



Keeping Touch

SANTA BARBARA, CA • APRIL 2012 • VOL. 30 • No. 8

FROM THE DESK OF **BILL CIRONE...**

Words matter in important ways

Recently Santa Barbara County’s Teacher of the Year, Desa Marie Mandarino, spoke at our annual Teachers Network Awards Banquet, on “Time plus effort equals success.” Some of her points struck me as profound on several levels. Most involved her use of words to highlight larger truths.

Sometimes words get stale and lose their power. They are shortcuts to larger meanings and can in time become substitutes for that meaning. When we tire of the word, we can lose sight of what it represents. Desa said she discovered there were words that teens did not want to hear: “homework,” “write an essay,” and even the word “student.” Her solution was to retain the underlying meaning of the word by glorifying it. So her “students” became “scholars.” How much more glamorous it sounds. And how much more respectful the person using such a word comes to be. This only works, of course, if you mean it sincerely, and Desa is a believer to her core.

In her classroom, “homework” became “evening studies.” Instead of a chore, those studies became positive experiences. Rather than directing her students to “write an essay,” Desa enables them to become essayists. It would be easy for critics to dismiss this approach as corny or contrived, but the results—and test scores—speak for themselves. I certainly do not want to belittle Desa’s masterful professionalism by focusing on just one small arrow in her quiver of exceptional instructional strategies. She is a master teacher in every sense of the word.

The focus on re-invigorated words, however, struck me as a useful tool in many arenas. Certainly this is well known and practiced in the political arena – where weapons are dubbed “peace-keeping missiles,” wealthy people become “job creators,” and taxes become “revenue enhancements.” These techniques wouldn’t be used if they didn’t work effectively.

It seems that our public discourse could benefit from a shifting of focus, especially in these times of such strife and discord. We could all learn to replace the words that have become so polarizing, and focus instead on our shared values, goals, and humanity. Think of the strides we could make simply by reframing our arguments into positive discussions.

It’s a solution worth trying on many levels. And the prize will be in proportion to the effort.

Authors win major awards

Three of the four authors that graced IMS’s recent Author-Go-Round have been rolling in the awards since the January event. Wendelin Van Draanen’s book for teens, “Runaway,” garnered the American Library Association’s Schneider Family Book Award, which honors an author or illustrator for a book that embodies an artistic expression of the disability experience for child and adolescent experiences.

Kristine O’Connell George’s book of poetry, “Emma Dilemma,” won the Bank Street College of Education Claudia Lewis Poetry Award.

Local author Lee Wardlaw’s book, “Won Ton: A Cat Tale Told in Haiku,” has won the Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award, as well as the upcoming Los Angeles Book Festival prize in the Children’s Book category. The illustrator of that book, Eugene Yelchin, won a coveted Newbery Honor award for a book he wrote titled “Breaking Stalin’s Nose,” and is on board to be part of Author Go Round 2013 next January.

—Fred Borchers/IMS

Quote of the Month...

“

There are only two mistakes one can make along the road to truth: not going all the way, and not starting.

—Buddhist saying

”

Question of the Month

What are some little crazy things you can't stop yourself from doing?

Correcting grammar and punctuation mistakes whenever I read anything. And the hardest thing for me is to keep my mouth closed when I hear people use incorrect grammar. Sometimes I just can't help myself. On the other hand, I appreciate it when people correct me, too. When I was in my 20s I can still remember mispronouncing two words: macabre ("mac-a-bree"?!) and centrifugal ("centri-Fyoo-gull"). A coworker told me how to pronounce them properly, and I'm glad because I would have kept mispronouncing them otherwise. Now I have Merriam-Webster online to pronounce them for me, so no more embarrassment! Thank you, Merriam!
 —Rose Koller/IMS

Paying bills and going to work.
 —John Kafel/ITS

Continuing to participate in a lottery pool. It could happen, right?!
 —Tracey Beauchamp/
 Communications

Question for May:
What's a good recipe that has five ingredients or less?

Save the Date ...



You are invited to attend a health fair to meet Judy Stepka, Benefits Manager, and sign up for your fringe benefits and meet representatives from: Anthem Blue Cross; Delta Dental; Golden West Dental; Davey Administration, which administers our IRC 125 Flexible Spending Accounts; and representatives who provide insurance for long term and short term disability, term life insurance, cancer and heart attack/stroke policies, as well as Aflac reps. The Holman Group will provide information regarding our Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Also attending will be representatives from CalPERS 457 Deferred Compensation Program, Santa Barbara Teachers Federal Credit Union, CalPERS Retirement System, and CalSTRS Retirement System.

This is the time of year when employees may elect to add / change / terminate their health plans for the new enrollment period that will be effective Oct. 1.

Enrollment Deadline
Friday, Aug. 17



Staff, students shine, despite no lights

Everyone involved with this year’s Spelling bee would probably agree that it’s one we’ll never forget. (And one we hope never to repeat!) Of all the things I worried could possibly go wrong that day, being without power wasn’t even on my radar.

At first when I heard “no electricity,” I thought, “Well, we have plenty of time. It’ll come back on soon.” Boy, was I ever wrong! But if nothing else, it gave us an opportunity to prove our mettle. It was a great example of everyone’s flexibility to go with the flow and our ability to improvise in the spirit of “The Show MUST Go On.”

And go on it did. Instead of a microphone, we used a bullhorn. Instead of an LCD projector, we had **Fred Borchers**, who wrote each word on the whiteboard. But the most amusing improvisation of the day had to be this: instead of using an electronic buzzer to signal the students to stop writing, one of our older gentleman judges used a stopwatch. And every time he called out gruffly from the stage, “Time’s UP! Pencils DOWN!” I couldn’t help but chuckle to myself.

At the end of the day, we all breathed a big, collective sigh of relief. But I hope everyone shares my feeling of satisfaction for a job well done. Despite unusual and challenging circumstances, we still managed to pull it off. It doesn’t get much better than that.

—Rose Koller/IMS

Q & A on popular event

A: It’s the most thrilling, popular, stimulating event put on by IMS, and it’s FUN.

Q: What is the **Battle of the Books**?

Staff members should **COME ON DOWN** and be prepared for the sound of 200-plus public school children cheering and competing at the 11th annual countywide Battle of the Books from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on April 19 in the auditorium at Cathedral Oaks Road. The event spotlights the most X-treme readers from grades 4-6, who will compete by answering comprehension questions composed from a list of 30 books chosen for their literary value.

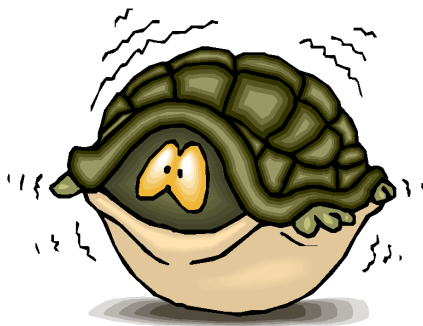
It’s exciting, students love it, and it has the added bonus of encouraging kids to read good books. Every year the students vote for their favorite title, which is then included in the following year’s book list.

IMS also features a guest author whose book is included in the competition. This year local author Mary Hershey will be part of the festivities, autographing books and acting as judge for the final Battle.

Winners win — what else? — books, of course! Awards are presented for sportsmanship, best shield, and 2nd place winning team. The winning team receives the grand prize of a custom-made t-shirt commemorating the event.

—Rose Koller/IMS

Not afraid of the dark...



Those of us arriving at the Cathedral Oaks office in Santa Barbara on Feb. 23 were surprised to find that we were in the dark. Literally. High winds the night before damaged power lines and power was out to our site the entire day as well as the first part of Friday.

Can you spell “inconvenience?” Would 150 children have to be turned away from the County Spelling Bee in the auditorium? Would employees have their pay delayed because Thursday was the day for running

payroll? Would a teacher recognition dinner on Thursday night be set back because of all the preparation that was sitting in computer files wasn’t suddenly available?

Maybe at some other place—but not at SBCEO. IMS staff banded together and announced words by bullhorn, wrote correct spellings on a whiteboard, and crowned two new winners at this year’s County Bee. A dedicated payroll staff worked by sunlight and flashlight over longer hours, doing whatever it took to crank out payroll. Teacher Programs, after working with IT Services and assorted generators and surge protectors, got RSVP lists, invitation lists, and seating charts printed up for the night’s event. And brilliant IT Services kept the spark alive so when power did return, there was a seamless return of all network functions.

The “dark days” were turned to overwhelming success stories. A real tribute to the can-do attitude of SBCEO employees. We are not afraid of the dark. Great job!

Note: no photos available due to insufficient lighting.

—Tom Heiduk/HR and Fred Borchers/IMS



A HUGE thank-you to **Matt Evans** (Reprographics) who volunteered to help us at this year's spelling bee. He came up with much-needed suggestions for dealing with our lack of electricity by lending us a flashlight and borrowing Curriculum's bullhorn, both of which proved invaluable. On top of that, we were more short-handed than usual that day, and he was a big help handing out name tags and certificates to the students.

Thanks also to **Kris Mainland White** (Computers for Families), who was kind enough to pinch hit for **Steve Keithley** who was unavailable that day. Not only was she doing something for the very first time, but she did it without electricity. Talk about baptism by fire.

Special thanks also go to **Walter LaRiba** (also CFF), **Shelley (Crawford) Takeuchi** (Educational Technology) and **Lupie Vickery** (Curriculum and Instruction) who assisted with sign-ins, crowd control, and everything in between. And thank you to everyone else who stopped in to offer support.

We are fortunate to have the kind of co-workers who are willing

to jump in and lend a hand when needed. Thank you one and all for saving our event from disaster and turning it into a triumph instead.

—Rose Koller/IMS

*Up on the rooftop
keys were thrown.
Where they came from
is unknown.*

I sat at my desk, looking out the window at some bright shining object up on the rooftop. Pretty soon, a giant fireman-looking ladder goes up from the courtyard and frightfully extends all the way to the roof. Then I see a figure slowly and carefully moving up the ladder. He is after that bright shining object. When he gets to the top he finds the object a little too far away to reach, so he takes a long tool and reaches way over to snag it. I was holding my breath.

Thanks to **Dwight Staggs** and **Dennis Lopez** for retrieving somebody's keys. So as not to embarrass anyone, I will leave it a mystery how those keys got on the rooftop. —Carole Cole/SBAS



Congratulations Jenelle

Jenelle Williams (SBAS) completed her Chief Business Officials (CBO) Mentor Training Program. She is now a qualified California school district CBO. To qualify for the program, participants must be nominated and then approved by a selection committee. The objective is to provide an innovative training experience to candidates with high potential.

Jenelle shared a ride with **Denice Cora** (formerly SBAS), also nominated for the program. They drove to Sacramento and back 10 times. It was a one-year program with 10 two-day sessions on Friday and Saturday. Participants had to complete monthly work-study assignments reflecting strategic and technical competencies in the functional areas of school business, and receive positive evaluations from their assigned mentor and program coordinator. It was intense and exhausting, but both qualified for certification.

This project is a partnership of the California Association of School Business Officials; School Services of California; the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association sub-committee: Business and Administration Steering Committee; and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team, which is underwriting the project, which is free to participants.

—Carole Cole/SBAS

Next Month:

Be sure to look for **Classified Employees of the Year**, who will be officially announced at the April county board meeting.

I'm so proud...



Diane Smith, wife of Steve Smith, Reprographics, designed the above winning mural in a contest hosted by Town Center Gallery in Santa Maria. The theme for the murals was Harvest of the Valley. In winning the contest, Diane received a monetary award and the honor of painting the 20-foot mural on panels and boards that will be mounted on the side of Big Five Sporting Goods Store in downtown Santa Maria. (The mural looks even more awesome in color.)

My son Isaac has finished his first high school basketball season. He had a great season and was named the freshman team's "Most Inspirational Player." His sister Rebecca is busy with community service projects at the Goleta Boys and Girls Club and is doing well in her 8th grade year. I'm one proud Pop.

—Michael Pardo/Fiscal Services



Book Reviews:

Brandwashed: Tricks Companies Use To Manipulate Our Minds And Persuade Us To Buy

by Martin Lindstrom

In Martin Lindstrom's new book, *Brandwashed: Tricks Companies Use To Manipulate Our Minds And Persuade Us To Buy*, he tells us about the lengths brands will go to in order to get us to purchase their products. I recommend it to anyone who has a smartphone, is on Facebook, uses a credit card, uses store loyalty cards, has children, or buys things.

Marketers are reaching younger and younger children. Studies show babies recognize brands by 18 months, and can hear and remember ad jingles from the womb. Free iPhone applications and online games are turning our children into shopaholics. Certain brands of lip balm purposely make their products chemically addictive. Grocery brands create an illusion of freshness for products on the shelves for months. Muzak gets programmed differently throughout the day to subconsciously persuade us to buy based on our mood.

This book is loaded with case studies and examples on how marketers go about manipulating consumers by playing to many emotional triggers. I think this book has some interesting facts and insights about marketing and how companies are so manipulative.

—Carole Cole/SBAS

Support Services ready to help

May the support services group help you? Our team is ready to help, making copies, packets, labeling, stuffing envelopes, trifold, stapling, sharpening pencils, or confidential shredding, and the best part... It's FREE!

Please contact **Judy Jimenez**, ext. 5284. Brian, Mark, and Tais are waiting for your work orders. Our hours are Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. We are looking forward to helping you!

Students win awards

Many of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing students from the SBCEO program entered prize-winning artwork and literature pieces into the Creative Arts Gallery at the California Educators of the Deaf/Hard or Hearing Annual Conference that was held in Asilomar in March.

Winners were:

Grades Pre-2nd, Visual Arts:
1st place, Benjamin Yang
2nd place, Verna Pivovaroff

Grades Pre-2nd, Literature:
1st place, Lizbeth Bravo

Grades 3rd-6th, Visual Arts:
1st place, Adriana Asuncion

Grades 7th-12th, Literature:
1st place, Antonia Nunez-Rodriguez
2nd place, Kristin Cutsinger
3rd place, Jesus Asuncion

—Vera Alarcon/SESS-N

Welcome aboard

Child Development

Brenda Corona

Food Service Worker, Santa Maria Cal-SAFE Guadalupe March, Child Care Assistant, Early Steps to Learning Preschool

Special Education

Brandi Woller

Vocational Assistant, Special Education, Santa Maria Services South



Matt Evans

Reprographics/Communications
Administrative Assistant, Cathedral Oaks

What is your favorite ...

Community interest/soapbox topic:

Keeping the Gaviota coast (Naples and north) from being developed into a bunch of McMansions and timeshares.

Author/music/TV: **Authors:** Neil Gaimen, Dostoyevsky, C. S. Lewis, Christopher Moore. **Music:** Protest the hero, A Wilhelm Scream, Beethoven, Esperanza Spalding, Faraquet, J. S. Bach, Nada Surf, Herbert Howells, Eric Whitacre, Between the Buried and Me, Edwin Fissinger, just to name a few. **TV shows:** 30 Rock, Doctor Who, Arrested Development, The Daily Show, Home Movies, The Simpsons, Monty Python, Kids in the Hall. **Radio:** This American Life, Radiolab, Says You, Wait Wait don't tell me, To The Best of our Knowledge, Planet Money.

Leisure time activities/hobbies: Surfing, hiking, playing family with my daughter—where she's the mom and I'm the brother to her baby doll and she has to put us to bed before going to "do some work." It's a really great way to see our parenting when she reflects it back to us.

Hidden talents: I sing in a group called the Quire of Voyces and in a local church choir and I play the guitar (but not in choir). I also make a mean pasta sauce.

Hometown: Goleta

Where did you go to school: Goleta Open Alternative Class (now known as Goleta Family School), Goleta Valley Junior High, Dos Pueblos High, and Santa Barbara City College.

Any kids or pets: I have a daughter named Aria who is 3 and a half, and we have three fish of indeterminate ages.

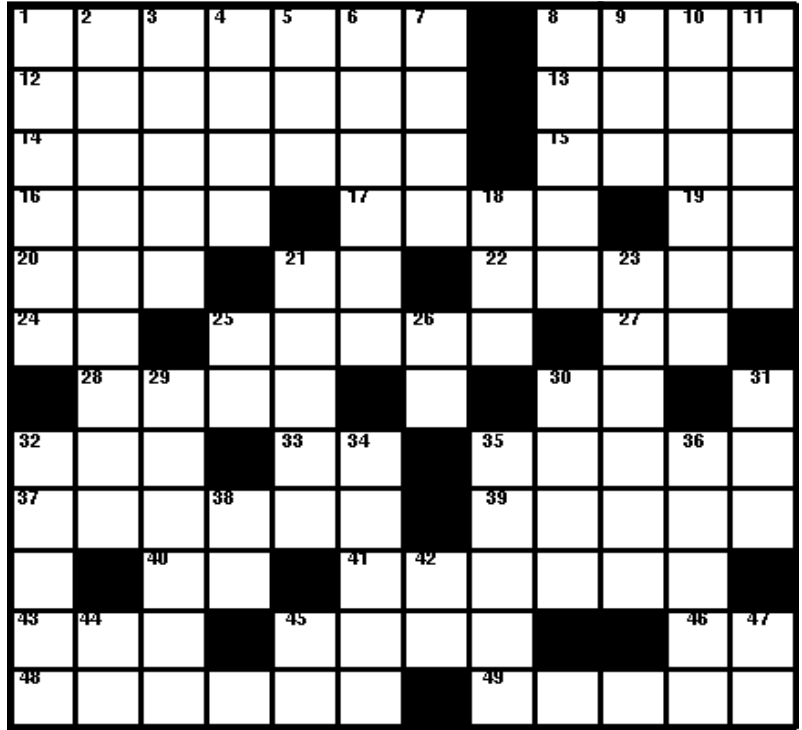
Any family bragging rights: Um, I've got a lot of siblings and a really cute nephew.

When did you start at the SBCEO:
July 2009.

ACROSS

- 1 Does Santa Maria-Bonita District Asst. Supt. of HR take no cream in her coffee?
- 8 On, or to the leeward side
- 12 Draperies, structures on a theatrical stage
- 13 Tidy
- 14 Columbus Day month
- 15 Modern subculture type
- 16 Foot digits
- 17 Aim; intent
- 19 "Show Me" state postal code
- 20 Year-round school acronym
- 21 Boxing result
- 22 Toy building bricks
- 24 ROP Acct. tech in Santa Maria office; init.
- 25 Ms. Oakley or Lennox
- 27 Garden Pre-Sch. Instructional Asst.; init.
- 28 ____ facto
- 30 Food Network, for short
- 32 ____ vs. Wade
- 35 Trusts of land in medieval times
- 37 Oak Valley sch. secretary Aracelia probably doesn't need to know what a cosine is
- 39 Chipmunk star
- 40 Buellton Union Sch. District Admin. Asst.: init.
- 41 Tim in IT Services is not a big rum fan, but has been known to like some brews
- 43 First name in cotton gin fame
- 45 Spanish house
- 46 School Manager at Adelante Charter Sch.; init.
- 48 Aliso School Principal Holly's office is near the beach, but still probably not marine
- 49 A lot of SBAS personnel think Ms. Wells is this

sbceo
Crossword "Anagrams"



Submitted by Fred Borchers

Down

- 1 It won't cost ya to hunt down Melany and Barney in SESS-N locations
- 2 Squeezebox
- 3 Allots
- 4 Baseball's Slaughter
- 5 Basketball stat
- 6 California's northern borderer
- 7 Bronx-born singer songwriter Laura
- 8 Adams school secretary Angel does great work at any ____
- 9 Longtime retired SBCEO Graphic Artist ____ Lathouwers
- 10 No team has it better than Lompoc Union School District Board Member Kay's
- 11 Distinguishing character or guiding beliefs of someone or institution
- 18 Pale or ginger beverage
- 21 Recognizes; understands
- 23 1949 Conventions site
- 25 Bruce School Principal; init.
- 26 Cool type of crowd

- 29 Polysaccharide found in berries and fruit
- 30 Movie
- 31 24-hr. TV shopping network acronym
- 32 Sew again the edge of pants or dress
- 34 "So close, but yet _____ away."
- 35 As _____ I can tell, it's an anagram of Fraas, as in Jeni
- 36 Championship game or match
- 38 "All ____ fair in love."
- 42 Plural object of "we"
- 44 SB County Educ. Association Co-President; init.
- 45 Carpinteria Unified Sch. Dist. Asst. Supt. of Business Services; init.
- 47 Internal Services Payroll and Benefits Assistant; init.

..... Answers to crossword on page 8.

Wildlife Sightings: *The Egret* by Kris Mainland White/CFF

Perhaps you've been lucky enough to see a large white long-legged bird lingering about the area lately. The egret is actually a type of heron, a bit smaller than the stately great blue heron. I got a good look recently, watching this "shore bird" hunt amidst gopher holes here at the Cathedral Oaks site. Its dark feet indicated it was not its yellow-footed cousin, the snowy egret, and its pure white plumage lacked the buff colored highlights of the cattle egret. These carnivorous feathered friends stalk gophers as well as fish.

Things are not peaceful in the nest for a smaller sibling, who is often stabbed to death by its older brother or sister. But they sure are cute looking snowballs of a chick, as can be seen on the National Geographic site: <http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/birds/great-egret/?source=A-to-Z>. This site is also useful in identifying the song of the bird, which in the case of the great egret sounds like either a rusty or snoring frog.

The great egret has rebounded from near extinction at the hand of feather hunters, due to intervention and protection. The population was down to five percent but is now found all over its former range, wintering from roughly mid-latitudes of the U.S. south into Central and South America. You'll even see it flying atop the Audubon Society logo.

Health & Safety tips:

by Donna Scott/NoCo

Dietary fiber

From SIPE online training site, www.sipeonlinetraining.com.

Fill up on fiber. Dietary fiber is a natural component of plant-based foods, consisting of the structural components in plants that are not digested in the human stomach and small intestine. An adequate intake of fiber is crucial in reducing the risk of chronic disease while promoting optimal health. Fiber helps prevent: heart disease (by lowering cholesterol), cancer, diabetes (by controlling blood sugar levels), digestive problems, and weight gain (by making you feel full faster).

There are two primary types of fiber: soluble and insoluble. Insoluble fiber helps prevent and treat constipation, and also helps reduce the risk of colon cancer by moving potential cancer-causing agents more quickly through the digestive tract and diluting their concentration. Insoluble fiber is found primarily in whole-wheat products, especially wheat bran and other whole grains. Soluble fiber helps reduce the risk of heart disease by lowering total blood cholesterol and LDL (bad) cholesterol, and also reduces the risk of type 2 diabetes by normalizing blood glucose and insulin levels. Soluble fiber is found mainly in legumes, barley, brown rice, oats and oat bran, fruits (especially apples, plums, citrus, strawberries, and blueberries), and vegetables such as carrots, split peas, and corn.

You can get all the fiber you need from foods, but only plant-based foods provide fiber. Animal-based foods do not. Not all of us are eating enough fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes to get an adequate amount of dietary fiber. In fact, most of us are only getting less than half of what we need for optimal health.

Answer to Puzzle (p. 7)

C	A	M	E	R	O	N		A	L	E	E
S	C	E	N	E	R	Y		N	E	A	T
O	C	T	O	B	E	R		G	O	T	H
T	O	E	S		G	O	A	L		M	O
Y	R	S		K	O		L	E	G	O	S
A	D		A	N	N	I	E		E	N	
	I	P	S	O		N		F	N		H
R	O	E		W	S		F	I	E	F	S
E	N	C	I	S	O		A	L	V	I	N
H		T	S		F	U	R	M	A	N	
E	L	I		C	A	S	A			A	T
M	I	N	E	A	R		S	W	E	L	L

Question of the Month for April...

“

What's a good recipe that has five ingredients or less?

”

Be ahead of the game for May.

Email your answer to traceyb@sbceo.org by Apr. 15.



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