



SPRINGHURST QUARTERLY

The Whole Child School

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A Year of Quests and Adventures

Once again, our school year is off to a flying start. With a dozen students and two teachers, we are ready to tackle any number of learning experiences. One of our first stops was Africa. Through the use of the Internet, we have been participating in a program called



AfricaQuest. AfricaQuest is a team of eight people who took an online audience of students on a 1,500-mile, six-week mountain bike journey through Africa's Great Rift Valley. Each week, as

online collaborators, our class got to help decide the team's route and with whom they interacted. The purpose of the trip was twofold. First, the team was trying to learn about the origins of species, particularly ours. Second, they were also trying to find causes for the depletion of large-animal populations in Africa. We learned much about the human and nonhuman inhabitants of Kenya and Tanzania. It was also a great way for us to learn about teamwork and journeys to unfamiliar places. The trip just ended and it was very interesting. As a class we are now heading north to study Egypt.

Of course most of our travels are not done vicariously. We just took a field trip to the Seattle Art Museum to view their exhibit, *Egypt, Gift of the Nile*. The students really enjoyed it and are fascinated by ancient Egyptian culture. Earlier in the year we went to Remlinger Farms for a fun fall adventure. Our next stop will probably be the Pacific Science Center.

After spending some time studying Egypt, we will return to life closer to home and take a look at the microbial world that shares space with us — in our classroom, our school yard, and our bodies. Later in the school year we will take an online trip to the Galapagos Islands and the diversity of life found there. ■

Staffing Changes

Since our last newsletter there have been some changes in our staff. First, Linda Chapa retired at the end of September. We are grateful for all of her contributions that helped make Springhurst a great place to learn. The children will always have fond memories of her.

Subsequently, we were very fortunate to hire **Kindra Myron** as our newest teacher. Kindra brings to us a wealth of experiences. Kindra has taught students of all ages. In addition to teaching and directing gifted programs, Kindra is also an artist. She has had for many years her own studio in which she produces murals, hand-bound books, paintings, and photographs. ■

GatherSeattle Conference Held Here

Seth! and Kindra recently attended a unique education conference entitled *GatherSeattle* and arranged entirely via the Internet. *GatherSeattle* engaged a small group of colleagues in a three-day, face-to-face encounter designed to extend their e-mail conversations of the past year. Among the attendees was Marion Brady,



Seth! at a GatherSeattle meeting

the original advocate for supradisciplinary curricula. The group discussed various ways that a true supradisciplinary curriculum could be

put into practice, including the personalization of learning and using aims as a way to focus educational goals and strategies. We hope to use this dialogue as a springboard to improved methods of teaching and learning at Springhurst. ■



Learning Adventures Launch Here.

Springhurst

EARLY KINDERGARTEN
THROUGH SIXTH GRADE
ACADEMIC YEAR

FOUR WEEKS OF
SUMMER PROGRAMS

If your child is highly capable and would benefit from a challenging, individualized program, Springhurst may be the school for her. We have a very low student to teacher ratio which allows us more time with each child. Interested?

Call us or visit our web site today. Enrollment is ongoing.

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Star Kiwi II — Student Fiction

This is an excerpt from a short story by Trey Howard. Trey is nine and a half years old and wrote this story for an independent project. If you would like to read the rest of the story, you may find it in the student section of our web site or you may order a copy from Trey in care of the school. Please include \$2.50 to cover shipping and handling. Mostly handling. - ed.

Juba Mafato woke up that morning in a white-walled room, obviously coated with some kind plaster. Anything other than that would be too easily picked up by loyalist long-range scans when the cloaking device was not on for docking procedures. He quickly got out of his bed and got dressed. He preened a few feathers here and there and then opened his door. He stepped into the mess hall and looked around. The circular room was packed with tough Sealons, sleek Otterillians, crafty Foxenons, sly Weaselillians, hotshot Maneteyetons, smart Kiwians like himself, and a small group of burly Bagderillians. All of the creatures were eating breakfast. Juba thought for a moment, "There are hardly enough

"Another time the friends had helped the patriot in a battle in which Chonch lost his beloved blaster class cruiser."

patriots for the loyalists to make a decent scrap of." He looked around the room again and found what he was looking for. His friends Chonch and Jofassa were sitting together by one of the walls of the room. Juba smiled as he remembered what they had been through. Chonch had once saved them from an attack by the strange Meggipeedias. Another time the friends had helped the patriot in a battle in which Chonch lost his beloved blaster class cruiser. Miraculously they made it to the headquarters of the patriots. As Juba headed for the table where Chonch and Jofassa sat, he had to weave through the throng of patriots while bumping in to Weaselillians, Kiwians, etc. Juba finally made it to the table where Chonch and Jofassa were sitting. The Sealon and Maneteyeton had been his best friends ever since he set off to join the patriots.



"Hi Juba," said Chonch, who was already three-fourths done with his breakfast while his friend had hardly even started.

"What's wrong with Jofassa?" asked Juba. "I don't know, he keeps muttering something about Aquarus... and the Temple of Serenity."

"It might be a fever. Did you check with the doctor?"

"Yes, I took him to infirmary and the doc said he was in the clear."

"I've never heard of any thing like it. I don't know about you but I'm going to look up Aquarus and the Temple of Serenity on the computer database."

Then a bell rang and all the diners made an immediate exodus to the large sliding doors. As the first group made it to the doors, a metallic, disembodied voice came in through the speakers:

"Have a nice day." ■

Springhurst: One Parent's Perspective

This guest piece was written by Erin Leary, wife of school director Seth! Leary and mother of two Springhurst students.

I see Springhurst as the start of something wonderful for families and in particular, children. The idea came from a desire to do things differently in educating highly capable children. The difference isn't glaringly obvious when you walk into the classroom - the children look like school kids everywhere. The real substantive difference is in how they are learning what they learn. A project as simple as creating a game takes into consideration a variety of skills and tools such as math (measuring lines, dividing an area), language (writing the instructions), art (decorating the game board), and a wide range of others, depending on the subject of the game. It's apparent in projects like these, which capture the imagination of a child, that learning becomes fun - not just an exercise that everyone must complete in lockstep. The approach is geared to the individual child, and they can suggest their own special twists for the project, and take pride in ownership of the creation and completion.

Children often thrive in spite of their environment - and the public schools in our area do a pretty decent job of trying to provide a good environment. However, when children can help create their own parameters by doing things that are of particular interest to them, the learning process is almost seamless. It's as natural as running, and with almost the same exuberance. This isn't always second nature for our children. They have quickly become used to and comfortable with doing what is asked of them and no more. It takes awhile for some to see the power in their greater independence. Moving them away from cookie-cutter projects, where all are doing the same thing at the same time, is gradual. Those who are starting out this way, at the beginning of their educational efforts, seem to adapt quickly. The benefit of this approach is that there is greater accountability by the individual for taking on things they truly need to know.

My hope for Springhurst is that it will thrive, and the children will remember their school experience well. It is history in the making, and I feel fortunate to be a part of something that will have a positive effect on our kids. ■

Symbiotic Planet - Book Review

Symbiotic Planet: A New View of Evolution, by Lynn Margulis; Basic Books, ISBN 0465072712.

Lynn Margulis takes a decidedly personal approach in explaining her view on how the two theories to which she has devoted her career, serial endosymbiotic theory (SET) and GAIA, the interrelation of all things, are linked.

Beginning with the smallest organisms, bacteria, all the way to the largest, the planet Earth, Margulis charts the way from the beginnings of life to current day thinking in symbiotic biology. Symbiosis, which is the biological term for the intimate and mutually rewarding pairing of two kinds of organisms, is critical to evolution. A renowned expert in both SET and Gaia theories, Lynn Margulis writes with authority and persuasion on the subjects she knows best. Interspersed in her account is the evolution of her own professional life which allows the reader a glimpse into her mind. Called "one of the most successful synthetic thinkers in modern biology", (E.O. Wilson) Margulis invites the reader to think about the world and our place in it in a totally new way. ■

Reading Program To Be Implemented

The students and staff of Springhurst will soon be adding a new facet to our reading program. We have decided to include Advantage Learning Systems' **Accelerated Reader** and **S.T.A.R.** programs in our reading curriculum. Our goal was find a way to help students, parents, and teachers monitor and assess the growth of our students in reading skills while allowing the students the flexibility to choose their own books and read at their own pace as they have done in the past. We believe that the Advantage Learning products will help us in this effort.

Our students have shown phenomenal growth in their reading ability and we want to do whatever we can to ensure that this continues. Because Accelerated Reader and S.T.A.R. use the teachers' and students' time efficiently, we will have more time to devote to diagnostic work and skill building in higher order use of reading and writing. ■

