# News



# Notes

S U M M E R 2 O 1 3

# VISITING OTHER SCHOOLS

### by Kathy Koo

AS PART OF PENINSULA SCHOOL'S commitment to on-going professional development, the entire Peninsula staff devoted its March 22nd Staff Inservice day to visiting fellow schools, public and private, across the Bay Area. The visits were orchestrated and organized by an enthusiastic team of our staff who divided us up into small groups. The school visit selections were based on the goal of achieving growth opportunities aligned with our own specified development goals. The schools visited include Addison, Berkwood Hedge, Castilleja, Discovery, Gateway, GEO Kids, Hillbrook, Waldorf, Lighthouse Charter, Nueva, Ohlone, Rocketship Charter, Synergy, The San Francisco School, Urban, Presidio Hills, Girls Middle School and Monarch.

It was a beautiful California day, and the weather cooperated wonderfully as we toured campuses and classrooms, and engaged with our tour guides, and the students as well. There were a myriad of learning moments for increased awareness and understanding of how other schools approach education including emphases on progressive practices, diversity, technology, foreign language, play, parent participation and community, and a wide range of other topics. As we explored these topics at other institutions we found both differences and some parallels to what Peninsula delivers in areas such as physical and outdoor space, free time and play, use of technology in the classrooms, and curriculum themes. The visits provided considerable food for thought for what we might consider integrating into our own environment, as well



A lovely portrait of beloved Peninsula Teacher, Marion Conley, who passed away peacefully on February 21, 2013 at the age of 91

# MARION CONLEY REMEMBERED

AFTER 91 INCREDIBLY FULL and fulfilling years Marion Conley passed away, with her daughters Kristy and Kathy by her side. She gave so much to Peninsula and the students who have played through our mud puddles and oak trees for the past 50 years. Though she retired in 1998, from the same classroom now lovingly cared for by Annie Young, she continued to tutor several kids up until very recently. This is because she was young at heart, truly loved children, and wanted to help them find their own way.

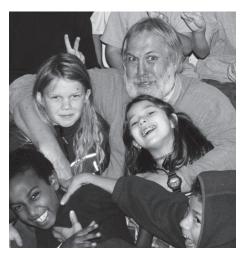
Below we have reprinted a part of the article printed in News Notes 1998 when she retired, as well as a letter Marion wrote on that occasion. While no words do justice to the role Marion Conley played in life and at Peninsula, these words, especially hers, are a beautiful way to remember her connection to Peninsula and to us.

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## ROGER RETIRES

ROGER GANAS HAS INSPIRED AND TAUGHT 36 years of Peninsula students, starting as a head teacher in 1978. Like so many Peninsula teachers, he also was a parent to alumnae Elyse '85 and Sarah '92, but stayed to teach another two decades of Peninsula kids. Now he is off on his own adventures, not the least of which is life as a grandfather. If it were up to him, in his typical fashion of focusing on the kids and not himself, we would have no fanfare around his retirement . . . the only problem with that is the fact that he is an integral part of Peninsula culture for four decades of Peninsulans. Many around school can't imagine Peninsula without him, because . . . well, he has been here as long as they have been alive or at least as long as they have known the school. We are lucky to have had so much time with someone who continues to inspire his students in their music, art, careers, and parenting, even years after they have left his unique classroom and

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This picture captures Roger, in a very typical fashion, having fun with his class with a spirit he brought to each class through his 36 years teaching at Peninsula.

# DEPARTING TEACHERS

#### HEAD P.E. TEACHER, KHEATON SCOTT

Kheaton Scott has been a wonderful addition to our teaching staff these past two years. Arriving on campus in 2011, Kheaton could see why students love Peninsula's unique environment with wide open spaces and trees, but also saw some challenges for a P.E. program without the usual grass fields, as well as jumping from age to age. The fact is that our dirt is much harder to fall on than a soccer field's grass. He was happy to find much help and support from the classroom teachers about popular games and age appropriate games. From the start, he bonded with the kids and his colleagues immediately due to his vibrant



Kheaton Scott

personality and willingness to make things happen. Whether he was leading staff line dancing with Math Liz, helping Nursery kids have a fun and safe time in the Playspace, or mediating Upper School kids working out a P.E. dispute, he brought his whole energy, encouraging others to do the same. Watching him with the kids, one was struck by the fact that he has a great talent for engaging kids in Nursery or 8th Grade, and each age in between. Though Kheaton has been happy at Peninsula, he felt the pull of untried options. "The future is filled with possibilities," Kheaton said thoughtfully. He wants to travel both domestically and internationally, starting with a trip to Costa Rica. It feels right, taking the chance now while he is still young, to explore some of these possibilities and interests while also substitute teaching. He loves Peninsula, the kids, and the staff here and does intend to come back for visits, announcing, "I'll be checking in on the mud puddle!"

#### ASSISTANT TEACHERS

#### Alice Newton

It is with a heavy heart that we are saying goodbye to one of our most senior teaching assistants. Alice Newton started assisting

in the fall of 1986 in Marion Conley's class, and has been a staple of our community ever since. She learned of Peninsula before she married and had children first through being a Quaker, then through her job managing the Briarpatch



Alice Newton

Co-op Market on Bay Road in Menlo Park near Peninsula. She had moved to the Bay Area in 1974 with a degree in Nursing, but had been very involved in the alternative food movement, and so was hired as the first co-manager to help open the market. The cooperative model and all members sharing in decisions appealed to Peninsula families, and Alice connected with many of our families and teachers while working there. Food for the Spring Fairs and Auctions was provided wholesale from Briarpatch. In 1984, she started son, Kenny Meehan, '94 in Dottie and Winston's kindergarten, and later her daughter, Carmela Meehan, '98 in Maida's.

Alice started working as an assistant through the participating scholarship model, defraying tuition costs, and also worked for 15 years as a summer school teacher, but stayed to work long after both children graduated because she loves Peninsula. She began working afternoons in Ann Guy's class as well as Gail's and Graceann's, then began working full-time with Graceann in 1992 and has been there ever since. "One thing I've learned from Graceann that has helped me not only in the classroom, but in my personal life too," Alice mused, "is to deal with any issue right in the moment and to try to live what we teach and expect of the kids." Alice has found both Graceann and the Peninsula community as a whole to be wonderfully caring and inspiring.

"There is so much joy here," she continued, "and part of that joy is a lot of positive feedback. I think we are pretty good at thanking each other for what we do." And she includes parents and staff, as well as younger and older kids in that loop.

The legacy of such a long connection affords Alice some insight into retirement. She loves it when she meets with a former student who is now grown up, maybe working in a career already, "and there is still a bond between us. They usually remember my name and it is a magical moment." She likes seeing her early students and her children's friends at the Spring Fair, now bringing their own kids to enjoy the day, and she looks forward to more of that. She plans to continue sharing our culture at the Spring Fair by coming back to help sell our books and DVD's which show our school and discuss our philosophies. This also allows her to continue these magic moments with her decades of former students, about 750 total, while connecting with staff and parents as well. Alice is a historian at heart, so likes this way of staying connected to the school. This love of history is also a part of her future plans, as she will use her time in retirement to finish assembling historical family albums. Also, she will soon become a grandmother. Something tells me that Alice will never find herself with a lack of adventures to occupy her time. We feel honored to know she will find time to come back and visit us too.

#### Patty Moran

After 19 years of association with Peninsula School as parent and teacher, Patty Moran accepted a new position as a Child Development Coordinator at the Community Childcare

Council of Santa Clara County. Over the past nine years Patty has worked at Peninsula as an assistant in Josie's, in Nursery Green, as well as in Childcare and teaching in Summer School. Her longest



Patty Moran

and final role at Peninsula was as a part of the Nursery Blue team. She brings a love and affection for nursery age children that helps them grow and blossom. Our community will be glad to know we can still expect to see her at school events in the coming years. Happily, Patty is very excited about her new job and

will enjoy increased responsibilities and the chance to promote good care of children. She hopes to spread the knowledge held at Peninsula about nurturing young children and supporting their development with those she meets in her new role for Santa Clara County. We think they are lucky to have her! "Patty is one of those rare souls whom others are always happy to encounter, even if just in passing and to share a quick hello. Patty has touched and inspired many children over the years. She made the children feel special and greeted them every morning with a warm smile and kind welcoming words. Thanks for your hard work Patty, for your many contributions, for your personal integrity, and for your friendship. You will be missed deeply by the children, teachers and parents of Nursery Blue," shared Megan Hart. We will certainly miss Patty's presence, and kind and joyful manner, and of course wish her the best of luck in her new pursuits.

#### Jason Cirimele

Jason graduated with the class of 2001, and came back to work as an assistant in Roger's class in 2010. He worked there one year, and moved to assist in Marcella's 6th Grade this past year. Growing up here as a student and a staff kid, he fit in easily. It just made sense to him, to come and give back to the place that gave him so much. He likes the idea of giving today's kids what he got from his teachers, in respect, encouragement, and space to grow - and it felt fulfilling. Getting to teach alongside some of those very teachers he knew

as a kid was an interesting experience, allowing him to become, "a member of the council," as he put it. He has brought great energy and care to both classrooms as well as the Choice Program, supporting students in their creative and academic endeavors,



Jason Cirimele

and truly partnering with both head teachers to make great classroom environments. In addition, he brought his musical talents to help many kids at the rock concerts and other performance events, as well as collaborating with staff members and on the front porch with



Akash Pandey

parents for all to enjoy. Jason is a philosopher and was thoughtful about this next chapter in his life, "I will never be done with Peninsula, but need to step out to explore other interests. I have known since 5th or 6th Grade that music was probably what I wanted to do." We are glad to know he will keep his connection with us, and are equally glad to see him following

#### Akash Pandey

We have been very fortunate to have Akash Pandey as our Upper School assistant since 2011. He has brought energy, humor, and caring connections to the students in his teaching role. Throughout his time at Peninsula he aided Mel and Brian ably, instantly making him a staple in the community. "He brought a wide breadth of knowledge - ranging from current events, to sports, to music - but more importantly, he brought his incredibly amicable personality and an innate sense of how to connect with kids," reflected Brian Adams. Akash's Choice offerings, from the very first in 2011, were unique and intriguing. He often teamed up with fellow teachers to create multifaceted units, like the History of Hip-Hop with Jason Cirimele. We are glad to say that Akash will be continuing as an educator and is off to further his skills by joining the Urban Teacher Education Program (UTEP) at the University of Chicago. We wish him well and are glad to know he won't be a stranger when he visits the Bay Area.

### Mikel Kovach-Long & Abby Chen

Big changes are afoot in Josie's classroom in the lovely cottage at the entrance of our school. Two of her wonderful assistants are moving on this year, though neither is leav-

ing the community altogether. Both Mikel Kovach-Long and Abby Chen will no longer be in Josie's starting in the fall. They have each brought unique skills, interests and fun, not



Mikel Kovach-Long

only into Josie's room, but the many spots we have seen them around campus. We will miss them both as Josie's assistants.

Abby's perceptive care of some of our youngest students will be missed, as will the amazing gifts she brought to our admin team, helping in the office and as a past editor of News Notes. Her smile and kind



Abby Chen

attention to kids and grown-ups alike will be remembered by all. Luckily we will still see her around in her role as a Peninsula Parent.

We wish her well in her future endeavors. Mikel is not leaving the school, as he will continue the role of Woodshop Teacher he has held since 1982, but after 20 years with Josie, and another eight prior with Maida, he is moving on from his classroom role. Living in San Jose, traffic has gotten notably worse in the past 30 years, and it now takes him almost as long to get to Peninsula at that time of day, as he spends in the classroom. Mikel is giving up his beloved

role with this Kindergarten/1st grade group to replace that traffic time with increasing attention to his own art, and to come in refreshed for Woodshop each day. As he notes, he sees kids getting overscheduled, and would like to lead by example in the concept of valuing free time to follow what you love. His parting wisdom from this role is that kids need more time to play, and, what he learned from Maida, "Always listen to what kids have to say and respect what they are saying. Listen with a kid's point of view. Then the adult makes the final decision, but the kid knows they were really heard." We are glad that both kids and adults can still visit Mikel in the

#### KATHY KOO

basement of the Big Building for Activities!

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as an affirmation and appreciation of many of the key components of a Peninsula education.

This Staff Inservice day was an opportunity for our staff to achieve greater visibility into the educational world outside of Peninsula School, and was highly successful and beneficial for all. I know that everybody looks forward to another similar development and outreach opportunity in the future!

# MEMORIES OF IRA

IN APRIL, WE LOST IRA SANDPERL at the ripe old age of 90, Peninsula Teacher from 1960 to 1965, first of 7th Grade and then Creative Writing. He not only taught kids to trust their inner writer, but he also shared with them his passion for literature and reading. He worked at Kepler's books for over 30 years as well, so he was a local legend and incredibly well read. In addition, he taught about nonviolence during his time at the school, and supported that thinking in his students

Ira Sandperl and Sarah Griscom '73 sharing a good discussion on Peninsula's front porch.

and in this community. Such concepts were what drove Ira, and this led him to open the Institute for the Study of Nonviolence with Joan Baez, who had also spent much time at Peninsula School. A year after leaving Peninsula, he was marching with Joan and

Martin Luther King, Jr. in the South, and King later visited Ira at Santa Rita Prison, after Ira had been jailed for passive resistance at a Vietnam draft induction center in Oakland, California. Remembering that Peninsula is a place that has supported, fostered, and passed on such important movements and attention to social justice is a parting gift Ira gives us. He never let us feel that we could sit by, and he reminded us then, but also he reminds us now, that one person can make a difference, and that it matters to stand up for what you believe in, and for what is right.

Shortly after his 90th birthday, he fell ill. In his little Menlo Park apartment on

April 13, surrounded by his dear friends and over 5000 books (shelves of which adorned even the kitchen and bathroom) he decided it was time to move on, and did so. He is survived by his daughter, Nicole Sandperl '64 and son Mark Sandperl '68. In his last few days, Ira's near and dear asked Peninsula to let his former students know, and we were touched by the obvious impact he had on his Peninsula students. Below are some of their words.

I was talking about Ira just yesterday. He would read to us - from Tolstoy, when we were second graders in the mid 50's. I remember thinking, 'I wonder how he knew we would understand this stuff, (It was like our child-secret that he had pierced) but he did know - and we did understand. I've had a lovely lifetime as a poet and playwright. It was Ira that got me started. I wrote a poem for him one day. The next day he looked me deep in the eyes and said, 'You're a poet', and I thought, 'Yes. I am'. I knew that when I wrote I could feel my true

self. Ira felt it too. For years I've taught adults with autism, and I have often thought of the calm certainty of Ira's care. Thank you, Ira. You go on now with your journey. We'll carry on your work. I promise.

This is the poem that I wrote for Ira when I was in the second grade.

Death

Death, what is it?
What is it for?
Is it eternal sleep?
Is it living away from our earth?
Or is it birth?

Jeff Shepard '63

Far away, close at heart!

Garen Patterson '62

Ira's legacy is large and contributed significantly to my experience at Peninsula.

Kit Jeffrey '62

I'm sorry that it seems that times like these are what bring us together, but that is also the spirit of Ira to unite us. I know like most of us he had a big impact on my life. He introduced us to creative writing and poetry as a language.

He taught us about Gandhi, love and peace and what it meant to hold these concepts. About being a non conformist. He brought Joan Baez to our classroom and to our life – was she and her music beautiful! And in so many ways added to our experience at Peninsula which has helped shape my life as an artist and thinker. All at a time when the rest of our nation was watching "Leave it to Beaver" "Andy Griffith" and "Gun smoke!"

Thank you friends for sharing the past with me and this bittersweet moment right now. I hope we can all get together one day soon and catch up.

Marc Silber '65

I was glad to know the book of mine I sent made it to Ira. I hope Ira got the message of my gratitude for his great influence in my life. It wasn't until I lost my own father, the great Henry Scott, that I became a poet ... he taught summer science school with David Warner many years ago. It's been 50 years since Ira was my creative writing teacher! Ira was a great human being who touched many lives, deeply. I was sorry to hear of his hardships at the end of his life, his refusal of "treatment" at the end was how he seemed to live his life; with a singular strength and vision.

Molly Bellman '64

# ALUMNI CONNECTIONS

#### J. Christina Smith, '63

I'm a librarian at Boston University, where I select the books for anthropology and sociology. In a previous life I was an archaeologist for a consulting firm in San Diego and taught ESL in California and Japan. I'm studying Danish (a heritage language) and doing geneology.

#### Kris McClanahan, '75

Hello Peninsula School! And Hi to my classmates. It's been a looong time, I'm over due for a visit....I live a full and creative life these days, making sure I find enough time

for being outdoors, doing some kind of art, traveling, dance, Qi Gong and yoga practice. I began my acupuncture practice this year and am grateful to be a part of a great circle of



Kris McClanahan

healers in my neighborhood! Very cool, this part of Lexington, KY is quickly becoming known as the place for complimentary health and wellness. Peace, Love, Light- Kris.

#### Hillary Heard, '82

I moved at the end of third grade and I think I would be in the class of 1982. Susan was my teacher. Hi to anyone in graduating class of 1982.

#### David Sloan, '85

I'm currently living in Singapore and working as head of product at Bubble Motion, a social voice network. My wife Meg runs marketing for APAC for Facebook. We have two kids: Jack, 8, and Lindy, 5. We are enjoying the expat lifestyle and traveling a lot around Asia. So far we've taken the kids to various spots in Indonesia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, Japan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Australia and



David Sloan

Taiwan. My kids are loving their large international school here. There is a very diverse student body of 4,000 students and they wear uniforms! The school features

lots of art, theater, and creative writing. After school I've been teaching my kids computing basics like HTML / CSS and we even make Minecraft video tutorials together.

#### Owen Pike, '89

My college sweetheart and I have been together for 20 years this September. I've been working in tech since college graduation, in various capacities, living in the Bay Area, San Diego, and Los Angeles. We moved to Portland, OR from

Orange County in late summer of 2010. My wife, Sce, started her own mobile software strategy and design business in 2007, and after the birth of our daughter,



Owen Pike

Ciel, in 2009, I joined the company as a project manager to help shoulder the workload (both of the business and child-rearing). A merger with a Portland company precipitated our move to Oregon, and I transitioned to full-time Dad. Currently, I'm finally indulging my long-held desire to be a writer, and am working on a novel on the days when Ciel is in daycare. We're also expecting our second child, due this August, so the pressure is on to finish the book soon while I can still think.

#### Holly (Sabelman) Miller, '92

I miss the Bay Area but have adjusted to the Upper-Midwest and really enjoy it there. After



Holly Miller

serving as a family pastor I have enjoyed the transition to serving as a counselor at a youth treatment facility. I also enjoy my coaching jobs with girls basketball and soccer. I married a wonderful

man, Jason Miller, in December 2011 and had our first child, Kayla, in March 2013!

#### Bailey Griscom, '03

Hi Peninsula!! I am currently in Brooklyn, NY, living with my boyfriend Kieffer and working in a microbiology lab. I absolutely love my job and getting to hang out with fellow science nerds! As a lab tech, I am in charge of planning/executing a number of molecular genetics projects. These projects are focused on developing



Bailey Griscom

drugs targeted for alternative malaria therapies, potentially to be used in combination with other current drug treatments. I will be applying to grad school for fall of 2014, and will be pursuing a

PhD in parasitology/microbiology. Other than work, I have recently become passionate about acquiring different species of orchids and caring for them (or in some cases just desperately trying not to kill them). I like NYC more than I expected to, and am surprised at how easy the adjustment was to living on the east coast. However, I miss California and wish I could come to the reunion! I will not be able to make it because it is the same day as my sister's (Laura's) senior art show at Bard College, but I hope everyone has fun!

#### Keaton Tips, '03

After graduating from the Academy of Art University last year, two of my friends from school and I started a company this January. We are a small motion graphics house called ATMG Studio. It is located a block from the AT&T Ball Park. We are very much in the early

stages of our little San Francisco start-up. But we are staying afloat in the deep end, where we decided to dive in. Along with a number of clients, we like to collaborate with the Tips-Bellomo VFX &



Keaton Tips

Film Production venture out in NYC known as Space Division. My brothers, Travis '97 & Zack '01, and Brendan Bellomo '99 are doing well in their movie making exploits. Feel free to follow our adventures at www.facebook.com/ ATMGStudio or www.ATMGStudio.com or www.linkedin.com/company/atmg-studio. I'm excited to see what happens next. Thanks to Peninsula, what most people view as problems, I see as opportunities and another chance to collaborate. I just want to keep making stuff, just like my parents and Peninsula School encouraged me to do. Fortunately, I've been in contact with the majority of my graduating class and see some of them regularly. It's fun to see how they are all heading off in their new careers after college. I'm proud of you, class of '03! Let's show the real world who's boss. And much love to the Peninsula community.

#### MARION

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Like many Peninsula teachers, Marion Conley came to Peninsula first as a parent, bringing her daughter Kathy and, two years later, daughter Kristy. She worked as an assistant in kindergarten; then she was enrollment chairman, then first grade assistant, and later a classroom assistant in Ethel Young's primary class. When Ethel left to join California's Head Start program, Marion, whose background prior to coming to Peninsula was in nursing education, became the teacher. She earned her California teaching credential and later her California reading specialist credential after receiving her M.Ed..

In many ways, Marion's childhood prepared her for Peninsula. She was born on a 20-acre farm in Minnesota and from a young age had the freedom to roam and play in what she calls a "not overly supervised way", well out of range of her mother's voice. When she went to school it was in a two-room schoolhouse with four grades in each room. She remembers her teachers as good people who read stories to their classes and encouraged the singing she enjoyed. When she came to Peninsula, she says, it was like coming home: the feeling of country, the freedom, the friendliness, the small classes.

Over the years Marion evolved a number of traditions that were treasured by students and parents alike. Witch Wilma, the diminutive alter-ego for several hundred children, not only helped children learn to read but also helped them understand and express their feelings and see different ways of resolving social issues. Morning circles, birthday ceremonies, and hip-hip-hoorays were opportunities to acknowledge the importance and uniqueness of each individual member of her classes. Music and hugs were fundamental ingredients of her class and of her personality; many adults spoke at the MarionFest of carrying her songs and a love of singing into adulthood and returning even now for the reassurance and warmth of her hugs. Marion taught her hundreds of children that mistakes aren't the end of the world; they can be turned into pictures, for heaven's sake! And the stuffies of many, many children still wear the sweaters Marion crocheted for them, a very special gift which acknowledged the specialness of each child and the importance of his/her "friend."



Marion with Witch Wilma during a Halloween celebration with her class.

Marion's 1998 letter: When I first started teaching, I played the guitar when I sang with the children. I soon realized that the more I played the guitar, the less the children would sing without some sort of accompaniment (guitar or piano). So I still have a guitar there on the wall but seldom use it. I found that if one learns songs a cappella, the songs and words are 'in the heart'. Then people sing in the car, while they draw, out in the sandbox, in bed – anywhere! There are other ways also that less is better. I want THEM to do the talking, so now I don't talk as much. I used to set up more things for them to do. Now I know that I don't need to do all that for them. The things are there and THEY choose them and set them up much of the time. The games they invent, the spontaneous ones, are incredible. I make room; I put the materials where they can get them; and they devise ways to do things themselves. I also use materials that have come out for dyslexic children and they are wonderful for all children. Of course I don't do it the way Mrs. Slingerland would do it, because I don't like to have "a way" to do it. There isn't "a" way to do anything, in my opinion - I'm an eclectic from way back. You do things to fit the child you're working with.

It's hard to be a parent at Peninsula. One of the things that happens here is that we help the children get to the place where

they can stand up for themselves even in situations where it's very hard to do it, and that spills over into their homes. Some parents are open to that and some parents really aren't. I think if parents aren't open to that it sort of defeats what the child gets from our school. Some parents see something here that they like and come into the school wanting to get it. Not being sure how it's going to work, they find it doesn't always work for them. Maybe they want to see more "products" – like seeing what comes out of the clay room, classroom, woodshop, etc. We as teachers might want the children to be able to make something, and then 'splat' - make something else. At times the product is really important to the parents, but they want to know why the child didn't use a different color or make something look different or "better", but that's all it takes sometimes to turn off the child's enthusiasm. When we remind parents how important it is just to look and appreciate, the magic of nonjudgment allows the child to be confident in his creativity. Then much more creativity unfolds and allows the child to develop his own unique vision. This is perhaps the core of Peninsula's gift to the child and family.

There was a tone set in my class so no one would ever say, "Don't you even know THAT?" It's something that just wouldn't fit. At the start of the year they might say such things. Somebody might say something

negative about a drawing such as, "You say that's a cow? It looks like a pig." When somebody says something like that, we remind him how it would feel if it were said about his own work. Also we might say something about how it might feel to us. Or I might have said something about a real experience I had as a child. Soon they are able to object if they hear things that hurt their feelings – or things that hurt the feelings of others.

I have had fun almost every single day I've been here, even when things were hard or changing rapidly. It's important not to be self-satisfied. We need to go out and see more of what other schools are doing. There are wonderful public schools and public school teachers. I think we could learn from going out in the community a bit more than we do. Of course, I remember a parent named Christopher Bay, a professor at Stanford, who said, "Peninsula's not a good school because there aren't any good schools, but it's the best of the bad schools!" I just think it's good to get poked at now and then, just as it's important to have a troublemaker in a group. A lot of learning goes on as a result of "living" with people who make you adjust your ways. Then you see the "hard one" change and become softer and become a loved member of the group. We all need to keep looking for new ways and new ideas, because we each have plenty of room to put in more new things. We don't have to throw out any of the wonderful things that are already here.

What will I miss? The fun in the classroom! I get such a lot of energy from the children, assistants, and parents, and I'll miss that. I'll miss the other teachers. A lot of people never have, in their whole lives, a job that they just love, that they can't wait to get to in the morning. I've been lucky to have all this, and especially to have had it for so long!

Could anyone ever be more lucky than I was to spend so many years working with people I love? Not many are able to get what I got from all of you. Thank you for that love you gave me!

Love, Marion

When it comes to Marion, there is an amazing amount of love, affection, and thanks that has poured out from her former students, colleagues and parents alike. The Chorus and many gathered friends and students sang "Land Of the Silver Birch" in her honor at the Spring Fair and we had a wall up in the Auditorium for visitors to write down memories and reflections about Marion. These speak volumes and we are passing them

on to her daughters as well as saving them in our archives. If you missed the chance at the Spring Fair and would like to contribute a memory or reflection, please send it in to Andromeda in our development office or email andromeda@peninsulaschool.org.

#### PLAYING IN NEW YORK

### By Paz Hilfinger-Pardo

WHEN I WAS IN ROGER'S, we made a movie as a class. Actually, we started a movie as a class. I was never very clear what the plot was going to be, or how we were going to figure that out, but I was fascinated by the transformations of the everyday: a trick of the light made the space under the benches in the classroom, where we normally stored our cubbies, into an underground tunnel; a hole next to the gaga court became the mouth of that tunnel; and we, normally fourth graders, were suddenly the heroes of a mysterious, epic adventure.

I channeled that fascination when I set out to produce my play *Duct Tape Girl & Fetish Chick Conquer the World* in my living room in Brooklyn. We focused on transforming the room from the pile of couches it normally is into a fantastic space fit for two odd-ball superheroes. Our designer, Sara Walsh, said it best: "It's not really a living room. It's the perfect container for this play, and it just happens to have disguised itself as a living room." The room came alive when we looked at it that way. A stocking left on the wall since last Christmas became the perfect holder for a flashlight. Couch cushions were nests for bourbon bottles. When a shadowy figure appeared in the story, one of the actors laid down a floor lamp, crouched over it, and threw a sheet over his head. Paper hidden strategically on the blades of an overhead fan was magic and snow and sadness all at once when, late in the play, Fetish Chick disappears.

Before we figured any of this out – back when I was writing the play, alone in my room, wondering how crazy I was – I wrote "This play should feel live and messy. In my head, it has the same improvised aesthetic as the movies I made as an 11 year old with my friends on our playdates." We made the first of those movies in the classroom, with Roger behind the camera. I'm still trying to figure out where, exactly, that tunnel under the cubbies led.

# IN MEMORIAM

#### Frank Raymond Wheeler

Peninsula alumnus, Frank Raymond Wheeler passed on Dec. 21, 2012. He was one of our earliest students, attending from 1927 through 1937 when he graduated. He went on to be a doctor with a private practice in Palo Alto, California where he had grown up. He practiced for 35 years and was loved by his patients. He is survived by his three daughters, Barbie Breneiser, Anne Wheeler-Waddell, and Joan Griffin, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

#### Annabelle Markoff

We are sad to bring the news of the death of Annabelle Markoff, who taught here at Peninsula in 1946 and 1947. She is well remembered by the Peninsula alumni she taught, who informed us of her passing. She went on to a lifelong career in education, innovative in the field of early childhood education. She died on Dec. 2, 2012, in Davis, California, at the age of 91. She is survived by her two daughters, Ellen and Joan, and her son John, as well as her two grandchildren, Hannah and Matthew, all of California.

#### ROGER

Continued from page 1

the maze of his junkyard. No one person can do justice to all he has brought to the kids, but his former students, some of whom came back to teach alongside him, give us a little insight into all he brings to – and brings out of – his students.

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Roger isn't someone that I can talk about and sum up in a few words. His retirement is sad, and brings up so many memories for me as both a student, and as a teacher in his room. He tells kids to bring art to everything they do, no matter what the project is. Art to him isn't just drawing or painting, but is music, dance, writing, song, or that mysterious something that has to be brought to life. He has encouraged my own love of art since I was 9 years old. As a kid, I was given the opportunity to illustrate my story as a comic, and as an adult, he has allowed me to stand in front of a group of children and use art to visually explain something like how Projects 2 works. He is about Heart, Effort, and Mystery. Three things that have allowed me, and hundreds of other kids, to push ourselves beyond what we thought we could do. Sometimes you struggle and sweat and put all of your love into something, and it just doesn't turn out the way you wanted. And if you come up short, that's ok. Who doesn't come up short every once in a while? Other times, it just seems to flow out. Why? That's the mystery. It's not always about getting the right answer, or being the smartest or fastest, or finishing first, or even being the one who came up with the idea. It's about being ok with the fact that sometimes things happen the way they do, simply because that's the way it goes. For many, his room means the junkyard, ho ho's, puppets, clocks, spark plugs, The Simpsons, story, Sweetwood, The House, Projects, Penny Carnival, Friday Morning Specials, and so many other things. It's hard to think about Peninsula without Roger, because to me, he is as much Peninsula as the rope swing, the trees, and the Big Building. His class is preparation for kids to discover who they are. Early on in the year he tells them, "You've never been this old before." In that, he's saying they can let go of such things

as old habits, rivalries, homesickness, and perceptions of who they think they are. By telling them, "You've never been this old before" he's asking them, "Who are you today?" Something I ask myself all the time.

Travis Lacina '93

One of my strongest memories of Roger was how he would read stories at the end of the day with a myriad of different voices for each character in the book. He made the stories come to life and it has influenced how I read to my children. It is not easy to do, but I am getting better at it with every story, and I am hoping to rival Roger in the coming years so that my kids can enjoy it as much as I did.

Seph Zdarko '89



"I was in 7th or 8th grade when we did the musical Annie! and Roger was the drummer." - Heather (Allen) Pang '80

Roger -

4th grade was a difficult year for me. I was a head taller than all of my classmates and had a hard time connecting with them socially. I thank you and our dear Steve Walling-Brown for helping me to laugh, play and not take things so seriously.

Sarah Korsunsky (Sacks-Irvine) '94

When I was in 6th grade, I decided that I wanted to become a teacher. This was almost

entirely Roger's fault: it was during 4th and 5th grades (when I was in Roger's class) that I started to come into my own, intellectually. His reading of *The Sword of Shannarah* (complete with the voices - oh, the voices!) opened up the world of the fantastic, his indulgence for my desire to explore division and multiplication by providing me with an endless stream of problems that I could complete in the loft fed this new wonder of mathematics, and the king of the mountain game that he occasionally played with us out on the grassy hill let me realize that my urgent need for intellectual and physical play could find balance. I have been so happy to experience Roger's gentle smile and warm laugh after 'leaving' Peninsula.

Emile Bruneau '86

It was the 4th grade that gave me the gift of art. Not just drawing, or gluing together pieces of cardboard and wood to make some cool looking creature, or doodling comics that were just trying to be half as cool as Calvin and Hobbes. Roger's class was the first time that I got a glimpse of the vastness of the creative depths, the mystery, the unknown, the bizarre reality creativity allows us to bask in.

The ability to look at the world with shifting perspectives keeps us from getting too jaded with things we see every day. It helps us remember the splendor our world has to offer us, even within the mundane details of everyday life. Creative thinking is the best way I know to keep things alive and intriguing. It is a tool that has helped me through a lot of my life, the good and the bad. It has been my life's struggle to create, play with, and make things that inspire. I know I would have opened this door on my own, but it was Roger who first gave me the key.

I have had the fortune of being in Roger's class twice, once as a dyslexic 4th Grader who just wanted to draw, and again as a dyslexic adult wishing he had more time to draw. His class meant just as much to me back then as it does now and I feel very thankful that I got to spend his last year teaching by his side planting some seeds of creativity and wildness, which to me are at the core of Peninsula's spirit.

Thank you Roger,

I wish you the best in your creative wanderings.

Aaron Zonka '00

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# SPRING FAIR AND REUNIONS

# By Tess Peppers

On Sunday, May 5TH Peninsula joyously celebrated its 41st Spring Fair on a beautiful, sunny and temperate day. Current families, alumni, PALS (Parents of ALumni Students), staff and neighbors all attended. Many were entertained with face-painting, henna, student and alumni music, a student and staff flash mob, the climbing wall, and a great obstacle course. All enjoyed the wide variety of treats from kebabs to candied apples.

Many alumni came to admire their work in the third annual alumni and 8th grade collaborative project, "Slap, Bang! Good Ol' Peninsula Cooking," which the class of 2013 helped to sell next to the T-shirt booth. Among the alumni who came back to school were groups celebrating milestone reunions.



The class of 2003 held their 10th reunion on Spring Fair weekend, and gathered during the Fair to take a ride in the Brain Cart.

Former students from the classes of 1972 and 1973 gathered on Saturday night at the home of Julie Kriegler, '73 for a pre-celebration and

> then met again at the front steps of the Big Building at the Spring Fair for a photo op. Several classmates from the class of 2003 enjoyed a Caribbean barbeque at the home of Dennis and Terry Tsu, parents of Tori, '00 and J.W., '03. After reuniting again at the Spring Fair, a large group of 2003 alumni rode the motorized brain cart around campus, reconnecting to their recent past as students. One alumnus from the class of 1963 was able to visit the archives and found an old piece of his writing as a student. All in all, this year's Fair was a great day to revisit past friendships and build new ones!

Please contact Andromeda at andromeda@peninsulaschool.org for more information about the articles, if you need additional copies of News Notes, hope to add someone to the mailing list, or no longer wish to receive future mailings from us.

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