

---

---

# Philomath Montessori School

## November 2009



***For the Families and Friends of the Philomath Montessori School***

### Class News

What a lovely group of children we have this year! Pauline, Leslie and I are really enjoying them and counting our blessings. By and large, they are a very cooperative bunch. The new children are all so eager to be like their elders and fortunately for us, our oldest kids are really good role models for them.

We have recently finished up a wonderful unit studying the Alutiiq people of the Aleutian islands. We were so lucky to have the Amoths in our class, who are part Alutiiq themselves and provided us with some wonderful artifacts. We also received a large box of cultural items from an Alaskan museum. Sharing these with the children, telling about how the Alutiiqs sustained themselves in the old times and how they are trying to keep those old ways alive was educational for adults and children alike.

Now we have begun a unit on Korea. We have some wonderful books full of gorgeous pictures and interesting facts about Korea and again, the Amoths have turned out to be instrumental. They have a lot of Korean artifacts to share! According to Olivia, they are also part Korean! I know what you're thinking. "Those little blonde girls are part Korean?" Well, I don't know if it's true or not, but someone in the family has at least visited there and we are all the richer for it. The Hulstrunks have also helped to bring

Korean culture to life by harvesting and drying their own home-grown persimmons and sharing them with us. The persimmon tree is very coveted in Korea and most villagers have one. The dried fruits are strung and valued as a sweet to enjoy through the winter months. Persimmon trees have 8 qualities that make them so special to the Korean people.



**Hazel sews on muslin.**

Our Korean holiday is Alphabet Day which celebrates the creation of the Korean alphabet. Calligraphy contests take place and even though the schools are closed, the children go there to practice and exhibit their writing skills. We are learning a beautiful song in Korea called Arrirang, which sounds lovely and sad. It is a song of

parting. We have replaced our spooning activity with chopstick practice and we are learning about the temperate forests, mountains and oceans of Asia. Leslie has created some wonderful art activities such as origami, making a festive paper lantern, making and painting a pretty fan and copying Korean letters. We also have a "Buddha board" upon which one paints with water using a bamboo brush. Then one sits and observes as the water evaporates and the board is blank again. It is an exercise in meditation for those who have the discipline to practice it.



**Someone might even know the answer!**

I told an old Korean legend to the children today and they were absolutely rapt. There is something about a story that is told rather than read that makes it so personal and engrossing. It is as if you are giving something of yourself to the child and the recipient truly values the gift. After I told it, I was thinking of all the ways I would like to do it differently. I said, "would you like to hear it again?" The answer was a resounding "Yes!" In the second telling, the plot and the outcome were the same, but certain aspects of the story were emphasized, certain elements revealed in a different order, certain nuances were finessed. Again, the children loved it. In a literate society, storytelling is often forsaken for the printed word and that is a loss. Long ago, early Hawaiian Islanders could recite epic stories about their ancestors from memory so elaborate, long and detailed that the missionaries disbelieved their own ears. Our

memories, as literate people, do not compare to those of pre-literate peoples. The children in our classroom really enjoy memorizing and reciting poetry and many are quite good at it. Not only is this a delightful cultural occupation, but it aids the memory tremendously.

As I prepare to meet with some of you for conferences, it is a great opportunity to look critically at the work being done by our children. I say to myself, "Where has this joker been hiding out all September and October? Oh, he's been largely in the garden! Wet weather will surely drive him back indoors." Or, "This child has been reading a lot, but where's the math? I need to present more math and see if I can help her balance her curriculum." Or "This young man has really increased his ability to concentrate and persevere. Yay!" It is a wonderful chance for assessment and accountability for me and I really welcome it.

Clearly, observation is an evaluation tool that doesn't interrupt the child's learning or limit the learning to what is on a test. Pawing through the work the child has assembled in his or her folder offers many clues as to where the child can improve and where he or she has excelled. I vastly prefer this non-invasive method to that of tests. I look forward to sharing what I have



gleaned with you and hope that you, too, will have information about your child that I can use to guide him/her as we carry on.

**Anna Gratz puts the Trinomial Cube back together**

Allow me to close by regaling you with a tale of the lovely afternoon I just had with our full-day children. Granted, there are only six of them and after the morning children file out, the quiet that descends is like a balm. But this afternoon was so nice. I sat in my chair reading about Korea as the children directed themselves. Someone was practicing pinning fabric together with

straight pins. She needed a quick re-presentation to figure out the technique. Someone grated an entire nutmeg, taking 30 minutes to do so. Two kids were labeling all the countries in North America. I was glad to see this as I had recently lamented to them that no one was able to take advantage of our beautiful puzzle map of Asia because no one had learned all the countries in our home continent of North America. Someone else was doing origami. Then, nutmeg-boy had a lesson about the classes of invertebrates such as echinoderms, mollusks and crustaceans. Origami-girl read some simple phonetic sentences and the map-labelers had a vocabulary lesson on mountain animals of Asia. The children were happy, quiet and very self-directed. I was not leading them, but supporting them. (Not that I never lead, it just wasn't necessary at that time.) Sadly, there were no observers to witness this idyllic scene, so I just thought I'd share it with you. Thanks for reading about it.



**Anna Wilson discovers all the combinations for 10**

## Newsline

- ❖ A **Wine Tasting** hosted by Magenta on Friday, November 6 from 4:30 - 6:30. All the proceeds from bottles of wine sold at the event will be donated to our school! Be sure to let interested friends and family members know about this event.
- ❖ On the same evening and timed conveniently is our **Parent's Night Out** fundraiser. Fifteen children will have a

fun-filled evening while their parents have their own fun! Children must be at least 2 1/2. Contact Lua Siegel at [luas@casco.net](mailto:luas@casco.net) or 929-2861. This event is limited to current and former PhMS families.

- ❖ **Parent-Teacher Conferences** are this month - please be sure to check your date and time and be as mindful about changing your conference date and time as you would any other professional appointment.
- ❖ There will be **no school** on Wednesday, November 11, Veteran's Day.

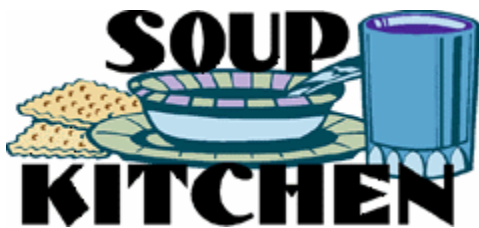


**Kaidyn and Emily put together some color combinations.**

- ❖ Friday, November 13 is the **Toy Factory Give-Back Night** for our school. So from 6:30 to 8:30 10% of all the proceeds from sales will be donated to our school! Please tell grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends and acquaintances - anyone who'll be shopping for the upcoming holidays!
- ❖ Our next **parent meeting** is on Thursday, November 19 from 6:00 to 7:30. Free child care provided. Signups will be up two weeks before meeting.
- ❖ There will be **no school** for the Thanksgiving holidays on Wednesday, November 25 and Thursday, November

26. School will resume on Monday, November 30.

- ❖ If you would like to **submit an article for our newsletter**, please send it to me via email by Monday, November 23.



To make Thanksgiving a more meaningful celebration for the children in our class, we'd like to encourage families to donate food items for the local soup kitchen - almost literally in our backyard. Every Tuesday, the church has a soup kitchen from 5:30 - 6:30. So from November 16 - 23, we will have boxes in our hallway for the collection. The food items recommended are : cans or cartons of chicken broth, cream of mushroom soup, elbow macaroni, and cans of corn, green beans, or black beans.



**Ava at the chalkboard.**



## **Board Bio - Mad Doctor**

So here's another character from our board. One that you may have seen in the papers lately and even on national news -- he's one of the Mad as Hell Doctors. **Meet Paul Hochfeld.**

**Day and Month of Birth:** September 15th

**Briefly describe your background and interests/hobbies:**

Emergency Physician, golf, video, bridge

**How long have you lived in this community?** 30 years

**Family:** Husband - Janet, Sons - Nick, age 13 and Ben, age 25

**Educational experiences:**

BS/MS in Electrical Engineering - MIT '73

UCSD School of Medicine - '78

**Current type of work:** Emergency Physician

# Thank Yous

Just in the past month, our classroom has received many generous donations. We want to again thank **Kevin Albin** for generously donating and installing four faucets for our restrooms. **Beto Sattell, Hilary Berkman, and Bekki Levien** (all alumni parents) had a garage sale and donated all the proceeds from the sale of Beto's Guatemalan items -- \$150! At the request of a number of families, **Hattie Muir** ordered copies of the beautiful album she created for the 2008-2009 school year. She was able to get a bigger discount than she had anticipated so instead of refunding the families, she turned it into a donation to the school! **Maggie Brock** brought in a stunning chrysanthemum for her birthday celebration - one that we had never seen before! For his birthday, **James Cunningham** and family are donating the funds to borrow a Burke Box from the Burke Museum for our focus on Australia in April - it's now on reserve!. **Ruth Purdue**, a board member of the Philomath Area Senior Citizens Association, sent in large boxful of greeting cards for our students to use for art and writing activities. Many thanks you all of you for your generosity and thoughtfulness!!



**Alan puts together a favorite - the Binomial Cube.**

For our classroom shelves, **Janel Lawrence** cut out animal shapes for our drawing activities and

prepared the materials for Korean crowns, **Hattie Muir** trimmed mammal cards, **Beth Jordan** prepared the "Finish the Picture" art activity, and **Mel Norland** is preparing sewing cards for level 1 and 3. Thank you for keeping our shelves stocked with these engaging activities.

We are very grateful to **Beth Jordan** for organizing the Montessori Services and to all of you who ordered!! Looks like Doni, Leslie, and I will be able to shop the Montessori Services catalog with a generous budget thanks to you! And a big thank you to **Clara Bozievich** for all of her work putting together the Wine Tasting fundraiser at Magenta and coordinating it with the Parent's Night Out fundraiser. **She and Bill Brock** also donated two ads in the Gazette-Times to get the word out about the Wine Tasting! Another big thank you to **Lua Siegel**, who has generously offered her home and her child care services for our Parent's Night Out fundraiser.

Thank you to **Lua Siegel and Rory Plaire** not only for the use of their projector for our Parent Orientation II, but also for coming in to setup the projector and coming to the parent evening to troubleshoot if needed.