

NEWS



NOTES

SPRING 2011

A LETTER FROM KATY

WHEN JOSEPHINE AND FRANK STARTED Peninsula School, they were looking for an educational environment that was engaging for students and allowed each child to learn important life lessons and develop their potential to the highest degree. Prior to opening Peninsula in 1925, during the two years that they planned the school, they contacted some of the well-known educators of the time and learned about their strategies for instruction, as well as Jean Piaget's developmental theories and views of cognitive development.

The parents wanted a school that encouraged creativity and grew social consciousness, independence and productivity. They wanted children to have the freedom to learn to be responsible, rather than be told about responsibility in abstract ways that are hard for a young child to comprehend. They believed that social and emotional development was just as important as academic lessons. They had learned that targeting developmentally appropriate learning was critically important in an educational environment, so they wanted Peninsula to focus on the developing child. Dewey, Parker, Johnson and the other progressive educators of the day had convinced them that choice and experiential learning would be foundational features of the school.

For all of us who were involved in the beginning – parents, teachers, children – the experience was profoundly meaningful. We felt we were pioneers inaugurating a new society and for the first time in our lives were free to translate our ideals into reality.

—JOSEPHINE DUVEINECK

It is interesting to imagine what it was like for the people who set the stage for such

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Stu Harwood (a.k.a. Merrill Bickford) in March 1964, getting help from John Nichols while building Nursery Green.

REMEMBERING STU HARWOOD

by Abby Chen

STUART HARWOOD (Merrill Bickford), former maintenance man and shop teacher, died on March 7, 2011 at age 87. He was on staff from 1963 to 1969. Three of his children, Rachel ('72), Garth ('73) and Ben ('75), attended Peninsula School around that time. Garth's partner, Kathy Alberts, has been an assistant and childcare teacher here for many years, and their daughter, Hannah Harwood, graduated from Peninsula in 2009.

"Stu Harwood and helpers, 1966," a photo caption in Barney Young's *The Coleman Mansion: Peninsula School's Big Building* (p. 47) provides a lasting reminder to the Peninsula community, present and future, of

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A LEAP OF FAITH

by Andromeda Garcelon

THIS YEAR A GIFT ARRIVED at Peninsula School in honor of "Flat Top – the best climbing tree ever!" While it has been many years since current students could climb this beloved member of the Peninsula community, it seems the right moment to remember what made it such a pivotal experience, place, and learning tool in so many of our lives. While this piece is a chance to reminisce about a lovely part of our school's history, it is also a chance to think about an important part of our educational philosophy. In an era when so many articles are being written about the importance of 'play' in childhood, writing about Flat Top gives us the chance to answer the always closely-tied-to-Peninsula question about why kids should be allowed, and why it is valuable, to climb trees. Here are a collection of alumni thoughts and memories about a tree that has made a world of difference.



The Best Climbing Tree Ever, Flat Top in 1999.

ALICE WAGNER '84

I learned to climb Flat Top while in 7th grade with my friend Molly Arms. I love the fact that this was passed on by students and no adults were involved in the teaching. If you wanted to know how, you had to seek out some kids who knew and ask them to teach

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HONORING PARENT VOLUNTEERISM AT PENINSULA

by Stacy Dryer

... the growth of each individual is deemed important because thereby the whole corporate life is enriched. Many [at Peninsula School] found themselves through their giving. I think that is really why it has survived – because a purpose to which you give of yourself means something to you.

—JOSEPHINE DUVENECK

Parent participation at Peninsula School is a long-standing practice, dating all the way back to the school's inception in 1925. While the school was undeniably born from the heart and vision of Frank & Josephine Duvneck, who were striving to create a better educational experience for their children, it was nurtured into a healthy and functional progressive school through the volunteer efforts of many of the original founding parents. It is safe to say that, without the hard work and dedication of that early pioneering group of families, Peninsula School might never have come to be.

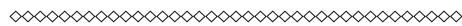
It should come as no surprise, then, that a place, which was infused with so much parental heart and passion at the outset, is still fed by those same things to this day. During any given week – any given day really – you will find parents on campus helping out in the classroom, driving on field trips, assisting with mailing parties, meeting as part of the Board, or preparing for an upcoming event. In fact, three extraordinary events take place each year on campus, largely run and produced by parents – the Craft Fair, the Auction and the Spring Fair. These events not only raise much needed funds for the school and help maintain an affordable tuition for all families, they also bring us together to celebrate as community, as friends, as family. These events require thousands of volunteer hours – *THOUSANDS* – with the head coordinators easily putting in hundreds of hours themselves. Likewise, Board and committee members spend late nights away from their families, working to support and strengthen the strategic work and mission of the school. These



In 1952, volunteers gather to help paint the Big Building. The green shade was picked by parents, Marion Brink and Marc Stedman, and remained for many years.

are undertakings of monumental proportions, especially in this day and age of overscheduled lives and two-parent working families.

So why do we do it? Here's what some of our current parent volunteers had to say.



I learned a long time ago that you can't keep something unless you also give it away. So in order to keep my family well within the beautiful nurture of Peninsula School, I need to give back freely as well. I also have learned the rule of "service, not sacrifice." I need to give what's right for me and my lifestyle, no more and no less. And I have found great respect for my personal boundaries in the place I have served most, on the Board of Directors. I believe this respect is a key ingredient in having a community that gives freely and with love.

—WENDY JUSTUS, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD,
CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRUSTEES

Unconditional love and regard are rare in the world and the acceptance of children for who they are and what they bring is phenomenal at Peninsula. I would tell my father stories about Peninsula and some of the more novel traditions and approaches we take for granted. He was always amazed and

quite pleased by what he heard. He used to say to me "Peninsula is a marvelous school, you should give all you can to it." I give to Peninsula because I believe in the school's mission. We are better people and better parents because we attended Peninsula.

—MARY LEA KIRVEN, TREASURER, BOARD
OF DIRECTORS

I signed up to be Craft Fair coordinator in 2002. Over time, it became clear my participation was meaningful to Henry and Amelia and later Thomas [my children]. That Jeffrey and I were contributing to this place that was so hugely important to them made school more than just school; it was a place of overall caring by staff, their own parents, and other parents as well. Also, they were having active citizenry modeled for them – something that is quite important to our family. I have come to realize that one of the most important reasons for my own participation is the constant learning and development that comes with involvement and investment. There are simply some things you can't internalize until you've done them and, for me, finding ways to work with and learn from all sorts of different people is one of them. So while some of my reasons for participating in Parent Events have changed over the years, the constant is that it makes

everything fit together somehow: community, family, and one's own person.

—STEPHANIE CHOI-FREEMAN, CRAFT FAIR COORDINATOR

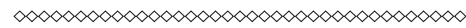
Volunteering at Peninsula strengthens my ties to the school staff, to other families, and allows me to support the vision and practice of a truly special place. It is also satisfying because I know the time that parents give makes a real difference: the wonderful events, the critical financial resources raised and stewarded, the dynamic strategic planning and direction would just not be possible without "all hands on deck." As a parent who works full time and has other volunteer commitments, it isn't always easy. I have found that having so many different ways to get involved – committees, Board, work jobs, classroom support, etc. – allows me to channel my particular skills in ways that make sense for the school and for my schedule.

—MARY HOFSTEDT, DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR, FORMER BOARD SECRETARY

Given that I have, in fact, volunteered probably thousands of hours of my time to Peninsula over the past nine years, in capacities too numerous even to list, the question is, WHY? The answer is simple: because I knew that doing so would make a difference for the better. For my daughter, for those other kids fortunate enough to attend Peninsula, for the staff (who have more than enough to do in focusing on the kids!), and even for the other parents. So I volunteered my unique skills because ... I knew that the staff couldn't do it all on their own. I wanted – and still want! – Peninsula School to exist and thrive

for ANOTHER eighty-five years, so that my grandchildren can reap the benefits of a Peninsula education just as my daughter has. To be clear, though, it's not just about generosity and altruism. Research shows a clear correlation between a child's academic success and the extent of their parents' involvement in their school in the early years. When a child's parents are involved in her school, school is no longer "that place they send me" but becomes "a place we all go together." So there's a strong element of "enlightened self-interest" along with my admitted generosity.

—SCOTT PYNE, FORMER BOARD PRESIDENT, AUCTION DATABASE COORDINATOR, TECH SUPPORT



Since the beginning and to this day, the parents at Peninsula School have never hesitated to roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty. They jump in and make amazing things happen. I would be lying if I said that it is always easy and fun. Sometimes – perhaps even many times – it is. But at other times, it's hard and it's tiring. Volunteering may involve long days, long nights, or working side-by-side with somebody you don't particularly like. It may push people to the limits of their comfort zone and sometimes even beyond it. However, it is at those very moments of being pushed to our limits where the true opportunity arises – the chance to learn something new about ourselves or others, the opportunity to mindfully explore new territories within our relationships and our own lives, the chance to truly be lifelong learners just like we teach our kids.

That, in my humble opinion, is the true gift Peninsula School gives to us all.

KATY

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an amazing school and to remember that some of the things we hold dear and cherish today became a part of the fabric of the school through organic growth, not intentional, strategic thinking.

There are wonderful aspects of Peninsula which were not the express plans laid out by our founders. An example would be our six acres of open space. Children who otherwise live in a world of formal landscaping and concrete have a place to play in mud puddles, climb trees and build forts here at Peninsula School. The property itself is one of our most valuable assets, yet Peninsula's relationship to the developed world around it could not have been predicted in 1925.

Peninsula School has survived and thrived for eighty-six years. It is a testimony to our strong roots as well as our ability to see worth in current practices and grow potential future traditions. Peninsula is a school with teachers who are guides and coaches and also learners themselves alongside their students. Peninsula staff understands that education is what happens to the other person, not what comes out of the mouth of the educator. It is a learning environment where people can explore, share, risk, make decisions, and construct answers. We do it together, through support, understanding and a dedication to growth for all.

IN MEMORIAM

Herb Rauch passed away at age 75 on March 29, 2011. Herb and his wife, Margie, who later worked on staff as a beloved Nursery Blue head teacher for three decades, came to the Peninsula School community in 1965 with their daughter, Marta ('76). Before long, their younger children, Erik ('79), Evan ('80), and Loren ('81), followed; much later, so did two grandchildren, Tysa ('05) and Gavin ('07). As well as being a very loving family man, as a Peninsula parent from 1965 to 1981, Herb served on the board for a total of ten years.



The Dessert Table at the Spring Fair is always a popular spot for volunteers and fairgoers alike.

Through Their Colleagues' Eyes

DAVID GARVIN

by Jerry Hearn

LESS THAN TWO MONTHS after man first walked on the moon, a young teacher walked into the first day of his 5th grade class at Peninsula. One student fondly remembers that he began class by saying: "My name is Mr. Garvin, but you can call me David." And that, to paraphrase the ending of the movie *Casablanca*, was the beginning of "a beautiful friendship" between Garv, as he came to be known, and his beloved Peninsula.

Garv grew up in the Pittsburgh area, majored in education at California University of Pennsylvania, and, after graduation and a year of public school teaching, worked his way west to the real California. In his search for a teaching position, he came across Peninsula and was hired by Barney

Young. Here he found his home where he taught for more than 41 years, rarely missing a day of school over that entire time. Last December he made the decision to retire from teaching, leaving a hole in our community that will be impossible to fill.

Garv has had an impact on the school community, and each of us, in many profound ways, some of which we will only realize in years to come. His legacy is rich; one of the creators, and the chief sustainer, of our Upper School program that has successfully launched two generations of our students into the world after Peninsula. He is the only teacher to have taught all five positions in the program, some of them several times. He served on the board a number of times, and sat in on countless committee meetings necessary to the continued functioning of the school. His calm demeanor and thoughtful approach to issues provid-

ed everyone with a sense of stability and a recognition that everything would be okay.

But most of all, Garv was, and still is, about the kids. He brought that same quiet, centered approach to all his dealings with young people, and they loved him for it. If he was there, it seemed like no matter what the problem, there would turn out to be a solution that would work for all involved. And he made learning so much fun! Who can forget his weather unit, shirts and all, or the California map project, the Spanish Armada, or, reaching way back in time, the infamous 5th grade mouse project? Memories such as these are what tie us to our roots and make us what we are, and, for many of us, Garv provided a whole bunch of them.

We, as individuals and as a community, will miss Garv for all that he brought us, and for how he made us feel heard, important, and loved. We wish him a bright future that he so richly deserves.

JERRY HEARN

by Lynne Rosenberg

JERRY HEARN HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN Peninsula School pretty much his whole life. He attended Peninsula as a child in 1947 to 1949, then returned 20 years later as a conscientious objector in 1969. From 1969 to 1971, Jerry and Garv, along with Steve Walters and Magda Dennert, developed the Upper School program. In the 40 years since, Jerry has mentored and inspired tens of teachers and hundreds of students. His unwavering support for the school is a beacon for us all.

Jerry walks his talk. He believes in community, in democracy, and in consensus. Jerry is as good at asking and listening as he is at talking and teaching. Under Jerry's tutelage, decisions in the 7th and 8th grades were made through painstaking discussions. Jerry is considerate at his core, and the kids felt his respect for them. Also, he can tease and play better than anyone. Some of the

greatness of Jerry's work comes from the familiarity and warmth that pervade his relationships. Kids and adults know he will always come through. In fact, he takes on projects and carries them through when others would fall to the ground and pound their foreheads in frustration.

Jerry is warm, affectionate, funny, kind, silly and very intelligent. He wears his heart on his sleeve, and lets kids know how he feels. He is a brilliant history teacher. Often the 8th grade was treated to his "ten minute university" version of world history, which actually took two class times. His outline of the development of western civilization has grounded 30+ years of students in the culture, philosophy and politics of their world. Algebra with Jerry and his banana was filled



Jerry Hearn plans to continue volunteering at Peninsula, now as a grandparent.

with difficult, shared, reflective thinking, and lots of fun. His repertoire of songs played on his guitar made late night campfires wonderful. His dedication to the environment preceded its current popularity by 25 years. His ability to help kids design and build anything they envisioned gave generations the confidence to do so. His

fidelity to his beliefs has been an inspiration.

Letting people know you care about them and communicating with grace are essential for a reasonable society. Jerry has always done this. He has shown the rest of us: students, parents, teachers and friends, that it is possible to create a mutually respectful community. We hope Jerry will still be contributing his special spirit to Peninsula even in retirement.

Through Their Colleagues' Eyes

JAN GRISELL

I MET JAN GRISELL IN 1978, my family's first year at Peninsula School, where she was Jean Moses' assistant in Nursery Green. In 1979, we became Nursery Green co-head teachers. When I became Childcare Director, we continued to share the Nursery Children until my retirement in 2006.

During the 27 years we worked together, I appreciated her intuition and wisdom about young children. She was an advocate for every child she knew and gently supported their interactions with each other and with the adults in their lives. Jan helped families grow in confidence and competence. She is a part of a strong Nursery Staff that nurtures a foundation for success at Peninsula School.

—EVIE PLANKINTON

When I first dropped by the Nurseries to interview for a position, Jan happened to be in the yard with the kids. She extended a most encouraging "Good Morning," which made me feel right at home. It is that same cheerful greeting that has welcomed hundreds of children as they step through the gate each day, affirming their self-confidence as they transition from home to school. Children

are drawn to her reassuring presence, and I have learned so much from watching her interact with them. We will all miss "Jam," as she was affectionately nicknamed, but I know we will continue to stay in touch.

—GAIL BLACKMARR



As Jan Grisell retires, it is good to remember she still has a busy life. Here she sits, pictured with her 6 grandchildren.

I don't remember the exact dates that Jan and I worked together, but I do know it was during her eating lunch such as baked-beans-right-out-of-the-can era, her bagel era and her eating-veggies-out-of-a-baggie era.

Jan and I shared common notions about children's social/emotional development. When I worked with Jan, I learned

a lot about "holding" children, physically and emotionally, when they were going through a stressful time. She modeled the way to help talk children through these times, when the time was right, which helped the children understand more about themselves and others.

To this day, parents of adult alums speak of Jan in a sort of mythical tone, remembering her helpful, caring advice. I also remember a child calling, "Jam, Jammmm...!"

—CHYERL HOSHIDA

I first met Jan when I was a child; her son Jason and I were in the same class at Peninsula School. I never imagined I would be teaching with her all these years later.

Working with Jan has been a gift. I have learned so much from her. She is a gifted teacher both with kids and parents. Whether she was holding a crying child on her lap or taking a group of eager children to a giant mud puddle, her kind and loving nature was ever present. She is not only a gifted teacher and a good friend, but her profound contribution to our school has touched the lives of so many children and their families.

I will miss working with her every day.

—MEGAN HART

THE BIG BUILDING BOOK

OUR FIRST ANNUAL ALUMNI COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

by *Andromeda Garcelon*

THIS YEAR WE TRIED SOMETHING NEW which has all the makings of a wonderful tradition. In reminiscing about cookbooks filled with recipes from kindergarteners, in viewing the museums currently compiled by Kate's class, or watching a pizza day, pie day, or bakery

put on by one of our classes, we decided that the joy of creativity, as well as that of working together, should not be lost to Peninsula's students once they graduate. What better way to connect than participating in a collaborative project? The concept is to put out a different type of request each year for any alumni who wish to contribute or take part. This year we asked for submissions of anything inspired by the Big Building, to be made into a booklet. The entries we received are phenomenal! On the final page is just a little taste of the thoughtful writing and artwork received.

In addition to inviting our multitude of alumni, it also gives us a chance

to welcome each year's 8th graders into the alumni community by asking them to join the project too. The haiku, drawings, memories and stories submitted by this year's soon-to-be-alumni are just amazing! The opportunity was priceless, to let these students know that their connection to our wonderful school does not stop when they get their diploma. Bravo to all those who contributed to this lovely collection, and be on the lookout for next year's invitation in the winter. It just might be your cup of tea. If you are interested in perusing this book, please contact the Development Office or alumni@peninsulaschool.org.

ALUMNI UPDATES

Margery (Jerry) Mecabe, '31

Currently, I volunteer at The Marine Mammal Center in Sausalito. I had worked at San Quentin for 33 years, and retired in 1979.

**Ardeth Alden Lobet (Ardie), '51
(9th grade)**

After raising three children and a brief entry into law, I jumped at the opportunity to go sailing for what was to be a year. That was in the early 80s, and the sailing went on far longer than we'd planned. My husband and I have been living in and enjoying New Zealand ever since. I was delighted to be able to attend a multi-year reunion at Peninsula in 2008; it was just great to talk with old acquaintances and friends – lots of interesting lives.



Ardeth Alden Lobet

Christopher Frazier, '61

I retired from teaching elementary school 4 years ago. My wife, Lisa Bush, and I spend a lot of time gardening, studying Italian, and dreaming about going to Italy. I go to Santa Rosa Junior College and am studying Italian. I play golf, love my dog, love to cook, and I am still a big SF Giants fan. I have very fond memories of Peninsula...

Steven Marcus, '67

I have two daughters, Robin Lane-21 and Zoë Jasmyn-20, and I am currently living with my partner of five years, Susan. I worked at BASS Tickets in Oakland from 1975-1980, Bill Graham Presents from 1976-1979 and National Semiconductor from 1980-1982; I worked for the Grateful Dead from 1983-1996 as mail order ticket sales manager and then worked for Bob Dylan handling mail order ticket sales via his website from 1997-1999. I am currently open to projects that may come my way...



Kelly Collins

Kelly Collins, '71

I visited Peninsula School in February 2011 with my fiance

and my younger daughter. It was a pleasure to show them where I went to school. The best part for me was to see a square block that is untouched by the re-development that is going on around the school.

Jim Holzman, '78

My first time at Peninsula School was from nursery to second grade. As for so many others, playing with my best friends, living in bare feet, tromping through the puddles, swinging from the trees, and learning from the wonderful teachers, Peninsula was paradise on earth.

Going into third grade, I was diagnosed with dyslexia, and at the time, the only specialist was in public school. I was able to overcome my dyslexia, but the transition into public schools was very difficult, and I always held onto the dream of returning to Peninsula. In eighth grade, that dream came true, and I joyfully returned to graduate from Joe Starr's class of '78.



Jim Holzman

During college, I met my lovely wife Martine, who was visiting from France and I also discovered rock climbing. Both, have been lifelong loves and passions.

I followed Martine to France, where we lived and traveled through Europe and South East Asia, returning to the US in '92. Martine and I now own and operate Martine's Pastries, a wedding cake and specialty bakery, which she founded shortly after our move to Lexington, Kentucky in '97.

Peninsula School was one of my life's most influential experiences, and I truly adored my time there.

Tom Grisell, '80

I am enjoying life in beautiful far northern California and am happily married with 6 wonderful kids, 3 boys and 3 girls, ranging from 8-21 years old. I love the outdoors, which makes Redding a fantastic place to live. I have great memories of friends during my



Tom Grisell

years at Peninsula, and hope to reconnect with many of you.

Eric Ammons, '81

It really hit home this year that I last attended Peninsula 30 years ago (but who's counting?). To me it means a couple of things: One, I'm getting old, and two, I haven't seen my classmates in over three decades. When I saw the class directory and the names of my 8th grade mates, it brought back a rush of memories and emotions. I will conclude by wishing every one of them well and would like them all to know that I'm doing fine. Regards and safe travels!

Chris Schlesinger, '81

I live in Marin County and am in a relationship with a wonderful woman. I run a safety training company called "In Home CPR." If you see a blue Toyota Matrix with the license plate "HOME CPR," that's me driving to a home or business to teach a CPR or first aid class. I've trained in martial arts for the last 20 years. I've also been an actor for nearly that long and used to pay some of my bills that way.



Chris Schlesinger

Victoria Schlesinger, '85

My husband, David, and I are over-joyed to introduce Peninsulites to our daughter Octavia, who was born in San Francisco on January 15 this year. She likes to be tickled, spends lots of time trying to get her little stuffed lion to speak, and has the longest eyelashes you've ever seen.

Along with being a mom, I feel lucky to still be working as a journalist, despite the industry's great layoffs over the past couple of years. These days I'm a contributing editor for California Lawyer magazine, and I co-run the website Way Out West: Bay Area Green News.



Victoria Schlesinger

Tonya Ward Singer, '86

For the past seven years, I have run my own consulting business providing training and coaching to K-8 educators in public schools to advance

instruction for English Language learners. It is fun, creative and fulfilling work. I am grateful for learning the skills of following my passion at Peninsula. An inquiry approach to seeking answers and think-outside-the-box approach to resolving challenges are at the heart of my success. Thank you Peninsula! As I look at Kindergarten options for my son, I do miss Peninsula. In the meantime, I'm volunteering at the kids' prospective charter school to help the staff implement their vision of "inquiry-based learning."

Sabina Brown, '91

I live in Santa Cruz with my family. I am married, almost 12 years now, and have 2 kids. Caven is 8 and Jasper is 3 and one more coming in September. We love it here and have found the closest thing to a Peninsula School this side of the hill has to offer. As my kids grow older, their experiences make me remember my years at Peninsula and appreciate it even more.

Gina Alongi, '92

In the past three years, my husband and I have relocated to Portland, OR (from Palo Alto), purchased a house of our own, and started a family! Our son, Noah, was born in June 2010. I have also recently completed my master's degree in integrated teaching through the arts. I still carry my childhood passions for film, animation, and dance. Since my son was born, I have joined a local Egyptian bellydance troupe and will be making my debut performance soon!



Gina Alongi

Amelia Porter, '98

I finally decided I couldn't live in San Francisco without the sun, so I moved to the sunniest place I could find: Albuquerque, New Mexico. I've got my own house and a wonderful job working with owls, hawks, and falcons. I couldn't ask for anything more.

Pefy Fraser, '02

Currently, I work at a residential treatment center for adolescents. I graduated with my BA in Psychology in May 2010. Currently, I'm working on my MSW (Masters in Social Work) and will graduate May 2012. Social Work is my absolute passion!

STU HARWOOD

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Stu's irreplaceable hands-on contributions in the preservation and restoration of the Big Building prior to and during "the crisis of 1965-67."

Can you imagine Peninsula School without the Big Building? Do you know that the subject of demolition was not only discussed but also made into a plan in the name of "modern development" more than once in our school history? Beginning in 1945, due to a smoke scare, and culminating in 1965 with yet another threat from the Fire Marshal of an imminent school closure, the Big Building's structural condition was vehemently scrutinized, her existence repeatedly challenged and her fate utterly uncertain. The warning, which dictated the building be brought to code or the school be closed down, instantly heightened the debate over demolition versus rehabilitation. The whole community – students, staff, parents and alumni – joined in the discussion, and the board jumped into emergency meetings.

It is in this critical context that the shop teacher Stu Harwood's well-rounded capacity as "an artist as well as an experienced builder" came to the forefront. Barney mentioned, in his book, Stu's name eight times in the space of seven pages (ten including photo captions). He unequivocally credited Stu for seeing and making a case for the building's emotional and symbolic significance, providing cost analysis information, which helped tip the decision towards preservation, scrounging building materials such as come-back cement and lumber for free or at very low cost from various sources, closely leading and supervising work crews of parents and kids, managing an incredibly long and complex list of action items, and dedicating numerous overtime hours week after week to meet crazy deadlines. In his account, "Stu Harwood was designated architect and superintendent of the project." After two years of focused hard work, the project was completed in September 1967, and the Big Building's rightful presence among us has never again been questioned.

Stu had dedicated his time in life to the making of art, particularly sculptures, which may be seen as a dance pairing between art (his calling) and building (his skill). As his son Garth recalled, "he spent his time scavenging art supplies of every description, creating a wild array of works large and small from such materials as dog hair, dryer lint, lottery tickets, the funny papers, telephone parts, shattered windshield crumbles, toys, bones, maps, wood



Photo from county documents around 1965, when Stu Harwood lobbied and worked to keep the Big Building intact, and saved it for the generations to come.

chips, melted toothbrushes, ladies' underwear, and just about anything that might wash up on a beach. He also built some unique and memorable buildings that were sculptures in their own right. At Ano Nuevo Point, on land that is now part of the State Park of the same name, his architectural masterwork was an adobe house framed with massive, salvaged redwood timbers from an abandoned railroad trestle. I remember helping him to dig an old shipwreck out of the dunes, parts of which he incorporated into a sort of floating loft above the main room of the adobe, which was accessed by a spiral staircase. The house still stands, but is off-limits to the public as it is now a ranger residence." Over the decades, Stu's work had been exhibited throughout the country, and examples are in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Memorial Art Gallery at the University of Rochester.

Thank you, Stu, for having given the Big Building your capable, steady hand. You nursed her back to life and our full embrace, and have given us the precious time to see how very much she has meant to us.

A LEAP OF FAITH

Continued from page 1

you. We were trained by a very experienced 8th grade boy. The two of us decided that everyone in our class had to climb Flat Top by the end of 8th grade, or not graduate. I know we put some pressure out there, and it became another learning opportunity. We had to understand that not everyone wanted to climb this mammoth tree, and this experience that was so amazing for us was not what our classmates had interest in risking their lives to do. We learned respect for our peers and their boundaries, as well as the limits of our adolescent power of persuasion.

Speaking of respect, we also learned respect from climbing Flat Top. You had to respect, adapt, and trust. Unlike the playgrounds of today, which are made just the right heights and distances, trees like Flat Top were not custom built for kids. It was on you, the kid, to learn how to use it and adapt to the gaps in branches, or the distance of a reach between them. You had to understand which branches were strong enough to hold you, and which you might only use as a handhold, and then you had to trust that knowledge. You had to trust that the tree and its strong branches would hold and keep you safe. Once you were on top, it was the closest thing to flying, looking out at the world around you, your everyday places, with a new perspective. I can't believe that we would climb Flat Top carrying our lunches, just to eat up there, but we did, and it is an experience I'll never forget.

ERIC BROWN '76

I never climbed Flat Top but my brother did. Jim was fearless about climbing, and Flat Top was a piece of cake.

SHANTI GAYLE '86

There were no adults teaching us to climb. I remember going up first with one person, I think it was Alida. Some older kids, boys, went up and showed us how to manage the first part, which was the most difficult. It involved a sideways jump and a leap of faith and a spiritual connection with the tree. It involved communing with Flat Top. We practiced once or twice the hard part and went up halfway. Then the bell rang. We told our teachers, Lynn and Steven. The next day we did the whole thing. I remember sitting up there and meditating – i.e.

reading, breathing, laughing, sightseeing, dreaming, eating, and believing.

KAREN PERKINS '68

Lisa & Becka (Lisa Stallings and Rebecca Garbett) used to steal my headband and climb trees with it so I'd have to climb up and recover it. I spent a lot of time standing at the bottom of trees, looking up, trying to muster the courage. The first time they coaxed me up Flat Top in that method, I was completely terrified and awed. Never did get comfortable with climbing down, even though I went up many more times. I'd crawl backwards down the last part, scared to jump. As an adult, I've worked past that terrified feeling when I deal with heights.

ALISON FOREST '70

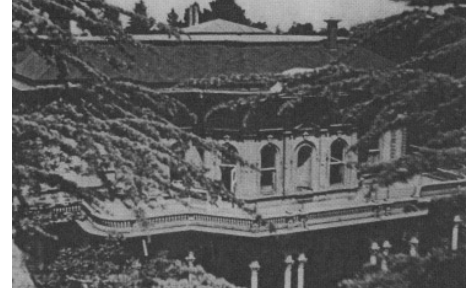
I only climbed Flat Top a few times. Getting up the first two branches, which were huge and far apart, was really hard. There was a leap of faith and a lot of upper arm strength involved, neither of which I had in abundance. Pippin Griscom climbed it a lot. Once past the third limb, though, it was thrilling, and completely worth the challenge. On top, the main trunk had broken off (or been cut) about 100 years ago, so the other branches had spread, and we could practically lie down – halfway to the sky. I never climbed Flat Top alone – that was for the really hardcore – and remember three or four of us up there, admiring the tops of buildings, and the view. Flat Top also produced those heavy, unopened pine cones, which Danny Marcus's black lab loved to chase and recover.

LIZZIE FONG '83

I ate lunch up there regularly.... I think I climbed with my brown bag lunch in my mouth!

ANDREW OSTRENGA '97

I used to climb Flat Top back in the good old days. I remember climbing to the top of that tree and looking north. We all swore we could see San Francisco from there, I don't know if we really could. To be perfectly honest, that tree really scared the hell out of me. It was so high up and the branches were spaced in such a way that it was a miracle we even made it half way up. The one person that really stands out in my mind was Ashley Gillespie. She would stand on the very tip top of that tree and sway with the wind, holding on by the smallest branch. I

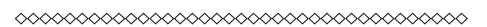


The amazing view of the Big Building from Flat Top so many of us remember. Taken by alumnus Jonathan Longcore, circa 1968.

was sad to see a "red ring" around that tree when I visited Peninsula School a few years ago, but it almost made me relieved that kids wouldn't take that risk. I remember my heart throbbing and my hands sweating as the adrenaline raced through my veins. A great tree in a simpler time...

PIPPIN GRISCOM '71

I climbed Flat Top dozens of times. My friends and I were big into climbing in second grade and I think my first time up Flat Top was in third grade. I remember loving being able to go out to the tips of the tall top branches, and finding spots to sit. I'd eat lunch up there with friends on the bobbing branches. One thing that stands out is that I always used the same hand on the same branch, in the same order, circling upward around and around the trunk in the same pattern, always climbing Flat Top the same way. It was a bit of a ritual and like a puzzle that only fits together one way.



Even if Flat Top is no longer the place to learn these lessons and find this connection to nature, current students have the tree house climb to master and a plethora of other trees to scale. It is vital to realize that this 'play' on trees, this climbing, is an integral part of our education and is important for Peninsulans, past, present and future. In fact, it is a way for kids not only to have fun, but to pass on their own traditions and become teachers of their fellow students, to individually face fears, reach goals, learn the abilities and limits of their bodies, find spirituality, acquire a respect for nature, understand real consequence with a tangible reason for caution and consideration, and learn to trust. Who wouldn't want these options to be a part of a child's education?

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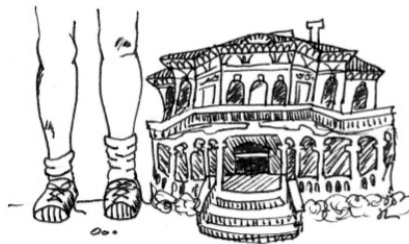
THE RULER

The Big Building was the ruler by which I measured myself during my years at Peninsula.

First I was too little to slide down the banisters, and then I got too big to do it. I was maybe 7 the first time I was brave enough to sit up while I slid down the banister from the gallery, and around 11 when my behind got too big for me to make it around the hairpin turn on the back stairs.

The doors shrank steadily as I inched my way to 8th grade. I still have a scar on my lip

demonstrating the face-level quality of the push-bar on the side door by the office when I was 7, but it barely reached my hip by the time I graduated. To see everything the library



had to offer first required a chair, then nothing but my own feet, then bending down on hands and knees.

The Big Building seemed impossibly big when I was in Kindergarten, like a mysterious palace. And by the time I was 12 or 13, it was a much more manageable size. I knew all the rooms and closets, the little storerooms and upstairs nooks. (Well, all except the basement which was a mysterious labyrinth probably miles long and was obviously completely unknowable by humans, and the attic, which was a treasure that only 8th graders got to see.)

The familiar smooth wood under my hands and feet on the stairs, the bookish, sawdusty smell in the hallways, the dusty sunbeams in the Gallery and the peely paint-and-aluminum coats on the radiators were comforting features that remained unchanged as I grew though, and I rely on them still.

—JUDY LAWRENCE, CLASS OF '86

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