many factors affect test scores. Students that are rested, arrive at school on time, are well fed, and take the tests with their peers, produce scores that more closely reflect their ability than students who do not. Please do not plan doctor/dental appointments or trips during the first two weeks of testing. At Nixon we only administer one test section per day so that children do not become over-taxed. Help us reassure your child that standardized testing is only one of many ways to assess their abilities. This frequently helps them relax and do better.

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PTA President's Message by Tracy Stevens

Tonight is The Night!

Come listen to the tunes of The DooDads, enjoy some fine food by one of our three participating restaurants, and just relax or shake a leg, however the music inspires you. You may even be one of the lucky raffle winners. All profits go towards the Nixon Technology Fund. See you on the playground from 5:00-8:00 p.m.

Counting Down – 7 weeks to go.....

The next two weeks will be more or less focused on Star Testing. This will disrupt daily schedules, and some children may

become a bit nervous about the testing. Although we are serious about the testing, with the understanding that the results are meaningful, Nixon tries to be as low key as possible about the process. Make sure your child gets enough sleep and a good healthy, mind-stimulating breakfast.

Staff Appreciation Week

Time to consider all that has happened this year and send a special thank you to the teachers, aides, education specialists, librarian, PE instructors, music teachers, office staff, and *Yes*, the principal for

Continued on Page 3

Se puede encontrar una edición de *Nixon News* en español en la oficina general de la escuela. Favor de avisar a Sandra Nadim si usted desea añadir su nombre a la lista de distribución.

Principal's Corner *Continued from Page 1*

May Fete Parade Saturday, May 6th

The May Fete Parade is an opportunity for us to represent Nixon as a member of the Palo Alto community. On Saturday, May 6th at 9:45 a.m. Nixon students will be gathering at the corner of Emerson and University to carry our Nixon banner, wave dolphins, chant, and march in the parade. You are welcome to bring relatives, friends, siblings, and pets. We march for about 20 minutes. Our march terminates at Addison School. If you choose, you may then attend the PiE carnival at Addison school. This year's theme is "The Great Outdoors." You may come dressed to support the theme or wear your Nixon T-shirt. To participate, each parent must fill out and return the permission slip in this issue of *Nixon News*. There will be additional permission slips in the school office. This is a great opportunity for us to model and participate in community building. All fifth graders are particularly invited, since this will be their last time to march in the parade and represent Nixon.

The Placement Process

There are a variety of factors that are considered when we place students in their classes. They are the needs of the individual child, the need to create balance within each classroom, and the need to create balance among classrooms at grade level. We begin this process before the end of school, and due to summer changes, always review our choices at each grade level when we return in August.

Individual Child

- Compatibility between the child's learning and working style and the classroom environment. (The style of a new teacher is gleaned through demonstration lessons.)
- The compatibility of the child and other children in the class.

Balanced Classroom Composition

- Learning Needs: Does each class reflect the range of learners, from independent to needing special support? Does each class reflect the range of academic abilities?
- Individual Relationships: Will the social dynamics of the class work to foster a positive learning environment?
- Gender: Is there a balance of boys and girls in each class?
- Ethnicity: Does each class reflect the diversity of all the children in that grade?
- Parental Participation: Does each class have parents who are interested in and able to help with in-class activities?

Balance Among Classrooms

Finally, is there equity among the classes so that all classes at the grade level have similar compositions of a balanced classroom?

We take the classroom process seriously. We always try to put the best educational interests of the children in the forefront, and we expect parents will trust and respect the judgment of the staff in making classroom placement decisions.

Parent Input

Parent input plays a part in this process, as well. Although your child's teachers are in the best position to see your child as a learner in the school setting, you bring a unique perspective as a parent, which is useful to the grouping process. Any information that you think is relevant please put in **writing**. There is an input form in this issue of *Nixon News* and additional copies are available in the front office.

On the input form, some parents request that their child be with or separated from a particular child. I believe giving children the opportunity to develop new "best friends" each year is a gift to them. When they go to middle school, they will have a wider circle of friends who help make their environment more secure. Also, teaching our children to make new friends, build relationships, and work out their differences are skills we owe them. If you have a unique request, include it on your input form. We always place your child with at least one former classmate. Teachers place students within peer groups, which provide them with the best learning environment. Finally, teachers are sharing with me that some parents are still making requests for specific teachers. This is not helpful and puts the teacher in an uncomfortable situation when the teacher has to remind the parent of the school placement policy. If you feel that your child may have some "special needs" for next year that cannot be addressed on the parent input forms, please come and see me. Your advocacy for your child is always supported. My job is to advocate for all the student community and work with families to resolve conflicts.

As always, thank you for your support as we enter the very busy last seven weeks of this school year.

Barbara

President's Message *Continued from Page 1*

another great year, with many accomplishments. All week long (May 15 -19) there are special events; look for the Friday Folder Flyer.

NOTE: The week ends (on the 19th) with a terrific celebration: International Day.

International Day

It looks like we have another wonderful International Day planned for Friday, May 19th, 4:30 -7:00 p.m. There are five different performances—some new, some old favorites.

BUT, WE ARE CALLING ALL CHEFS – please let us know if you will be bringing a dish to share. We need to make

plans for tables and signs, so not only is your contribution welcome and needed, but we want to be able to accommodate everyone.

Desserts are welcome, but we have a need for hot dishes, main dishes, salads, or appetizers. Please, no soup or anything that requires a bowl.

Please contact Tracy Stevens or Megan Cox if you will be bringing food.

Take Care,
Tracy

Listen (Do-Wa-Do), Do You Want to Know a Secret?

Wait, this is no secret! The Dance for F.U.N. party and Rock'n'Roll raffle is **TONIGHT**. Put down this paper and *boogie on down* to the Nixon blacktop playground from 5:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Festivities start at 5:15 p.m. with the 5th grade class entertaining us with the maypole celebration dance.

Next, don't forget your blanket to sit on the lawn with your own picnic, or buy dinner from your choice of Round Table Pizza, Tengu Sushi, or Taco del Mar.

Rock and Roll to the sounds of The DooDads, featuring Nixon dad, Richard Horton.

Buy some raffle tickets because you won't want to miss your chance to win one of many great prizes. Raffle drawing begins at 7:00 p.m.

Dance with me, Come on and be my partner, Dance with me. Night is falling and I am calling – Dance with me.
A Nixon PTA Sponsored Event

Participate in Stanford Research

From time to time, the PTA receives requests from Stanford researchers seeking children to participate in their studies. Research topics are diverse, including visual perception, behavioral studies, childhood anxiety disorders, and brain imaging in adolescent depression. It's an opportunity to contribute to important scientific research, and it might even be fun! Often, financial compensation is offered to those willing to participate.

These notices are posted on the Parents' Corner Bulletin Board, located to the left as you enter the main doors to the school. If you and your children are interested in participating in such studies, take a look at the bulletin board for all the details.

Family Portrait PTA Fundraiser

A Nixon PTA Sponsored Program

A \$25 donation to the Nixon PTA entitles you to a professional photography session of your family, children, or extended family reunion by photographic artists Jim and Linda Koski. You have approximately one year to use it at your (local) home, park, or the Koski Photography studio.

Look for more information in the flyer attached to this issue of *Nixon News*. More samples of their beautiful photography can be seen on their website at www.koskiphotography.com. Please send your completed form and check made out to L.M. Nixon PTA by May 5, 2006.

Show Your School Spirit!

Wear your school colors every Friday. We call it "Spirit Friday!"

Nixon School t-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, backpacks, and school supplies available. Choose royal blue or white. Order forms are available in the school office.

To order embroidered products contact Land's End at **1-800-469-2222** or order online at www.landsend.com/school. Mention our preferred school number when ordering: **9001-0031-4**.

Sign up now to head up the Spirit Shop in Fall, 2006!
Contact Pam Rasmussen for more information.

Spirit Shop is a PTA Sponsored Program

Dolphin Tales

Self Recognition: It's Not Just for Primates Anymore

"In a New York aquarium two dolphins, 13-year-old Presley and 17-year-old Tab, were discovered to have the self recognition thought to belong to only the highest order of primates and humans. They were housed in a tank with a mirror on the wall. Sometimes they were marked with a nontoxic temporary black marker and sometimes they were marked with a water-filled marker which left no visible mark. The trainers drew triangles, circles and cross-hatches on different parts of the dolphins.

"First the researchers used the sham marker on Presley, with no effect. Then they made genuine marks on various parts of his body - over his eye, on his flippers, on his tail - which definitely got his attention. From spending around 8 seconds glancing at his reflection, he went to nearly 10 minutes at a time. If marked under his chin, he would go to the mirror and stretch his neck upward repeatedly, and if marked under his left pectoral fin, he would repeatedly present his left side to the glass and peer at his image. After

he realized that sometimes the researchers were drawing on him, he'd rush right to his reflection and scan the parts of his body they had touched with the marker. Tab also used reflective surfaces to inspect marks drawn on his body.

"Once, after the formal experimental sessions were over, one of the researchers made a mark on Presley's tongue, which they had never done before. Presley rocketed to the mirror and opened and closed his mouth in front of it, something he had never been seen to do."

From *Becoming a Tiger* by Susan McCarthy.

Just For Fun Update *A Nixon PTA Sponsored Program*

Hello! Just For Fun is back from a hiatus in April to bring you the end of the year blowout activities. First, we have the Inaugural Australian BBQ scheduled for May 13th 2006 from 11:30 a.m. onwards at the Palo Alto Foothills Park. Marc and Jack Stoksik, as well as Catherine Matterson, are hosting this fabulous event. This event plans to **cater to all**—omnivores, herbivores, and carnivores. Hopefully, everyone has received the Australian BBQ flyer by now. But if not, no worries, another is located in the back of this *Nixon News*. Please refer to this for more details.

Secondly, we have the Zinfandel Wine Social hosted by Gili and Doron Aspitz this year on Saturday, May 20th. Arrival time is scheduled between 6:00 and 6:30 p.m., and the party will continue until 9:00 p.m. As in previous

years, the delicious wine is being donated graciously by Ridge Winery and will be served along with fine hors d'oeuvres to complement the wine. If you have not received the flyer which provides more details by now, please turn to the back pages of this *Nixon News* to get all the details you need to attend this one of a kind Nixon event.

Finally, we have the Mom's Night Pamper Party. See the article below for more details and get ready for a fun evening of pampering, relaxation, and socializing with old and new Nixon friends.

Just For Fun Mom's Night Pamper Party *A Nixon PTA Sponsored Event*

Here is an opportunity to get pampered and pretty while enjoying conversation with your Nixon friends, both old and new. Come to Nail n' Joy on California Avenue for a manicure/pedicure party for up to 12 women on Friday, May 5th from 6:00-8:00 p.m. Share the laughs, sip wine, and enjoy tasty snacks while getting beautiful for summer.

Cost is \$45.00 per person. Proceeds benefit the Nixon PTA. Drop your check, made out to Nixon PTA, in the Just For Fun envelope at the front desk in the office.

P.S. Make sure Dad and the kids see this as they get ready to spoil you for Mother's Day.

Classroom Happenings

Field Trip to Redwood Grove (by B-5 students A. H. and J. H.)

All 3rd grade classes took field trips to Redwood Grove during March. A naturalist named Keith Gutierrez showed us what the Ohlones ate, what they used to hunt, and how they cooked meals. We also learned about their special Ohlone festivals. They had many chants that they chanted during cooking a meal. He taught us that the most common food they ate was acorns. They had acorn mush and acorn bread for meals. The hunting tools they used included bows and arrows, nets, traps, and spears. They also had slings and bolas. They hunted rabbits, foxes, deer, and antelope. We learned that when they dyed their clothes red, they used redwood pinecones, and when they shook the cone in water, the water turned red. At our field trip, we also got to do face painting. What you do is dip two rocks in water, and then you rub them together. If the rocks dry too soon, then dip them in again. You should have created a liquid that

was brown, grey, or tan. When you rub it on your face, you will look like an Ohlone.

Unfortunately, the weather was very bad that day; it was pouring hard when we got there, and when we came back to school. We didn't get to go inside a tule hut, but we still had a great time learning about the Ohlones at Redwood Grove.

2006-2007 School Supplies

A Nixon PTA Sponsored Program

Remember driving to five different stores to get your school supplies last year and the frustration of looking for that one green fine tip pen? Introducing custom-packed school supplies. It is hassle free and a great way to start the school year. Here's what you have to do:

- Complete the order form for your child's grade next year,
- Attach your check before the end of this school year, and
- Pick up your supplies pack, conveniently boxed, when you register for school in August.

All the supplies that are required for each grade level have been teacher approved. Your child is ready to go from day one! Continue to watch your child's Friday Folder, *Nixon News*, and e-News for more details and order forms.

Participation in this program is optional. If you prefer to shop for your own school supplies, the list will be published in *Nixon News*, posted on the school website, and sent home in Friday Folders closer to the end of this school year.

If you have any questions or comments or would like more information, please contact Judy Koelbel at jdbb0245@earthlink.net.

Thank you for your continued support of this PTA sponsored program.

Back to School Supplies: What a Great Idea!

Our summer break was so much more fun last year because I didn't have to worry about running to five different stores to get school supplies for the kids. I also didn't have to bother with buying the pack of 5 pens for just a green one or hunt for that extra fine tip pen! The boys were happy and very thankful that Mom didn't drag them to the stationery stores for supplies, and I didn't have to worry about dragging all those heavy supplies to class, either. What a difference this made for us. (Nixon Parent Daisy Zook)

This was the BEST idea that the PTA has had. It saved us so much time at the start of the year, and it was also easy to donate supplies. In years past, I have had to take the children on a little expedition to Long's and then to Wal-Mart and perhaps stop at Costco, too. It's not a fun experience, particularly when you can only find the 108-pack of Crayolas and not the 24-pack that's on the list. This made it all happily a memory. It was such a sensible idea. I'd be willing to pay a premium for it. It also made donating supplies so easy. Do it again next year! (Nixon Parent Gayathri Rajan)

The problem with students purchasing classroom supplies individually is that students come to school with many of the specified supplies, but also bring improper supplies (for example, college-ruled rather than wide-ruled binder paper, 5-subject notebooks when a single subject notebook is needed, etc.). Office supply stores offer such a wide variety of supplies, it's nearly impossible to navigate, search, and be sure that you're buying the supply the teachers envisioned. In addition, students who go to pick out their own supplies often come in thinking that they have ownership over them, when in fact, we use many of the supplies for all students to use and share. The supply box program eliminated all of these problems. Students who ordered through the program had their boxes on the first day of school, and I was able to easily help them sort materials for their desks and materials that were donated into a class supply collection. The boxes contained all the supplies necessary for the classroom, and every student started the year on the same level, with the same supplies. It was convenient, efficient, and eliminated confusion. I hope that the supply boxes will be *highly suggested and encouraged* for next year! (Nixon Teacher Alison Curtis)

Nixon School is Lice Free Again!

A Nixon PTA Sponsored Program

Thank you to all the parent volunteers and teachers who took time out of their busy schedules to make this happen. The head lice checks were conducted the week before Spring Break. Everyone had to work around personal schedule conflicts, field trips, book report presentations, conferences, etc. Special thanks to the students at Nixon

who “willingly” allowed the volunteers to mess up their hair!

I want to personally thank everyone for their time and effort in making this possible. This is not the most endearing volunteer task most people sign up for, but it is necessary nonetheless. For this, I commend each and every one of you for volunteering to do this.

5th Grade Families, Mark Your Calendars

Terman Middle School is having a Social Event on Wednesday, May 31st at 6:00 p.m., which will be to dedicate the NEW Terman Triangle and welcome incoming 6th Grade families. Additional information will be forthcoming, but mark the date on your calendar now if you are interested.

Beyond Nixon

FUNdraising FOR THE KIDS

Sunday, April 30, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Nealon Park

800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park

FUNdraising FOR THE KIDS benefits the Silicon Valley Chapter of The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Now in its second year, the highlight of the day will again be rides on "Old Tom," a vintage fire truck, with Fireman Dave at the wheel. The event will also offer a bounce house, face painting, piñatas, snacks, and much more. Attendance is free, although there will be a charge for some of the activities and for food items.

About *Nixon News*

Nixon News is a PTA funded newsletter, designed to serve as a parent educational and information resource. It is published every other Friday (except when holidays interfere). Submissions should be sent via e-mail to the editor, Sharon Dally at nixonnews@paloaltopta.org. Either type the text directly in the body of the e-mail or attach a Microsoft Word or Rich Text Format file. If your article is on paper and cannot be submitted electronically or if you have a photo or graphic, please contact the editor for instructions. Deadlines are announced on the front page of every issue. They are normally (but not always) the Friday before publication. Articles may be edited for spelling, grammar, clarity, and length. All submissions must include your name and contact information.