



# SANTA BARBARA MIDDLE SCHOOL THE DIAMOND

The Newsletter of Santa Barbara Middle School

November/December 2008

## From the Desk of Steveo Lane

Head of School



### Trip Log for Oct 22, 2008

Today proved to be a challenging day of historic proportions for all.

At dusk, I drove a van from our 8th grade encampment at Midland School and motored along the last 7 miles of the 8th grade cycling route. The heroism displayed by our students along the final miles brought tears to my eyes.

First, I asked 2 girls if I could take their BOB bags (approximately 35 lbs.) into the sag wagon in an effort to reduce the weight they had to tow behind their bikes. They enthusiastically said "no!" They continued on in the dark with their pathway, a dirt road on the Sedgwick Reserve, illuminated by our rear sag vehicle.

Next, I encountered a new 8th grade boy riding along side of a teacher. The student had mechanical problems earlier in the day and was now entering his tenth hour on a bike seat. I stopped the van and asked both the teacher and the student if they would like to ride in the sag. The kid quickly indicated that he would like to finish the ride. The teacher vowed to stick with his charge. I positioned my van behind them and the truck's bright lights lit up the road home, the last 3 miles of an incredible journey.

Meanwhile, across the Santa Ynez Valley, a similar scene was playing

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## Ninth Graders Explore the Channel Islands

SBMS Ninth Grade Student Aiofe Quinn holds a starfish found while snorkeling at Santa Cruz Island (the starfish was returned to the water!)



### From the Vision to the Source

by Dave Pratt & Brian McWilliams,  
Ninth Grade Teachers

It is a trip that keeps getting better and better, and this year's "From the Vision to the Source" again exceeded all expectations.

For three days and nights, ninth graders and their teachers island-hopped the beautiful northern Channel Islands on the ninety foot dive boat "Vision," which served as floating classroom, bunkhouse, and gourmet kitchen.

The trip was the culmination of more than three weeks of intense study and research of "everything island." Students learned about and gave presentations on a wide variety of topics such as marine biology, ancient Chumash culture, the Island Fox, resource management,

marine debris, oil exploration, and a host of other issues.

Days were busy, and as the trip progressed, the ninth graders became a unified crew, working together and growing closer. New friendships were formed as the well-known SBMS campus disappeared over the horizon and the new and unfamiliar campus of the islands appeared before us.

Students were in a new environment; each island, each sea cave, each kelp forest, and each sandy beach became a unique and beautiful classroom where hands-on learning took place.

Students performed fish counts under the canopy of the kelp forests and made decisions about the efficacy of the marine sanctuaries. They sifted for plastics and debris on the beaches of Santa Rosa Island

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# From the Board of Trustees

Among the many volunteers who help make SBMS a truly great school are those who serve on the Board of Trustees. These dedicated parents, alums, and community members provide policy direction, financial planning, and long-term viability for SBMS.

This year, we welcome Alum Parent **Mimi deGruy** to the Board of Trustees.

Mimi's passion for early education and love of SBMS drives her to continue her service to our school.



Mimi deGruy

In June, we thanked **Tom Boucher, Ted Rhodes, and David Wexler** for their extensive service to SBMS. Their dedication to SBMS proved invaluable on several important issues, including site permanence, diversity, environmental responsibility, and fiscal oversight.

Returning Board members include: **Laura Collins**, President; **Guy Smith**, Vice President; **Rebecca Anderson ('92)**, Secretary; **Bruce Meares**, Treasurer; **Ron Werft**, Immediate Past President; **Pat Draghi, Dana Fritzler, Karen Heimberg, Robin Himovitz, Bruce Klobucher, Michael Jaffe, Wendy Mokler, Ken Saxon, Ayesha Shaikh, Briana Villasenor ('94), and Craig Zimmerman.**

Thanks to all of you who volunteer so much of your time to make SBMS such a positive and unique school environment for our children.

# Imagine the Life You Dream

## The Eighth Grade Retreat

by *Jesse Wooten ('90), Eighth Grade Academic Dean*

Every year eighth graders at SBMS go on retreat to El Capitan Canyon's Ocean Mesa Campground. Here, between the mountains and the ocean, we hope to further build the relationships within the eighth grade and give each student the opportunity to quietly reflect on themselves and their lives.

In order to build relationships within our community, students participate in a couple of activities that foster communication, common experience, and recognition of our individuality and contributions within the group.

First, we do a "low-ropes" course in which students need to work together to solve complex problems. Next, students participate in our Ceremony of Candles in which peers celebrate the individuality of

each person in the group. The symbolism as we light each student's candle is that one candle gives off only a bit of light, but fifty candles together are far more powerful.

The next morning, students wake before sunrise for their three-hour 'solo.' It is here where students are asked to imagine the life they dream of living. Using

Paolo Koehlo's 'personal legend' as an archetype, students are asked to ponder important questions at this formative time in their lives: What kind of adult would they like to be? What may be their life's work? Where would they like to go, and what would they like to experience? What do they value? What do they want people say about them when they're gone?

The retreat always proves to be an invigorating and inspirational event, and I'm looking forward to this year's retreat in December!



Recently our ninth grade hosted the sixth grade with a homemade lunch and games to build bridges between the two groups. Left to right: Connor Elmore, 6th; Ben Pecorini, 9th; Emily Dewey, 6th; Rachel Suding, 9th

# Our Student Artists

## Student Photography Exhibit in Downtown Santa Barbara

Photographs taken by students in last spring's Digital Photography class are on exhibit at Samy's Camera, located at 614 Chapala Street.

The exhibit ends in mid-December, and photographs were taken by Ashley Fritzler ('08), Benyapa Bakewell ('08), Jake Terrell ('08), Jos Gradstein ('09), Kate Amery ('08), Kendall Vincent ('08), Maika Buckley ('08), Margaret Easter ('09), Nonny Holroyd ('09), Ryan Guajardo ('08), Sophie Wilson ('08), Zoe Dusenberry-Fiedel ('09).

Many thanks to Samy's Camera, Village Properties Teachers Fund, Lori Rafferty, and Ken & Nancy Donnelly for making this exhibit possible.



## 6th & 7th Grade Poems

Where is thy's  
Love except in  
The dreams that loves  
Another man's  
DREAM  
-Anonymous

I see the wave crash  
up in the sky, here  
it comes tumbling by!  
-Sophie Haber

Falling of your heart  
is harder than the falling of  
your mind and body.  
-Alex Valente

Flying in time  
only to be stopped  
by the weight of age  
-Anonymous

# Let It Shine, Alumni

**Maile Black ('80)** writes: "Holy cannoli, SBMS! I just read the newsletter and my mind is officially boggled. As a middle school teacher myself and the nerve-wracked parent of a 7th grader, I can attest that your program is really extremely unprecedented. I'm using this newsletter as a teaching tool for the graduate class I teach called 'Philosophy of Middle School Education.' I've always admired the openness and adventurous spirit infused in everything you do as a school and as individuals. I hope it lasts forever. The best thing I've done lately was to spend a month in Guatemala this summer with my kid, learning Spanish and meeting tons of avid globe-trotting learners and mild-mannered Guatemalans."

**David Margolis ('92)** writes: "I ran into Steveo in Santa Barbara last September, just before I moved with my wife to Zurich, Switzerland. I took a postdoctoral research position at the University of Zurich, a 2-3 year job that will hopefully come with traveling and adventures as well as some good science. I'm doing Neuroscience research at University of Zurich, Switzerland, and recently married Johanna Rose whom I met while living in Seattle."

I often reflect on my time at SBMS. I remember pushing myself, and all the cool things we did provided some amazing and important lessons about how to accept challenges, how to experience life, and how to look at what you're getting out of it. The school provided the structure for the experiences and the vision for interpreting them. I still strive to weave what I learned there into my daily life. I still value the good friends I made there. It's no wonder so many former students want to give back by being a teacher there."

**Stefan Landfried ('94)** writes: "I am in Okinawa on deployment with the Marines again until January. I am able to get off base and check out the island, but have not seen a whole lot since we are rather busy training. One of the best moments so far has been the trip to Iwo Jima. Once I get back to the States, I will stop by and let you and the rest of the school know all about it!"

**Amanda Chen ('95)** was recently hired by the Clinton Global Initiative in New York City after graduating from UCSB's graduate program in Global and International Studies.

**Mattie Brickman ('98)** writes: "I'm just starting my last year at Yale School of Drama (for play-writing). It's been a wonderful two years. The program is production-oriented, so we really get to see our work on its feet. It's been a wonderful two years, can't believe I only have one left! My final play here goes up in May."

**Evan Hughes ('99)** writes: "I am honored to be performing with Soprano Dawn Upshaw as a part of Carnegie's 'Great Voices' series. She is performing new music by Golijov, Dowland, and more. We will close the concert with a fascinating piece by David Bruce called 'Piosenki.' The piece combines traditional Polish music with Klezmer and gypsy music in a very original and free-spirited way."

Share your news and photos!  
Email Whitney at [whit@sbms.org](mailto:whit@sbms.org).

1. Adrienne Hedrick ('95) and Emily Hedrick ('96)
2. Bob, Rivers ('05), Dawson ('07) and SBMS Teacher Whitney Ingersoll in Fiji
3. Amanda Chen ('95)
4. Geneva Hughes ('02) and father Kenny Hughes



Congratulations to these alumni who graduated in June from Santa Barbara High School's Visual Arts & Design Academy with the following awards:

- **Annie Villanueva ('05)** and **Rachel Rhodes ('05)** each shared the JR Richards Humanitarian Award for outstanding class leadership and citizenship.
- **Michael Draghi ('05)** won the Carol Taylor Art Award for outstanding talent and creativity.

# Support Our School

Although it still feels like summer in Santa Barbara, November is here so fall it must be - and that's when we kick off our **Annual Fund** campaign.

We are particularly excited about this year's **Annual Fund** because we are "going green," and have taken our Annual Fund online! That means a lot less paper, plus it is easy to use and has great photos of students and faculty.

To check it out, please visit <http://sbms.givezooks.com>, and while you're at it, you can experiment with the "Donate Now" button! Your tax-deductible gift supports the teachers, staff, and programs that we love so much.

Also, our annual **Grandparent Reception** will be held on December 15 at 6pm. Please send your students' grandparents contact info to [development@sbms.org](mailto:development@sbms.org) so we can invite them to this special event.

With gratitude,  
Christine & Laurie  
SBMS Development Team

# Mark Your Calendar

- Nov 11 Veterans' Day  
No School
- Nov 13 Scenes Night at 7pm
- Nov 17-18 ERB Standardized Testing
- Nov 19-26 Conferences & Career Study Week
- Nov 27-28 Thanksgiving Holiday
- Dec 15 Grandparent Reception at 6pm\*
- Dec 15 Fall Trip Slide Show at 7pm\*
- Dec 20 - Jan 4 Winter Break

\*Held in the Fleischmann Auditorium at SB Museum of Natural History

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## Steveo from pg 1

out with our 6th, 7th, and 9th grade students.

Many of these kids had spent more than 8 hours pedaling bikes and were shaping their final course home – just a few more exhausting miles. Our younger students, guided by their devoted 9th grade mentors, had persevered a long bike ride across the valley before climbing up and over Drum Canyon, a mountain on which many pro cyclists train.

From there, our kids rode across the flats to highway 246 before continuing on to our camp on Santa Rosa Road. Nighttime approaches to camp are not uncommon on some days of the Hero's/Heroine's Journey.

These will be the moments that students remember for decades. For some reason, our kids quickly forget about what happened on the easy days. Rather, the most challenging trip events burn indelible images in their memories. It is in this delicate space where kids learn about the value of persistence, stamina, attitude, and teamwork. I am so proud of our teachers and students. It is as simple as that.

## Islands from pg 1

and came to startling conclusions about the amount and impact of plastic debris on the ecosystem. And, they traced the footsteps of the ancient Chumash on San Miguel Island as they journeyed to hear a presentation on the survival of the endangered Island Fox.

Trips such as this, with its spirit of academic adventure amid natural beauty, are one of the reasons that SBMS is such a unique and exciting place to attend school!



SBMS extends loving gratitude to Alum Parent Glen Fritzler and the fantastic crew of the Truth Aquatics boat, *Vision*, for working hard to make our islands trip so memorable!



SBMS ninth graders Aaron Roberts and Will Suttner improve their kayaking skills



SBMS ninth grade class at Santa Rosa Island