

NEWS



NOTES

FALL 2013

INTRODUCING JIM BENZ

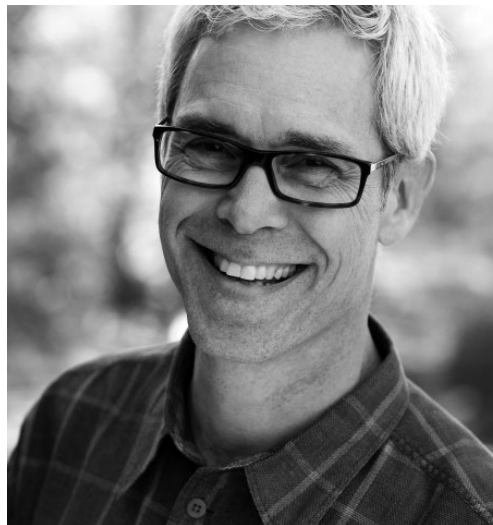
IT IS OUR PLEASURE TO ANNOUNCE the next Head of School for Peninsula, Jim Benz, who will begin his tenure with us in July 2014. After a very thorough and thoughtful search process, involving current staff, parents, past parents, alumni and our current students, the Board unanimously chose Jim and we are all very excited to have him join the Peninsula School Community.

Jim is coming to us from his position as the Director of Upper Schools (4th – 8th) at Far Brook School, a progressive school in New Jersey and he boasts a past rich with experience. Jim is an artist, a teacher, an administrator, an athlete, and perhaps most importantly, a family man. Jim's wife Joyce, a massage therapist, seemed to feel right at home while visiting Peninsula and has a warm and friendly demeanor. Together they have three children. Conrad, 19, is studying liberal arts at Goucher College as a sophomore. Their second son, André, 16, is currently a junior in high school and enjoys competing on the swimming and track teams. Their youngest, Chlöe, 14, is just starting out swimming competitively in high school as a freshman and is very excited for the move to California.

Jim began his career in education, joining the faculty at Greens Farms Academy, a K-12 school in Westport, Connecticut, where he spent thirteen great years teaching art and art history and developing curriculum in the middle school. He then moved with his young family to Seattle, taking a position as the Middle School Head of Seattle Academy of Arts and Sciences, a 6-12 school with a focus on the arts. Jim had great respect for the school but missed the sights and sounds of young kids in the hallways, so he and his family moved back to the East Coast in 2004, where he began his current position at Far Brook.

Jim did not start out as a teacher, but as an artist. He earned his B.F.A. in Visual Arts from the State University of New York at Purchase. He was particularly engaged in installation and conceptual art and later in ceramics and wheel thrown pottery. One of his favorite artists is Joseph Kosuth, because of the intellectual rigor Kosuth brings to the arts. Jim mentioned, *"Where the intellectual and creative meet is the place in art that fascinates me."*

This fascination with the philosophical side of art may be why, though Jim was comfortably working at a graphic design firm, his boss steered him towards teaching. He thought Jim had a knack for getting complex ideas across to people. Jim followed this lead, and was hired at Green Farms Academy in 1986. He instantly recognized he loved being with kids and sharing



Jim Benz, Head of Peninsula School beginning in July 2014.

PENINSULA AT THE PEN CONFERENCE

by Kathy Koo

IT WAS SUCH A JOY to be able to send our staff to the Progressive Education Network (PEN) Conference "Play Hard: The Serious Work of Keeping JOY in Learning." The two days were filled with thought-provoking workshops and truly inspiring conversation. We were once again able to fund this opportunity for all of our staff that wished to attend. Everyone who supports our school through tuition, donated funds, and in other ways, allows us to sustain professional development as an important priority in teaching and learning for our staff.

A personal highlight of the conference was finding that after six years and three PEN Conferences (San Francisco, D.C., and Chicago), the PEN Board of Directors put a stake in the ground in Los Angeles by culling myriad definitions of Progressive Education into three overarching tenets. They shared them with the 900+ educators in attendance and now I am happy to be able to share them with you.

PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION IS...

1. Preparing students for their active participation in a diverse, democratic society. (John Dewey)
2. Honoring the whole child, where teaching and learning are child-centered, and the individual's growth and creativity are affirmed.
3. Fostering agency and activism for improving society, and an enduring commitment to social justice.

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Jim Benz with some of his students at Far Brook, a progressive School in New Jersey where he is currently Director of Upper Schools.

JIM BENZ

Continued from page 1

his passions with them. He liked being in a school that had a strong sense of community and he appreciated that he and his colleagues talked often about having a positive influence on kids.

Jim went on to earn his M.A. in Art Education at the College of New Rochelle, with additional coursework at New York University. In addition, Jim learned from his Middle School Head about seeking out and focusing on a child's strengths and positive attributes and helping to celebrate and bring those to the forefront. Jim formed opinions that jibed with progressive education, which he thinks works best for most kids because it focuses on both the whole child and the family. In Jim's view, progressive schools prepare students for a broader future and for more creative responses to a changing society. Done well, he says, progressive schools do a great job of teaching kids about the joy of learning and encouraging them to continue learning throughout their lives. Jim believes, *"Learning how to adapt to change, how to take risks, how to embrace working with a diverse range of people and ideas, and learning why learning takes place are challenging ideals, but are essential elements that contribute to a full and truly enriched education."*

In addition to the current school community, Jim is really looking forward to meeting as many past parents and alumni as possible over the next few years and learning about what Peninsula has meant to them. He sees what looks like excellent education here at Peninsula. While visiting, he felt that there is an overwhelming sense of community and that there exists a strong passion about our school from everyone, including from the kids. It is clear to him that the school focuses on educating the whole child and cultivating a sense of



Jim with his wife Joyce, and their three children.

joy in learning. Additionally, Jim appreciated our community's strong commitment to diversity. *"The most successful schools, I've found, are joyful and diverse communities where the students are known, feel safe to be themselves, and are empowered to become compassionate leaders and ethical citizens."* For Jim, Peninsula is such a school, and he is very excited to be joining our community next year.

PEN CONFERENCE

Continued from page 1

So, at long last, when we are asked in the proverbial elevator – we now have a succinct response!

I asked our staff for their thoughts and experiences from the conference. The focus of the responses varied and showed a wide range of interests and learning. A few of these reflections are provided here to share a sense of the enriching experience gained by our staff.

WORKSHOP: CREATING A WELL-BALANCED MATH CURRICULUM

This workshop was presented by teachers from Children's Community School in Van Nuys, a progressive K-6 school. They have created a well-balanced math curriculum that is focused on including various content areas, games and a range of learning methods. There was discussion about how to integrate math into other disciplines, and real-life applications were included. The teachers keep an eye on developmental level and individual needs, providing support and accommodation when needed. They were absolutely committed to the idea that everyone can do math and enthusiastic about finding real-life math problems everywhere. — Susie Pickett, Lower School Literacy Specialist

WORDS TO THINK ABOUT AND LIVE BY

Right from the get-go at the opening speech of the PEN conference we were challenged to think deeply about the significance of education and its impact on the individual as well as on society overall with this quote from Vita Perrone, former Director of Education at Harvard: "What if our children and young people learn to read and write but don't like to and don't? What if they don't read the newspapers and magazines, or can't find beauty in a poem or love story? What if they don't go as adults to artistic events, don't listen to a broad range of music, aren't optimistic about the world and their place in it, don't notice the trees and the sunset, are indifferent to older citizens, don't participate in politics or community life?" Words to think about and live by - enjoy thinking & living! — Andréa de Wit, Lower School Science Teacher



Peninsula staff and other Progressive Education Network members look on as vibrant Keynote Speaker Angela Davis engages the audience.

AN INCREDIBLY IMPACTFUL EXPERIENCE

First and foremost, it opened my mind to a vast array of ways to improve my teaching. Some of these 'aha' moments are specific skills that I can and will implement right away, while others are bigger ideas that will seep into my teaching over time. Secondly, it was incredibly validating and exciting to see and hear more than 900 educators from around the country (and a few from other countries) who are implementing progressive education in their schools. I am profoundly grateful to all who made it possible for so many Peninsula staff members to attend the conference. — Mel Carvalho, 7th Grade Head Teacher

IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

I appreciated the validation of play! Dr. Stuart Brown, opening speaker, said, "We are built to play and built through play. When we play, we are engaged in the purest expression of our humanity, the truest expression of our individuality." His research into play has demonstrated that body play equates to graduated risk learning, and rough and tumble play defines our roots of empathy. Without play, individuals exhibit rigidity, interpersonal conflict, joylessness, and decreased curiosity. Guess what, the importance of play spans the life cycle! — Chris Vale, HR Assistant to Director & POP Staff Liaison

ALUMNI

Would you like to participate in the 2014 Alumni & 8th Grade Collaborative Project, "WHAT'S IN A WORD?"
 contact alumni@peninsulaschool.org

A SPECIAL CLASSROOM GIFT

by Stacy Dryer

During this holiday season, as you think about giving and, in particular, the ways you might want to support the beautiful home so many of us have found at Peninsula School, I invite you to consider the following letter from Kate Vander Ploeg, our K/1 teacher. She drafted this letter to the parents in her class last year in response to their desire to know what she most wanted as a class gift. Her letter expresses so well that much of what Peninsula needs today are sufficient funds to help sustain the things that have always made Peninsula the uniquely special place it is — our unparalleled teaching staff, the natural beauty of our buildings & grounds, and the ability to provide ample financial aid, so that families from all different backgrounds can continue to find their voice, their passions, their joy in learning, and their love of life at Peninsula School.

Dear Parents in Kate's Class,

This year, when asked what we would want for our classroom as a gift, Camerina, Frank and I found ourselves drawing a blank. I feel fortunate enough to have the means through our classroom budget to get necessary items (and then some) for our room and program. We are very blessed to have such a beautiful class and rich curriculum. However, when parents (aka you) come to me expressing a desire to give back to our class, I am very touched by the offer and want to honor your gift as well.

Camerina, Frank and I (along with some other folks from the Big Building) have spent some time discussing this. After considering many ideas for gifts for the classroom and the school we would like to ask that in lieu of giving an item to the classroom you would instead make a donation to the Peninsula School Annual Giving Fund in honor of Kate's Class. When thinking about what we could add to our class or to the school the big things that come to mind are increased funding for financial aid, continued support for teacher and staff salaries, and money for the upkeep of our lovely grounds. All of these elements are supported by the Peninsula School Annual Giving Campaign. While financial aid is particularly near and dear to my heart, in reality Annual Giving supports all areas of the school in significant ways.

I want to thank you all for your support and care for our room and your generous offer for a class gift. I appreciate you thinking of not only us but of the whole school this year when you consider donating to the Annual Giving Campaign in honor of the class. It has been a wonderful year and I feel very blessed to have been a part of such a remarkable class - children and parents alike!

So much love,
 Kate

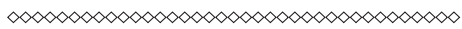
We want to send special thanks to the parents of Kate's class (2012-2013) for responding to Kate's heartfelt letter with a generous gift to the school's Annual Giving Campaign (AGC). Being important to Kate and (100%) of the other staff members at the school, Annual Giving allows Peninsula to keep tuition affordable for as many families as possible and to provide financial aid for those who otherwise could not afford to attend. The gift from Kate's class truly honored our teachers and directly benefited the programs and mission of our school. If you are similarly inspired to support Peninsula in this critically important way, we invite you to use the enclosed remittance envelope to make a gift or a pledge to AGC. Thank you in advance for your support & Happy Holidays to you and those you love!!



Kate with her class of 2012-2013 on their 100th day of school.

Mexican, and Bolivian. The fourth student is Russian, Latvian, Jewish, and Eastern European. The third student is Japanese, Korean, and Buddhist. We also began to see ourselves as connected to larger communities. The second student reached out as an ally to broader communities experiencing conflict in Syria and Newtown, Connecticut. The first student voiced how she is a “wind gently blowing around the world.” These words reflect a growing understanding of an individual’s place within broadening communities and society. They also speak to being allies with oppressed peoples, and advocates for global citizenship.

We are learning about the power of diversity. As progressive educators at Peninsula, we can engage students in understanding the strength of a diverse, democratic community starting at a young age. I believe school is a microcosm of society, and a lab for social justice and change for the future.



ANDRÉA DE WIT
HEAD TEACHER

This year will also bring a familiar Peninsula face to a new location within the school. Current lower school science teacher, Andréa de Wit, is our 3rd grade head teacher mentee for this year and the full-time 3rd grade head teacher for 2014-15. Although our current families mostly know her as “Science Andréa” and mom to current students Andries and Wim, prior to joining Peninsula, Andréa taught K/1, 1st and 4th grade classes. We feel lucky to have her combination of experiences as she transitions back into the classroom. For the first half of this year, Andréa is still the lower school science teacher four days a week, and she is spending one day a week in Gail’s classroom. She is becoming integral to the class community, and having the chance to see Gail’s teaching and wisdom close up. In the second half of this year, she will turn over her science role to a new teacher and switch to full-time in her classroom teaching position. She explains that while she has loved teaching science at Peninsula during these past 5 years, she is excited to be returning to a head teaching position in her own classroom.

Andréa’s hiring followed Gail Buschini’s announcement that this year would be her last year as head teacher of the 3rd grade



Gail Buschini (right) works with Andréa de Wit to pass on her years of wisdom before retiring at the end of this school year.

classroom. Not only has Gail taught at Peninsula for the past 36 years, she also is the parent of two alumni, the grandparent of one alumna, and has two more grandchildren currently enrolled. Anybody who knows Gail knows that she is not only a beautiful person and gifted teacher, but that she is somebody who is filled with great insights and deep love for children and their families. The fact that Peninsula Partner for the Future-Teacher Succession funds exist to allow us to capture and pass along some of her accumulated wisdom from the past three plus decades is an invaluable gift to Andréa, our students, and our entire community.

One of the wonderful things about Peninsula’s retiring teacher transitions is the flexibility with which they can be done to best support the specific needs of each teacher and classroom. Although we have, in recent years, seen many teachers provide mentoring and support post-retirement, Gail has expressed a preference for doing most of her transition work with Andréa during her final year as head teacher. In thinking about her transition with Gail, Andréa commented: *“Being able to work with Gail this year feels like such a supportive and loving relationship - for me, for the children, for the community, and for the spirit of Peninsula. It really nurtures those deep roots of generations of connections.”*

LEONARDO (LEO)
SCHNEIDERMAN
P.E. TEACHER

Our new P.E. teacher, Leonardo Schneiderman, comes to us from Auburn, California with his wife Beatriz, and baby daughter, Maya. His past work includes Summer Camp Director for the Auburn Racquet and Fitness Club,

various student and substitute teaching positions, and coaching positions at Tarbut V Torah, a K-12 school in Irvine. A native of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, he also held sports staff roles with the Brazilian Olympic Committee and Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines and is fluent in Portuguese, Spanish and English. Leo holds a B.S. in Kinesiology, and a Master of Arts in Education.

Leo is passionate about getting kids to discover and explore their abilities and strengths, even through skills to which they have not been previously exposed. He envisions a future where every Peninsula kid will feel confident to try any type of game or physical skill. He believes students should be able to strive for their goals, learn from their early attempts and even failures, and celebrate their successes. Perseverance is a value he hopes to encourage in all our kids. While he is passionate about the physical abilities, some of the skills he is working on with kids are about responsibility, choice, and clear communication upfront with agreement on the rules to avoid conflicts during the games. “I care about creating a safe environment for the kids so they can try.” Already he is happy to see kids doing activities with him they did not previously do. He delights in watching kids learn a new skill and run with it!

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Leonardo Schneiderman

STAFF CHANGES

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AYLA MILLER CO-ART TEACHER

Ayla Miller, who holds a B.A. in Art History, started this fall as co-art teacher alongside, Terra Miller. Ayla rejoined the Peninsula School teaching staff after a three-year hiatus during which time she was a teaching assistant in 4th grade at the Gideon Hausner Jewish Day School. She is glad to be working with Terra, who is not only her colleague, but also



Ayla Miller

her mother-in-law. Ayla and her husband, alumnus Lee Miller, '00, have a one year old son named Lev and she loves being a mom!

Thrilled to be back, Ayla is glad to bring two passions together, working at Peninsula and teaching art. Not divided into upper school and lower school positions, the co-art teacher role is designed as two halftime teachers collaborating together and sharing in lesson planning. This gives the students access to both teachers and the knowledge and approaches each bring to art. It allows both Ayla and Terra to work with all of Peninsula's students. Together they have a really good rhythm, which is evident to anyone who sees them planning. Enjoying collaboration, Ayla is happy she gets to work not only with Terra, but with each classroom teacher as well.

Ayla feels most energized by the Peninsula students. "Art lends itself nicely to how different kids see the same opportunity and assignment," Ayla reflected, "I also love that the kids are so willing to take on new art techniques and really try them out." She feels that when she brings in a new project, the

students exceed her expectations. Also new is the change from seeing one slice of the school as a classroom teacher to getting a little taste of everyone each week. Ayla feels very connected and enthusiastic about teaching art at Peninsula for years to come.

D'ARCY NICOLA ACCOUNTING ASSOCIATE

D'Arcy Nicola joins us as our new accounting associate and can be found with a smile on her face each day in the business office. Hearing about Peninsula through friends for years, she is delighted to join our staff. D'Arcy sees Peninsula School as a friendly, vibrant, creative community closely aligned to her core values. She brings significant experience from working in financial and administrative support roles for non-profits. Particularly dedicated to serving organizations that support children, she has worked with Friends for Youth and Fourt Therapy. Her two children (of whom she is very proud), Forest and Zora, both attend Ohlone School where she is an active parent volunteer.

D'Arcy is happy at Peninsula, as she likes solving puzzles and figuring things out, which is a big part of accounting. She has enjoyed working closely with Business Director Julie Backlund and with Bette Henley. Bette is now devoted to I.T. at Peninsula, but has passed along her knowledge to D'Arcy through the



D'Arcy Nicola enjoying the beach with her kids.

transition. D'Arcy could not help mentioning that a bonus at Peninsula is that even as an accountant you still get to see parents, staff, students and even dogs – you are truly a part of the community. She hopes that by being warm and welcoming people will see her as someone who can assist them!

IN MEMORIAM

Betsy Roeth

Betsy Roeth was a wonderful woman, teacher and artist, who we sadly lost in August 2013 at the age of 85 while she was on a trip in Switzerland. She most recently lived and had an art studio in Aptos, California. She was involved in the Peninsula community through the years in different ways. She was a former Peninsula teacher, board member, and also parent of alumni Ian Kaplan, '71 and the late Tirza Kaplan, '77. Later she returned to Peninsula as the proud grandmother of alumnus Jared Ben Jamin, '09. However, many of you may remember her most from "Betsy's Class" between 1972 to 1976, as she was much beloved by her students. Betsy had a warm personality and a smile, even in hard times. She will be greatly missed by her family and the Peninsula community.

Herbert Perkins

Herbert Perkins, M.D., passed away July, 30 2013, survived by his wife Frances, who once taught science at Peninsula. He was a hematologist, dedicated to research that included combatting leukemia, hepatitis and transfusion associated AIDS, in his role as Director of Research at Irwin Memorial Blood Bank. He later held the position of CEO. He was a parent at Peninsula for 18 years, father of Susan Perkins '59, Debbie Perkins Kalama '62, Dale Perkins '64, Karen Perkins '68, and Ronnie Perkins Connell '71. He served as the Board President in the '60's at Peninsula while his kids were here. Herbert and Frances have continued to support Peninsula as PALS (parents of alumni students) all these years. He was a good man who never said an unkind word about anyone and he will be missed by colleagues, friends, and family alike.

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

NEW AND FAMILIAR FACES IN NEW PLACES

WE ARE EXCITED TO WELCOME six new teaching assistants this year! Some have long histories with Peninsula, and some are brand new, but all have entered smoothly and are already woven into the everyday fabric of Peninsula. Joining our teaching staff are Seph Thomas in

Nursery Blue, Melissa Wright in Annie's, Masa Tasovac in Annie's and Graceann's, Nancy Christie in Graceann's, Damien Kardokas Johanson in Marcella's, and Lakshmi Eassey in both Mel's and Kate's. Here is what they have to say about their experience teaching at Peninsula so far:



"Teaching in Nursery Blue is offering plenty of new challenges and experiences every day."

— SEPH THOMAS, CLASS OF '02



"My first year at Peninsula is off to an amazing start. The entire Peninsula community has been so warm and welcoming. I feel lucky for each day that I get to spend with these wonderful children!"

— MELISSA WRIGHT



"Ever since our family joined Peninsula (and I say our family purposely, because this is a community affair) the school started becoming our second home. Both of our kids feel comfortable and free expressing their love for play and more adventurous sides of their

personalities. Joining as a staff member this year seemed a natural progression and it filled my life with new learning opportunities, ideas and life experiences. Peninsula has that rare gift of bringing dissimilar people together in the most smooth and gentle way. What a great journey!"

— MASA TASOVAC



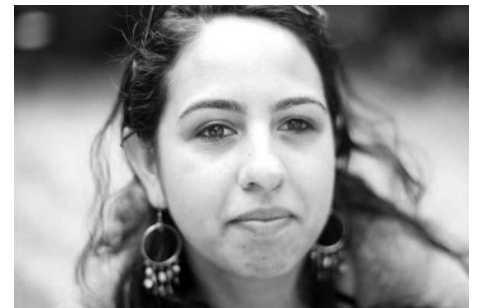
"I love being in Graceann's class in the mornings. Making relationships with the kids and watching the kids make relationships with their peers is such a gratifying experience. Now I understand why my kids loved Peninsula School so much!"

— NANCY CHRISTIE



"Seldom have I been so at play while working, and never have I felt like such a student in my capacities as a teacher."

— DAMIEN KARDOKAS JOHANSON



"Working in both Kate's class and Mel's class I have the best of both worlds. Supporting young minds as they grow through games of tag and facilitating current events makes each day different from the next."

— LAKSHMI EASSEY, CLASS OF '99

In addition to our new teaching assistants, we have some veteran teaching assistants who can be found in new places. Nancy Leech is now a warm welcoming presence in Josie's half-day class, Suman Kasturia of Nursery Blue also enjoys teaching in Kate's full day class in the afternoons, David Rowe can now be found in Gail's, and the talents of Travis Lacina are being added to our 8th grade,

where he works side by side with Brian. Every one of these teaching assistants is a part of the amazing commitment at Peninsula to provide a great student/teacher ratio so all kids have multiple adults to be their teachers, guides, confidants, friends, and advocates. These, and all our teaching assistants, help us build the community feeling at Peninsula that we cherish.

ALUMNI CONNECTIONS

Daniel Frishman '60

I recently retired from real estate, after many careers in my life, including professional acting, Alaska resort management, and on and on. I am married with grandkids. My wife and I live on a sparsely settled island.



Daniel Frishman

Carlos Aguilar '69

Class of 1969, the Golden Years! Lots of stories to be told! After a professional sports career (can you believe it after Peninsula?), and 21 years in local real estate, I now have a 60's style real estate company. Full Service at a Fair Price! I have never forgotten the Peninsula experience and what it did for me in the crazy times of the late 1960's and how it helped shape me as a person. The initiation of a new student having to climb all around the



Carlos Aguilar, 1967

Big Building without touching the ground – The legend of the ghostly bride – The field trips to Mexico, New Mexico, etc. in the bus! – Riders of the Purple Sage and Jerry Garcia's first public concert on the handball court during the Spring Fair – Watching the only video in 8 MM of the Doors new hit "Break On Through" ... and on and on – These made for a special time, never to be forgotten!

Kristy Conley '71

I made a big move and am now running an organic farm and equestrian facility in Oregon.



Kristy Conley, 1960s

Erik Thiesmeyer '77

Still flying airplanes and helicopters for a living, so I haven't really grown up yet. Going to the Kentucky Derby in a few weeks in the company jet. Maybe I will get a mint julep? Meanwhile, Nina (13) continues to dance in competition all over California while her younger brother, Erik, Jr. (10) plays in water polo tournaments with the high school kids. Retired from the Army a few years back, 28 years and four combat tours



Erik Thiesmeyer

was enough. Still keep in touch with many friends from those days. I'm in the VFW and American Legion now and love to participate in veteran events, welcome home ceremonies, and the sad duties of a military funeral. I'd

really like to buy a Harley Davidson motorcycle and ride escort in parades and stuff, but my wife says "ahhhh no".

Christina Morrell '93

I have just moved to Los Angeles after living in New York for 12 years, where I successfully pursued my acting career playing off-Broadway, regionally and touring with



Christina Morrell

two 'first national tours'. Here in LA I've expanded my career to include film, TV and theater as well as commercials. In fact, I was in an episode of "Blood Relatives" in mid-April on Investigation Discovery! In addition to acting, I'm also a certified Pilates Instructor.

Warren Wernick '05

I am a stage actor, musician, writer, photographer, and climber passionate about bridging the divide between science, mathematics and



Warren Wernick, 2000

the arts. I am completely at the mercy of serendipity, staying curious and working towards a career in whatever happens to hold my attention... whether it's teaching/education reform, tech journalism, psychology, filmmaking, sound engineering or, on occasion, some more humanitarian endeavors.

PLAYER, COACH, ON THE BALL

*Original Interview by Nina Garin for
UT San Diego, February 24, 2013*

KNENGI MARTIN is a women's football player – and, no, that's not a fancy way of saying soccer.

Martin, 29, plays actual American football, complete with big hits and fancy footwork. She owns and is a player for the San Diego Surge, a local women's football team that had an undefeated season last year. The team plays Saturday evenings – from April to June – at Santana High School in Santee (see schedule at sandiegosurge.com).

Martin, who moved to San Diego one year ago, is also the head coach and offensive coordinator for San Diego High School's boys' freshman football team. In 2010, when she first started coaching boys' football in San Luis Obispo, Martin was among the first female high school football coaches in the state.

As she prepares for the upcoming Surge season, she took some time to discuss the ups and downs of being a woman in a male-dominated sport.

Q: How do people react when you tell them about women's football?

A: First question is always, "Is it lingerie?" Then they take a good look at me and sort of ponder... but I'm quick to respond, "No, full pads! We actually hit each other." I honestly think most people like it better that I play traditional football and keep the game pure. I continue to promote the sport that everyone loves and has grown up with – it's not women selling their bodies and calling it football.

Q: When did you develop a passion for football?

A: I have always loved football, but I believe it was when I started playing women's

football in 2003. I knew this sport was for me, it came very naturally and I wanted to know as much as I could and be the best player that I could be.

Q: What is the San Diego Surge?

A: The San Diego Surge is the best women's football team in San Diego, and currently the reigning Women's Football Alliance Champions. Our regular season runs from April 6 to June 8. Our home field this season is at Santana High School in Santee. Next year, we hope to play all of our home games at Balboa Stadium downtown.



Knengi Martin, Peninsula grad of '97, is blazing a trail for women in football, as not only a coach for boys' high school football, but as a player, coach and owner of the champion San Diego Surge Women's Football Team.

Q: You have a gold medal from the International Federation of American Football (IFAF) Women's World Championship – how popular is the sport in the United States and in other countries?

A: First off, it was an honor to play for that team and I'm now lucky to say that I have been selected again to be part of the 2013

team that will play in Finland over the summer. Most people don't know women's football even exists, but once they see it they are blown away by the talent and big hits that these football players can deliver. The IFAF tournament in 2010 had only six teams competing; in 2013, there are over 60 teams hoping to win a gold medal.

Q: You are among the very few women who coach boys' football – are you treated the same as male coaches?

A: I'm lucky that I have never met any discrimination. I know my football, and the players and other coaches around me know that, see that and hear that. It's hard to hide on the football field, and if you don't know what you're talking about, players will know and just stop listening. Kids are sponges – they want to be the best and please. When they know you have their back and are giving them good information they don't care what sex you are.

Q: Do you feel your accomplishments inspire other female athletes?

A: I hope so. But I also try to always be very humble, so a lot of my teammates don't actually know all the things that I have done. Mostly I try to lead by example – so in that sense, I hope I inspire female athletes to be the best they can.

Q: What is one thing people would be surprised to find out about you?

A: I love unicorns and glitter. I'm not obsessed or anything, but I do have a unicorn pillow pet named Glitter, GT for short. Really though, I'm just a big-hearted football junkie who likes things that sparkle!

Q: Please describe your ideal San Diego weekend.

A: Beautiful weather, my girlfriend, our two dogs, we take my 1967 classic Bronco to Dog Beach (in Ocean Beach), where we can all run around and play in the waves. Then it's time for dinner and a great beer at OB Noodle House. Best food I've had here in San Diego.



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