

# SANTA BARBARA MIDDLE SCHOOL THE DIAMOND

The Newsletter of Santa Barbara Middle School

September 2009

## Head of School Brian McWilliams



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*From the Desk of Brian McWilliams, Head of School*

As we prepare for Santa Barbara Middle School's 33rd year, I am pleased to announce our theme for the 2009-2010 school year will be **Bridges: Respect the Past, Imagine the Future**. I have spent the summer reflecting on the mission, core values, and direction of Santa Barbara Middle School and concluded that much of what we do is about building strong, healthy bridges between our students, teachers, families, and our communities.

SBMS was founded to inspire and guide our students through their transition from adolescence into early adulthood. The years between elementary school and high school are pivotal for the cognitive, emotional, and physical development of our children, and we specialize in grades 6-9 for this reason. In our mission statement, we speak of *cultivating a passion for life-long learning, a deep sense of trust, strength and courage to succeed at life's challenges, and compassion and respect for others*. We have spent decades refining a unique philosophy and a highly effective program designed to provide the

guidance, wisdom, and peak experiences to help our students through these challenging times.

Bridges aren't just a means for transit; they also provide the opportunity and perspective from which to view the landscape of our past, present, and future that is seldom seen from either side. The bridge we have built for our students is not just a link, but a journey of self-discovery stretching out the developmental process to reveal vantage points from which to view their educational horizons.



SBMS has always "respected the past" by drawing from the stories, rites, and wisdom of world cultures and from thirty-three years of SBMS traditions, adventures, and experiences. Our school symbol — a Diamond in the

Center of a Wheel — represents our four-sided curriculum: Academics, Athletics & Creative Arts, Outdoor Education and Community Involvement. While education begins on campus with challenging academics and a robust elective program, we venture out into the world to engage our

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## Edline and Easy Grade Pro Web at SBMS

From the classroom and after school sports to school-wide events and the trip calendar, our new Edline website will offer parents easy access to the information that they need. Parents can quickly access information about their students' classes, activities, test dates, grades, homework, missing assignments, calendars, and much more.

We will introduce the new program at the Parent Town Meetings, so be sure to attend.

In order to sign up with Edline, we will mail the access codes and instructions to both parents and students in late September, so please be on the lookout for this important mailing.

There is no software to install and the setup only takes a few minutes. Parents with children at other schools who also use Edline will be able to access information for multiple children with a single sign-in, screen name, and password. Email alerts will provide instant notification when important new information is available.

We are looking forward to becoming partners in this exciting new method of communication that will enrich education at SBMS.



# A Report from Our Deans

## Ninth Grade

by Russ Lewin, Ninth Grade Dean

The ninth grade will meet for the first time as a group on Tuesday, September 8, from 9 am to 12:30 pm, at the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum. We will discuss the themes, ideals, and goals of the coming year. The ninth grade plays a strong leadership role in many of the school events, including the Orientation Ride and Overnight. Also, we will begin to prepare for the trip to the Channel Islands. Since the ninth grade is



Will Suttner ('09) and Robin Hutchinson ('09) demonstrate their pneumatic hand robot for Russ' robotics class last year.

the first year of high school, we hope that everyone is looking forward to a rigorous round of academic explorations. The year moves quickly, and it is important to start strong.

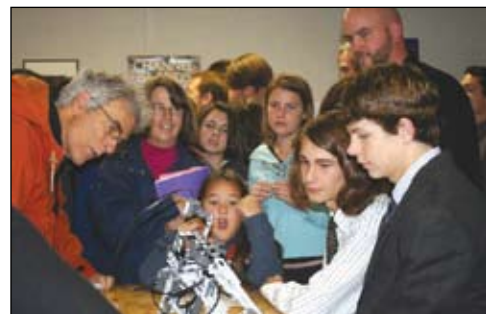
- In Physics, we start by learning how to program early in the year so that students are skilled enough to engage in this year's new Robotics projects that will be presented to the community in February.
- In addition to Geometry and Algebra, students will engage in applied mathematics and write algorithms that define the underlying intelligence of systems.
- We also have a new writing program that spans both History and English. This will include the use of a wiki.
- The ninth grade World History class



Last year's ninth grade class sifts sand to study the amount and types of debris and trash found on Santa Rosa Island.

begins the year with our exciting two-week Channel Islands Seminar examining various historical, environmental, and economic issues related to the islands and our local resources. Students will hone their research skills, test their conclusions in the field, and present their findings through oral reports and formal research papers. For more information, please feel free to browse our World History Wiki from last year at: [sbmsworldhistory.wetpaint.com](http://sbmsworldhistory.wetpaint.com)

- Online progress reports will be available and updated frequently. Every student will have a faculty advisor this year. Please know that Brian, Kelly, Jesse W, and Russ are enthusiastic for a brilliant year!



Milano Adrian-Giannetto ('09) and Aaron Roberts ('09) literally wow the crowds with their robot that can solve a Rubik's Cube.

## Eighth Grade

by Jesse Wooten, Eighth Grade Dean

As Dean of the eighth grade, I want to highlight a few aspects of the eighth grade program which is designed by our experienced faculty to promote the academic and personal growth of your child.

### A Rigorous Academic Program

With over 85 years of total teaching experience, the eighth grade staff will continue to offer a diverse, engaging, and challenging academic program.

The only personnel change is in Mathematics, where Jake Lindelof will

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Andrew Sanborn ('10), Tristan Bloomer ('10), and Brigid Quinn ('10) perform at last year's Mock Trial.

# Academics

## Eighth Grade, con't.

replace Ben La Barbera for the coming year. Otherwise, expect History Alive from Marlene, a literature-based English curriculum from me, Life Science from Victor, Spanish from Marco, and Human Geography from Jim delivered with the same passion of preceding years.

### Extracurricular chances to grow personally and academically.

The eighth grade staff has planned several grade-specific events for your child. The year starts with the eighth grade retreat where students get a chance to "reach out" to their friends and teachers and "reach in" to themselves. Participation in the Mock Trial provides a chance for students to learn about and experience the American legal system first hand.

Finally, in the spring, students go to the House of Blues in Los Angeles to learn about the cultural history of music.

### Regular reporting of academic progress.

The eighth grade will continue to offer regular academic reporting through Edline and will also participate in the Advisor Program. This will improve communication between parents, students, and teachers throughout the course of the year, something I believe is essential to maximize the academic growth of your child.

The eighth grade program is designed to feed the mind, body, and spirit of our students in a healthy and supportive environment. We in the eighth grade look forward to another strong year at SBMS. Please feel free to contact with any questions, concerns, or comments at any time.



Hunter Becker ('10) and Eliana Schiffer ('10) enthusiastically present their science experiments for Victor Dominocielo -Ho's eighth grade science class.

## Sixth & Seventh Grade: Oh, the Places We Will Go . . . .

by John Siegel-Boettner,  
Sixth & Seventh Grade Dean  
Oh, the places we will go  
Sixth and seventh graders all  
Three Cups of Tea in summer  
Building new bridges in the fall.

Books and binders  
Screens big and small  
Teachers round every corner  
People, places, life, and times  
To learn from one and all.

Jesse will launch us into the sky  
Vicki and Jake help us balance and divide  
Domi will introduce god and goddess  
Teresa will help us discover voices  
Written me's and you's  
No longer locked inside.

Jim with song and story  
Will help us puzzle skills of life  
Marco, master chef, master musician  
Will teach us "¿Como estás?"  
Means "How ya doin' today?"  
"Hola" A magical way to (just) say "Hi."

Oh, the places we will go  
Sixth, seventh, and parents not to be left out  
Cups of tea round sacred dinner tables  
Remembering every day is precious  
Every year important  
As bridges wear and sprout.

And if we've learned our lessons  
From journeys near and far  
Reached mountain peaks  
Atop our own two wheels  
Come home to tell epic tales  
Songs and sagas in the family car.

If dream has turned to passion  
Work looking to untrained eyes like play  
Come June atop San Francisco's golden span  
When asked what the heck we're doing?  
Us group of Santa Barbara Middle Schoolers  
Will smile "We're building bridges!"  
And be off and on our way.

## Around Campus



Brian Wheeler ('11) shows off his science experiment as Andrew Wakamiya ('11) looks on.



Nick Humbel ('09) paints the hands of Sam Kilpatrick ('12) and Andrew Wakamiya ('11). Nick organized the event during which he and other ninth graders spoke to the other students about the use of children in wars. The Red Hand Campaign was a global initiative by children and teenagers who sent one million red hand-prints to the UN as an expression of their protest against the use of children as soldiers.



Sam Steady ('11), Zev Troxler ('10), Karly Graf ('09) and Aoife Quinn ('09) learn the tricks of the trade from singer/songwriter and SBMS parent, Kenny Loggins.



Chris Benwitt ('12) shows off his display on land forms for sixth grade Environmental Studies class.

## SBMS Electives (taught over the last 4 years)

### Performing Arts

Beginning Guitar  
Belly Dancing  
Dance  
Improvisation  
Scenes / Drama  
School of Rock (Rock Band)  
School Play  
Singing with Maureen  
Songwriting

### Media and Digital Arts

Computer Programming  
Digital Arts  
Digital Photography  
Film Studies  
Flash Animation & Design  
Movie Producing  
Teen Press  
Web Design  
Yearbook

### Enrichment

Board Games  
Chess  
Cooking  
Exploring S.B  
Russian Culture

### Girls & Boys Team Sports

Basketball  
Soccer  
Volleyball

### Physical Education

Dance  
Flag Football  
Hiking  
Lacrosse  
Martial Arts  
Mountain Biking  
Mountaineering  
Ultimate Frisbee  
Weight Training  
Yoga / Pilates  
Independent Sports

### Visual Arts

Art Books

Beading  
Candles and Clay  
Cardboard Art  
Draw and Paint  
Fiber Arts



## Creative Arts & Sports

### All the World's a Stage

If last year's drama production was anything to go on, we're in for another exciting year in the SBMS Drama Department!

This year's play will be the musical *The Man From La Mancha*. Eric and Maureen Lehman are very excited to announce that SBMS grandmother, Renee Amadi, will be doing the music accompaniment. Renee's husband produced this musical for years, and Renee is quite the expert on it. We know that she will provide a one-of-a-kind insight and be a real treasure for this production.

In addition, Marco Andrade is going to cross-teach the play in his Spanish class – talk about building bridges!



Eli Himovitz ('09) as Claude the Sea Monster in "Mermaid's Tale."

Last spring, SBMS proudly presented Eric Lehman's original play, *Mermaid's Tale*. Based on Hans Christian Anderson's classic *The Little Mermaid*, Eric's play juxtaposes the surface world of humans with its inherent shallowness, and the literal and figurative depth of the underwater world. A wonderful study of polarities, with "good" prevailing over "evil" in the end.

As always, we couldn't do it without the help of the parents! Current and alum parents were directly involved in making *Mermaid's Tale* a wonderful and successful event, including Robin Himovitz, Dorie Hutchinson, Anne Newman, Tom Ridenour and Richard Wilke.

We hope to see you at this year's exciting play and other school events.



Griff Saxon ('10) as Professor Morbid in "Mermaid's Tale."



Travis Tighe ('09), Ryan Mori ('11) and Margaret Easter ('09) (left photo), and Eliana Schiffer ('10), Eli Himovitz ('09), Chris Osburn ('10) and Griff Saxon ('10) (right photo) all take the stage in "Mermaid's Tale."



### SBMS Electives, con't.

Freehand Drawing  
Photography  
Print Making  
Scrap booking

Study Skills  
Math Labs  
Homework Labs  
Learning Skills

### Ocean Sports

Kayaking  
Surfing  
Swimming

### Leadership

Bike monkey  
Media Show Team  
Mountaineering  
Stage Craft, Monkey

## The Coming Year in Teen Press

This year the Teen Press will be opening up new opportunities for students to participate, working to help give back to the school, and of course to push the boundaries of what teens can achieve in the world of media. As well as mining the human riches of Santa Barbara, the Teen Press will be heading out on the road again this year, visiting with people from across the spectrum of American (and world!) life.

For those of you who may not be familiar with SBMS' digital journalism program, the Teen Press is comprised of up to 12 student journalists each trimester who research, schedule and conduct interviews for their own stories, as well as write, create audio blogs, shoot and edit videos for online publishing under the direction of faculty advisors John Seigel Boettner and David Teton-Landis.

Teen Press staff members are admitted on the basis of an application, sample work and teacher recommendations, and represent the school in the wider community. The Teen Press started by covering the Santa Barbara International Film Festival, which it continues to do annually, and has since covered Macworld Expo in San Francisco, Interbike in Las Vegas, the Inauguration in Washington D.C. The Teen Press has an ongoing relationship



*Danny Boyle, director of "Slumdog Millionaire," with Christian Pearson ('10) & Marandah Field-Elliott ('10) at the Lobero Theater.*

with the Lobero Theatre, where it cover kid-appropriate live performance, and has also covered local politics, the environment, and SBMS itself. Soon to be posted are stories from last year's Career Study Week.

We are working to broaden the opportunities for participation in Teen Press. In addition to the three teams of student journalists our trimester elective program affords, we are trying to add a fourth team to travel and work during the March mid-year trip period, as well as hoping for a summer group to travel abroad.

Planned highlights for the Fall team are traveling to UC Davis and UC Berkeley to interview SBMS alums now attending those universities, and while we're in the area, to try to score some time with California

lawmakers in Sacramento. That team will also attend and review the 10th Ojai-Ventura International Film Festival.

The Winter team will work to bring more of the participants and media from the 25th Santa Barbara International Film

Festival into the classroom at SBMS, as well as reporting from events and reviewing films. This team will also be vying to cover one of the two TED conferences in Long Beach or Palm Springs.

If we manage to bring it about, the mid-year trip team will prepare during the five Fridays leading up to the trip, and then travel to Austin to cover the South By Southwest combined music, film, and



*SB County Supervisor Janet Wolf spoke with Harrison Gilman ('11) and Mary Kujan ('11) in front of the Capitol the day before the Inauguration.*



*Kendall Weaver ('11) and Harrison Gilman ('11) interview Clint Eastwood at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival.*

## Teen Press, con't.

interactive media festivals. This team is specially designed to give ninth graders an opportunity to experience and serve on the Teen Press.

The Spring team will focus on "Kids Making Change," a local and regional look at how kids are making the future, try to open the doors of the National Association of Broadcasters Show in Las Vegas to teen journalists, as well as cover the wide-reaching ramifications of the 40th Annual Earth Day.

Summer is up for grabs, but the pot we're stirring includes a return visit to Rwanda, or visits to the Avignon Festival or Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Stay tuned to [sbmsteenpress.org](http://sbmsteenpress.org) for the latest developments!

## Come Explore the World of Art!

If you feel that you have little talent in the arts and doubt you could ever learn, this class will give you greater confidence in your ability. We will use fun techniques using many different kinds of media and self expression. Enjoy the surprise element of creating art of which you will be proud!

Taught by our very own artist, Lynne DeBoer, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30-5:00 p.m. in our art room. Open to all skill levels, ages 10 - 18, with special rates for SBMS students. Call Lynne for more details at (805)448-1729 or email [lynesoychai@yahoo.com](mailto:lynesoychai@yahoo.com).



## A Guide on the Side: The Student Advisor Program

Something new at SBMS this fall is the Student Advisor Program serving to bridge the community spirit built during trips to everyday life at school. The goal of the program is to bring students and teachers together in smaller, more intimate groupings so that true community can be built. Similar to trip "families," advisory groups will be comprised of about 8 students from grades 6-9 and a faculty/staff mentor.

The students are the "advisors" under the guidance of a caring adult. Groups will gather for discussion and activities each Monday during sixth period following a 10-minute school-wide assembly for announcements and a presentation of the week's theme.

Themes may come from local, global, or school-related current events. We are excited to provide a program that creates opportunities for student leadership, increased communication, and team building.

*"...advisory functions in concert with small communities of learners, strong curricula, engaged families and communities...in maximizing performance. This is important to know, because middle level educators are at times confronted by critics who put forth the "false dichotomy" that we must choose to devote our time either to improved performance or to affective matters...it is not an either, or matter, but one of how various elements interweave to support performance and high expectations for all students."*

*-Jim Burns, MA, Education Expert*

# Outdoor Education

## Outdoor/Experiential Education at SBMS

by Jim Brady, Assistant Head of School, Dean of Students and Experiential Education

Our SBMS logo is a Diamond in the Center of a Wheel, both reflecting our past and moving us into a new and bright future!

SBMS journeys have always been at the center of our wheel, providing adventure, learning, and growth through direct experience. As it takes immense pressure over a long period of time to form a beautiful diamond from a lump of carbon, so our journeys provide ample challenges, tests and tribulations to mold our students into strong, caring individuals.

Our wheels have seen over two million

miles of successful journeying in the past three decades. The mainstay of SBMS journeys is our "Rite of the Wheel," an extended trip into the American Southwest in honor of the Native American

idea of Rite of Passage. In June 2009, our eighth grade students visited Betatkin in Navajo National Monument, while the ninth grade traveled to Canyon de Chelly to learn from the elders of the land's history and culture of her people. The two classes joined together for a week's challenging bike ride from the Grand Canyon to Sedona.

During this same period of time, the sixth and seventh graders were moving their mountain bike wheels along the backroads and trails of Santa Barbara County, from the Upper Santa Ynez River to Jalama, from



Sean Moffett, Dakota Dobbin, Ezra Danley and Ari Powell (left to right, '09) celebrate the Rite of the Wheel at Four Corners in June 2009.



Eighth graders at Betatkin in Navajo National Monument in June 2009.

Foxen Canyon and Sisquoc to Camino Cielo and Refugio Pass. Students learned much about their own region, from sea level to 4,000 feet, on this journey appropriately named, "No Place Like Home."

We are very excited about this coming year's journeys near and far with our students. Cycling, kayaking, mountaineering, hiking, snorkeling, and, of course, more cycling! Here's a preview of our 2009-10 journeys:

**Orientation Ride & Overnight:** During the first week of school, all students and faculty will ride from Ojai to the mouth of the Ventura River for a two-day journey, camping overnight at McGrath State Park. Students become oriented, with the leadership and guidance of ninth graders, to the spirit, structure and

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Rivers Wahl ('09) and Riley Mahoney ('09) at Four Corners in June 2009.



Former Head of School Kent Ferguson, Whitney Ingersoll, and Marco Andrade reunite at Four Corners.

# Experiential Learning

## Outdoor Ed, con't.

safety of our journeys: how we do things, and why we do them that way. We will complete the trip the next day with a bike ride and end in Manning Park for a celebration and return to families.

**Ninth grade Marine Biology** journey to the Channel Islands.

**Autumn Trip:** This is our all-school cycling and kayaking adventure, a week-



*Sean Moffett and Austin Corrigan (Class of 2009) after a long, muddy ride on last year's Four Corners trip.*

long journey based at Morro Bay State Park.

**Spring Trips:** Sixth and seventh grade students will learn the art of self-contained cycling with our annual Bikes and BOBs expedition. Eighth and ninth graders will have the option of participating in Mountaineering, Advanced Self-Contained Mtn. Biking in the wilderness, Backpacking in the San Rafael Wilderness or on Catalina Island, or Kayaking the Gaviota Coast.

**End-of-Year Journeys:** in June, all students will travel to Northern California. Eighth and ninth grade will cycle the mountains and coastline from the Redwoods to San Francisco, while sixth and seventh graders participate in our Marin County "Bridges" journey, based

in Pt. Reyes, ending with the famous San Francisco scavenger hunt. We plan to have the journeys overlap for one section of this trip, with all the students together for two days and one night to share a campfire and bike ride, where stories will be created, traditions shared, and legends passed.

In future articles we'll explore the philosophy of experiential education which forms the foundation of SBMS' Outdoor Education program. Our trips are more than physical adventures; they are diamond-making journeys of growth and awareness in the lives of our children, experiences to build bridges into their future. To the journey!



**Experiential Education is a process through which a learner constructs knowledge, skill, and value from direct experiences.**

**SBMS' Outdoor Program is fully accredited by the Association for Experiential Education. [www.aee.org](http://www.aee.org)**

Leading up to the Fall trip, **Whit's Warehouse** will be open Tuesdays & Thursdays after school to 4 pm.

## Congratulations to Our Class of 2009!



## Health Corner with Victor

In this column, I hope to explore any health issues that concern our SBMS families at school and on our Outdoor Education journeys. Topics can range from our disaster and evacuation plans to the best way to cover a sneeze. Certainly, one of the first topics addressed here will be the coming flu season and the concerns that many parents have already expressed.

There is much information on the web about the flu and I want to direct you to the ongoing resource of the SB County Health website. The County Health Department will be an excellent source for up-to-date, accurate information on the flu and vaccinations. For more information, check out their website at [www.sbcpd.org](http://www.sbcpd.org).

As a school, we are obviously concerned for the health of our children, staff, and families. We are monitoring this situation on a local and national basis and I provide the school with up-to-date information and recommendations on a routine basis. As we enter the flu season, the school and I will keep our families informed of any potential school closures or health and safety advice.

I always encourage you to check anything you might read in the Health Corner with your medical doctor if you have any questions about how this information applies specifically to your family.

Please feel free to address any school health questions or concerns to me at [victor@sbms.org](mailto:victor@sbms.org).





From top to bottom: Charlie Zimmerman (10) singing and playing "Ramble On," Shiona Heidrich-Klein (10) singing "Where I Stood," Ezra Danley (09) performing "Plush" with Marco, and Logan Kono (10) at the drums in "Santeria."

# Community Involvement

## Building Bridges: Get Involved in Your SBMS Community!

by Christine Cowles and Laurie Lauer, SBMS Development Team

Greetings from the SBMS Development Department, and welcome to the 2009-2010 school year! This is a very exciting year for SBMS; a year of renewal, changes and growth, and we are hoping that parent participation will be at an all-time high.

The Development Department will be working closely with the Parent Association, as well as the Dean of Community, Whitney Ingersoll, to make this a year in which our school community really flourishes.

We have already started off the school year with the First Annual New Family Welcome Party, graciously hosted by board member, Mark Bloomer, his lovely wife Lesley and their two sons and current SBMS students, Tristan (9th) and Spencer (7th). Sincere thanks to the Bloomers and to all who attended! (See photos on page 9.)

Another new event is the Orientation Reception. We will welcome the kids and faculty back from their first trip of the year

at Manning Park on Friday, September 11 from 3:30 to 5pm. Plan to watch your young travelers as they ride in on their bikes, tired but happy, and then officially end their journey with a Puja circle at the park.

Marco will be showing off the Chuck Wagon and hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be provided. The PA will also be on-hand with volunteer sign-up sheets and information about how to become involved in the Parent Association.

This fall we will kick off the school's Annual Fund and seek 100% participation from our parents, faculty, and staff.

We want to thank you in advance for your enthusiasm and involvement in Santa Barbara Middle School. We look forward to working with you throughout the year! Please contact us at [development@sbms.org](mailto:development@sbms.org) if you have any questions or would like to volunteer at SBMS.

## Songfest 2009: A Giant Thank You!

by Ted Rhodes, Past President of the Board, Alum Parent & Songfest Coordinator

Despite earlier forecasts of rain for Saturday, May 2, Songfest 2009 began with a rousing version of Talking Heads *Once in a Lifetime* that chased the clouds away for a warm, sunny, blustery afternoon of SBMS student music.

Set against a Kent Hodgett's air brushed scenic backdrop creation of musical staff and notes, 30 student acts sang and played their "axes" on an array of tunes including *I Can't Help Falling in Love with You* and *Mack the Knife*, several original songs, the driving rock'n'roll covers of Stevie Ray Vaughan's *Scuttle Buttin'* and Jimi Hendrix's *Fire*, right on through to Songfest's *Mama Mia* finale, through which the audience was on their feet singing on the chorus.

Marco, Maureen and Ted would like to acknowledge the tremendous efforts of everyone who performed as well as the help of all the volunteers who worked so hard behind the scenes to make Songfest 2009 another great SBMS success (in no particular order): **Jeanne Dentzel, Steve Botts, Teresa Kistner, Pravino Pearson,**

**Colleen Proctor, Tami Jauchen, Riley Jauchen, Peter Platt, David Dentzel, Mike Suding, Andrew Sanborn, Dan Feinberg, Lisa Bogart, Katie Roberts, Karen Suding, Mike Suding, Gina Gianetto, Cynthia Shipman, Charlotte Kono, Terri Graf, Ken Saxon, Sue Carmody, Colleen Proctor, Simi Barrad, Todd Jared, Lobero Theater, Steven Adrian, Steven Dunn, Tom Fogel, Peter Kornbluth, Rick Mellor, Michael Adcock, Desmond Warren, Mikey Donahue, Rosie Hernandez, Parent Association, Instrumental Music, Jensen Music, Mike's Drum Shop, and Kent Hodgetts.**

## Order Your Songfest DVD

If you haven't ordered your own DVD copy of Songfest 2009 yet, you can do so at the SBMS office. Cost of each DVD is \$35. Or contact Ted Rhodes at [tedrhodes@cox.net](mailto:tedrhodes@cox.net) or 705-8393 for further information.

# Community Involvement

## A Letter from Laura Collins, President, Board of Trustees

No one seems to ever want to leave this place. This is something that struck me early on in my Middle School journey, eight years ago when my daughter Amelia started out as a sixth grader: how lasting the connection seemed to be for both the kids and their parents. Students coming back from college to go on a ride. Parents of former students involved in everything from teaching to fundraising to helping out on the trips. Alumni from twenty years ago still writing letters to the faculty and staff, telling and re-telling the stories of their adventures, and challenges, and special relationships here – and the growth that came out of those stories.

Looking around the table at our last board meeting, I was struck again by the number of parents still making valuable contributions as board members – still doing long hours of work – for SBMS. There are many reasons parents stay involved – for me, it's gratitude.

Most of us send our kids to SBMS because we have an idea that there is something for them here – some aspect of their intellectual, emotional or social growth – that can be uniquely benefited by this school. My daughter Amelia came to SBMS eight years ago as a bright, curious and happy, but very timid girl. She had been this way since birth. I have pictures of her and our son Jacob at Knott's Berry Farm at age 8, on a Camp Snoopy "low thrill" ride that moved glacially up and down a track.

There is Jacob, at 5, looking longingly off at the big rides, while Amelia is holding on for dear life.

Four years at Middle School – four years of outdoor challenges and personal attention and encouragement from her teachers and schoolmates – transformed her into the confident and courageous kid that went from SBMS to the IB program at Dos Pueblos, to UC Davis where she is now, easily navigating her way through a community of over 30,000 students, and working 20 hours a week in the "Animal House" environment of the college bike store.

Most of my fellow trustees have a similar story: a child who was transformed in some important way here at Santa Barbara Middle School. And for this, as you can imagine with your own kids, we will always be thankful.

So, as you look around and get to know the school this year, don't be surprised by the number of alum students and former parents still in the mix, still trying to make a difference for the school. Maybe the coming years will find you still engaged in some way too, long after your child has gone on, still grateful for the time they spent at SBMS.



Teacher Marco Andrade, Alum parent and Trustee Guy Smith, and alum parent and Board President, Laura Collins welcome new families at our New Family Party in August 2009.



Craig Zimmerman, Trustee, with parents Craig and Fran Granet at the New Family Welcome Party in August.



New friends were made at the New Family Welcome Party in August.

## SBMS' Search for a Site

by Michael Jaffe, Trustee and Head of Site Committee

The SBMS site committee continues to explore every opportunity it finds. In addition to our ongoing conversations to extend our current lease, we are also re-examining some sites which were not available when we first looked at them several years ago but which have now opened up.

Currently, we are looking at three specific sites which could work within the time frame of our remaining lease. As well, a fourth promising site may be available and would definitely work for us since it has been occupied as a school before.

While we are trying to hold to high standards for the type of site we would like, we are also cognizant of the need to be practical. All four of the main prospects we are looking at right now offer some unique or distinguishing features that would fit the SBMS model. We'll be in good shape if any of the four work out.

Don't be shy. If you think you know of a site which might work for us, please contact any member of the Board of Trustees of the school, or Brian McWilliams, and we'll look into it right away. And thanks for your help and for your support of SBMS. We are working hard to find a permanent home and hope to have good news for you soon.

## The Tech Corner: Mobile Labs at SBMS

What new families may know, while ongoing families might not, is that SBMS now has two mobile computer labs, one in the Muir Wing of the building and one in the modular classrooms on the lower campus.

Each lab is housed on a rolling cart (so that it can be moved between classrooms) and a wireless, networked laser printer. Of course the key feature of each mobile lab is a complement of 15 MacBook laptop computers, each with an array of productivity and creative software installed for student use.

The labs will be used extensively during the year in the Digital Arts program, which features Russ teaching digital filmmaking, David teaching Flash animation and game programming, among other classes. During any class, students can check out a computer from one of the mobile labs and work at their desk, and still be productive.

In addition, all computers in all of the labs – Muir, Library, and the two Mobile Labs – have been extensively reviewed, conditioned, and some upgraded over the summer to be ready to work at full speed in the new academic year. All the computers now display the new school desktop image (below), signifying the limitless boundaries of learning here at SBMS.



## An Alum's Perspective

### From Alexandra Frost, Class of 2001

Upon hearing news of tremendous change taking place in the school I hold so dear to my heart, I found varying emotions rocking my soul. Shock, dismay, surprise, understanding, and overwhelming delight came over me. Twice, I asked my source of information to rewind, repeat, and take it into slow-motion. Finally, swallowing it all down with a big gulp of oxygen, I found acceptance for all the news, knowing even the heartbreaks are just part of the forward pedaling motion for which Santa Barbara Middle School is celebrated.

First, I must admit how often my thoughts trace back to my days on the bike; undoubtedly more than the average mind wandering back to pubescent junior high. If I'm not day dreaming about the friendships gained, and lessons learned, then I often find myself acting as storyteller, riding an outsider up Figueroa Mountain on my handlebars, or painting a front row picture of a breathtaking Death Valley sunrise. In the days following this pivotal news however, I found myself with different thoughts.

Although the changes taking place are riveting and diverse, my mind's focus couldn't escape the most surprising of all the news. Brian McWilliams, the man who clicked me into live-web interaction with students in Tibet, who taught me how to make my very own movie, my ninth grade Novus teacher and my friend has been asked to step into a role of great proportions. Leadership, yes. Decision making, yes.

But as any person whose heart is blue, yellow, and shaped as a diamond knows, Brian is approaching a seat still warm from the chain of legends who have occupied it. We all know the names and stories of the headmasters who have moved, touched, and inspired so many of us, and Brian does too.

I believe most of us were surprised at the news, but never doubtful. Why the shock? Because the Brian I know would never campaign for the role. As a matter of fact, he never appeared on my "imagined headmaster line-up." While his capability was never questioned, he was off my headmaster-radar because of who I believe he is in the SBMS community.

Brian's success as a teacher, while academically effective, truly thrives in his

effortless friendship with the students. He belongs in the Novus classroom; he belongs at the beach for Friday electives; Brian belongs next to the students, not in front or behind them. Because Brian loves what he does, I never entertained the idea of his place in our community changing. And (sigh of relief)... it's not.

After speaking with Brian about the news, I sincerely understand that while this might be a change in our school's structure, it is ultimately just a supplement to his life at Santa Barbara Middle School.

Occasionally sharing a beachside laugh with him and his wife, my friendship with Brian has only grown since my days in his classroom. Philosophy, ocean swells, and, of course, always keeping up on life, I have never felt a disconnect in our honesty with each other. Before we spoke, I feared a silence in my voice, as his title is now

composed of authority (and as many know, I don't do well with authority).

Contrary to my fear, Brian is still Brian: brilliantly easy to talk to. I expressed my joy and excitement, as well as my concern for the challenges that will surface. He added to my feelings of delight, and agreed that tasks will emerge that may

look as daunting as Yukky Yuk Yuk, Mighty Might, or even Gibraltar Road. As a former student who cried at the bottom of those steep, outrageous looking trails, I know that conquering a mountain is possible one pedal at a time, and Brian is just the man to take the snout, leading us to the top.

Ingenious, insightful, and truly open to opinion, Brian is more than just our next headmaster; he is our community's new voice: wholeheartedly representing faculty, parents, and students of the past, present, and future. When I think of "the school that changes lives," I recognize SBMS as successfully continuing to evolve, while never losing sight from where it came.

As I have always been, I am supremely confident in Brian's dedication to OUR school, the tradition we honor, and the growth we welcome. As an eternal devotee, and formal alumna, I'm supremely proud of the choice that has been made in naming Brian McWilliams as the Interim Head of School for OUR SBMS.



Alums Eva Louda, Alex Frost, and Sierra Klucken-Bostick.

# Let It Shine, Alumni

**Sarah Lambert ('85)** writes "I graduated from San Francisco State University with a BS in Biology in 1995 and completed my post-bac/pre-med stuff at UCSB part-time from 1996-1998 then went to medical school at UC Irvine from 1998 to 2002 and graduated with my MD. I then went on to do my residency in Ob/Gyn at Kaiser Santa Clara from 2002 to 2006. I am now a physician at Kaiser in Portland!"

**Lynn Nisbet ('93)** writes "I went to UCSB for college (chemistry major) 1996-2000 and played water polo there. Then worked as a high school physics teacher at Santa Barbara High School 2000-2001, then medical school at UCSD 2001-2005. Then I completed my residency in Internal Medicine during 2005-2008 at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital. Now I am married and living in Uganda for a year where I work as a

volunteer medical doctor in a hospital and am a lecturer at the Mbarara University Medical School. My interests are infectious disease and HIV. I am moving to Portland to do a three-year fellowship in infectious disease this summer."

**Marissa Mika ('96)** Graduated from U.C. Berkeley BA with honors in Development Studies in 2003; Johns Hopkins School of Public Health MHS in International Health in 2007; and is now attending the University of Pennsylvania Graduate Program in History and Sociology of Science.

**Brett Slatkin ('97)** graduated from Columbia in '05 with a degree in computer engineering from the prestigious Fu School. He then worked for IBM for a stint and then went to Google where he is now a senior software architect.

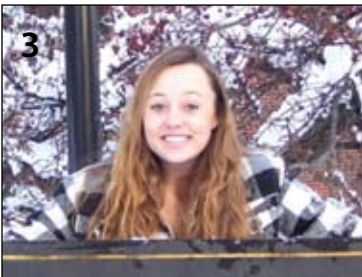
## Prepared for High School & College

There were thirty-two ninth grade students in our graduating class of 2005. Eighteen of those matriculated to Santa Barbara High School and graduated last June. As a group, their cumulative GPA was 4.04. Eleven of the eighteen completed honors or advanced placement courses and their cumulative GPA was 4.28.

These students were accepted to some of the finest colleges and universities in the United States. We are proud to announce that they are currently freshmen at the following schools:

- California Polytechnic State University
- Chapman University
- College of Holy Cross
- Dartmouth College
- Georgia Tech University
- Loyola Marymount University
- New York University (2)
- Parsons School of Design, New York
- Santa Barbara City College
- Scripps College (2)
- South Carolina Academy of Design
- Temple University
- Tufts University
- University of Arizona
- University of California, Berkeley (3)
- University of California, Davis
- University of California, Irvine
- University of California, LA
- University of California, SB
- University of California, Santa Cruz
- University of Colorado, Boulder
- University of Oregon
- University of Pennsylvania, Wharton School of Economics
- University of San Francisco (2)
- Vassar College

1. Sisters Natty Kornbluth ('00) and Day Kornbluth ('97) at Yale University 2. Max Ronci ('05) at UC Berkeley 3. Rachel Rhodes ('05) at Tufts University 4. Arielle Lafuente ('05) at University of Pennsylvania 5. Annie Villanueva ('05) at Dartmouth College 6. Jesse LaTourelle ('93) with wife Jessica and son Sasha 7. Jessica Adcock ('98) at The Julliard School 8. Becky Fogel, Andy Norton, Susannah Freedman, Jesse Smith, Emilie Albach, Derek Jonsson, Natty Kornbluth, and Alex Nazerian, all class of 2000 9. Nina Sarguis Walker ('82)



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

Keep up the great work SBMS alumni!

To receive this newsletter electronically, update your address  
or remove your name from our mailing list, please call 805.682.2989 or email [office@sbms.org](mailto:office@sbms.org).

## Mark Your Calendar

Sept. 8: 9th Grade Orientation  
Sept. 9: First Day of School  
Sept. 10: Orientation Ride &  
Overnight  
Sept. 11: Riders' Return &  
Orientation Reception at  
Manning Park  
Sept. 14: First day of classes  
Sept. 21: 8th & 9th Grade Town  
Meeting  
Sept. 23 - 25: 9th Grade Trip to  
the Channel Islands  
Sept. 24: 6th & 7th Grade Town  
Meeting  
Oct. 6: 6th & 7th Back-to-  
School Night  
Oct. 8: 8th & 9th Back-to-  
School Night  
Oct. 19 - Oct 24: Fall Trip  
Oct. 24: Homecoming  
Oct. 26: No School, Trip  
Recovery Day  
Nov. 11: Veteran's Day, Half Day  
of School

students in a unique and rigorous outdoor program, work internships, and community service. Each side of the diamond doesn't just fill in the wheel or stand alone, but rather, each side illuminates and reinforces the others.

This stage in our students' lives is a challenging time of major intellectual, emotional, and physical transformation. One of the things we study in my world history class is how different cultures deal with change. Confucius said, "A scholar who loves comfort is not fit to be called a scholar." We constantly challenge our students to get out of their comfort zone, try new things, and see what they can do in the face of adversity. These trials help them become confident, self-aware, and resilient learners in all areas of their lives.

Times of change are clearly opportunities for innovation, creativity, and transformation and I believe the same can be applied to the experience of SBMS as an institution. This summer we've worked hard to assist our families through this economic downturn with increased financial aid and to answer questions about our site and the direction of our school. I believe the situation is improving in all three areas. The economy has shown signs of improvement

since earlier this year, and we are currently pursuing four different options for a long-term home for SBMS. (For more site info, please see page 9.)

While the jury is still out on the "new" leadership, it's clear that we are drawing from an experienced leadership team of faculty and staff who are devoted to our children and dedicated to making this time of transition an enriching and rewarding one. I have been inspired by the way SBMS has renewed some of its core traditions such as the Deal Letter and introduced new programs such as the **EdLine Grading System** and the **Student Advisor Program**. I encourage you to read through the entire newsletter to get a better sense of the incredible amount of energy and creativity that has gone into our preparations for this year.

It's an extremely exciting and invigorating time to be serving as the Head of SBMS. I am immensely grateful to our faculty and staff for their dedication and their passion for teaching, and for their ability to reach our students. We are very lucky to have such a talented, soulful and experienced team of educators. I look forward to crossing many bridges this year together and sharing the view with students, parents, and staff.