

FEBRUARY 2011

ROBIOUS CORRIDOR

The French Subjunctive

Rising Interest Rates

A Pinch Of Personal
Enterprise

Transcripts, GPA, Service

And The Winner Is?

ROBIOUS CORRIDOR

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1
FEBRUARY, 2011

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Congratulations To Heather Margetak!

Winner Of The "Art In School Is Really Cool!" Cover Contest

Mrs. Courtney Day, art teacher at Bettie Weaver Elementary brought us a great idea:

"Let's have an art contest among my 5th grade students. I'll challenge each child to create a unique piece of art work inspired by Grace Lin's book, *Robert's Snowflakes* and let's put the winner's art work on the cover of the February 2011 issue of Robious Corridor Magazine."

Yes, Mrs. Day, we're in...and I bet we can find a local artist to sponsor this contest!

In her book, Grace Lin collected more than 200 well-known children's book illustrators from around the world who each transformed a five-inch wooden snowflake into an original piece of art work resulting in an art auction and awareness campaign to help raise more than \$100,000 for the Dana-Faber Cancer Institute.

“*Sometimes all it takes is a spark to get a firing going.*” Mrs. Day’s encouragement and support for her art students is that spark.”

With inspiration from the *Robert's Snowflakes* story, Mrs. Day took to giving each contestant a white cut-out of a 5" x 5" snowflake and challenging them to decorate it in virtually any design or style they wanted. After careful consideration, Mrs. Day and her team met and declared the winner and several runner-ups.

"Sometimes all it takes is a spark to get a firing going." Mrs. Day's encouragement and support for her art students is that spark.

Who can relate to that? Local artist and dentist, W. Baxter Perkinson, Jr., didn't discover his love for art until 1979 when his wife talked him into taking a watercolor class. Dr. Perkinson is now an avid and well known watercolorist in our community and enjoys giving his paintings to various philanthropies.

He has also been able to decorate all nine of his dental offices with his own creations so patients can enjoy his beautiful paintings.

We'd like to thank Dr. Baxter Perkinson for sponsoring the "Art in School is Really Cool!" cover contest. Dr. Perkinson has generously donated one of his paintings to the contest winner, Heather Margetak, and he will be displaying the art work of the winner and runner ups in his dental office located at 14253 Midlothian Turnpike during the month of February 2011.



Heather Margetak's winning snowflake design

Congratulations to all of the Runner Ups:

Maggie Harper, Kara Rogien, Matthew Callihan, Paul Covert, Madison Johnson, Alana Mills, Ava Moslow, Micayla Sadler, Tanya Das, Caitlin O'Neill, Margaret Weinhold, Davis Fairfield, Kay Shepherd, Thomas Jordan, and Joey Dorsch.

As you browse through this issue, please enjoy other Weaver students' snowflakes drifting through-out this issue. "Art in School is Really Cool!" ■

Surviving the Road to College:

One Seventeen-Year-Old Girl's Perspective On Everything From The First Visit To The Final Letter Of Intent

by Caitlin Phelan



I have always dreamed about going away to college. Hearing about the friends, activities, football games, sororities, and parties just made me that much more excited as I sailed through my middle school years and onto high school.

Now though, being halfway through my junior year in high school, the idea of actually going away to college is really starting to hit me.

Sure, I fantasized about going to Stanford University when I was twelve, but what I didn't realize as a young sixth-grader was all the important information I have to think about now. The transcript, standardized tests, my grade point average (GPA); even my hobbies,

whether it be cooking or dancing, are important on a college application nowadays!

Today, I am beginning part one of a yearlong series on the college search process. This first article is going to be a general overview of college, and a little bit about what I will be covering in the months to come.

I am not a typical high school junior. In my free time, I enjoy avidly looking at college websites, pouring over the brochures I've received, and visiting sites such as *The Princeton Review* and *The College Board*. I will expand and talk more about these easy to use, free, and very helpful tools down the road.

Here are the main topics of what I will be covering in those future issues. The topics are aimed to help all of you applicants, parents of applications, and future parents and applicants through the college process, as I experience it right now too.

The College Process: What You Need to Know Now

Everything Academic: Applying to college is first and foremost about your grades, transcript, the classes you've taken, and your GPA. Depending on these grades, a school's academic caliber can give you an immediate indication as to whether you would be a good fit for that college or not.

Standardized Tests: You have 3 choices: To take the SAT, to take the ACT, or to take both. The SAT and ACT are equally challenging and will both get you into college. However, they are graded differently and have different components.

School and Non-School Activities:

Colleges don't just want to see a stellar academic record these days. They are also intrigued by what you do outside of the classroom, and even outside of the school community. Do you play volleyball? For how many years have you played? Have you ever been a captain? Do you play the flute? Are you part of the marching band? Have you ever gotten a solo? Are you a part of your youth group at church? Do you have a job or internship? Colleges want to know all about you and everything you love to do.

Community Service: Many colleges love for their school to help the greater community. So, they want to see you already helping your local community!

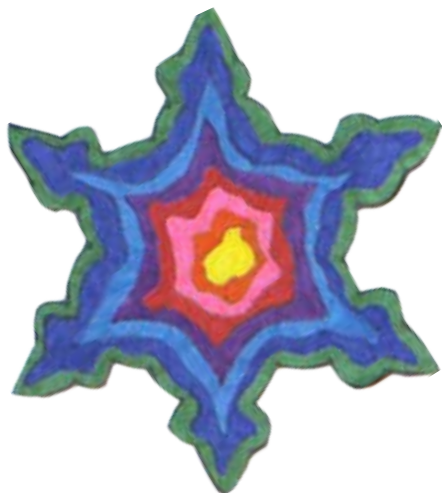
The Summer: Summer is supposed to be a time for relaxing, kicking back by the pool, and doing nothing academic whatsoever, right? Wrong! Colleges want to see you up on

“*The topics are aimed to help all of you applicants, parents of applications, and future parents and applicants through the college process, as I experience it right now too.*”

Continued on next page ➡



By: Madison Johnson



By: Alana Mills



By: Paul Covert

your feet whether you're working a job, taking classes at a local college, studying in Italy, or volunteering in Africa. Summers are no longer for wasting away, my friends!

Visiting Campus: Visiting campus is one of the most crucial actions you can make when trying to discover what college suits you and your personality best. Do the people seem friendly? Do the academics sound challenging and interesting? Does the campus feel like a place you would like to be?

Meetings, Interviews, and all that stuff in between: Is a representative from a college coming in for a lunch meeting at school? Are you thinking about going to visit that college? Do you even just sort of like the school? Go to these meetings! By attending, this will put you in the college's database so they know you're interested and can have you on file. This is your opportunity, without having to go all the way to the college for a visit, to find out general information about the school, sign up for their mailing list, and talk with the representative personally.

Financial Aid: Financial aid is the topic parents know they need to read. Can your family afford this school? What types of packages are available? Are you a student who excels in the classroom or on the athletic field? You may be up for a potential scholarship. The subject of financial aid involves discussing what the definition of financial aid is, how to apply for it, and what types of packages are available.

Applying: This is where everything above comes together. You've visited the school at least once. You've

talked with representatives and sat in informational meetings. You've printed out the financial aid papers. You've had a productive summer. You've worked really hard at your GPA. Applying is when you're rolling the giant package called yourself into action and giving it, in the form of an application, to the colleges you wish to apply to.

Signing that Letter of Intent: You've gotten your "Congratulations on your acceptance to..." letter in the mail, jumped for joy, put your acceptance as your Facebook status, and if you're like me, have definitely cried tears of happiness and relief. Now, which school should you pick? Is there anything you can do to make the decision easier if you can't decide? In the end, you will be able to decide, and there are plenty of options out there that can help you make that decision.

Continue following me on my "Road to College" in April, as I break down and discuss the details of campus visits! ■



By: Tanya Das



Rich Napier

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Build Your Dream Home Now

Craftsmanship, quality and integrity distinguish Napier Signature Homes, an award-winning custom builder and remodeler

Building a dream home or tackling a major renovation can seem overwhelming. Since starting Napier Signature Homes in 1989, founder Rich Napier has worked one-on-one with clients to ensure a smooth and stress-free experience.

Q: Tell us about your company.

My father, Oscar, started Napier Realtors ERA in 1958. I joined him in 1974 and later served as the firm's president. Today, I run a custom home design and build company that also does remodeling. Over the years, we've built a few hundred homes each with their own uniqueness, including the 2006 Richmond Symphony Designer House in Founders Bridge and other award winners.

Q: How do you work with clients?

I'm personally involved with every project from the first meeting to the final punch list. We stand behind our work and treat our clients like we would like to be treated. We help clients blend value, design and quality. Plus, every client has my cell number.

Q: Why is now a great time to buy a home?

In an environment where mortgage rates are increasing, we have some incredibly low financing available on

our existing lots: 3.99 percent fixed for 30 years. Certain terms and conditions apply, but this is a significant value that can save thousands.

In addition, there are values on material and labor in some areas that can make a dream home even more economical.

Q: What sets Napier Signature Homes apart?

Craftsmanship and quality ... that's what our clients tell us. Our work stands out with creative designs and attention to detail that you don't see in production homes. I like for people to see our work for themselves.

Q: What about renovations?

Lately, we've been handling renovation projects for some of our past and new clients for kitchen and bath remodels, screen porches, garages and attic expansions. It's all about designing and building a custom space that you'll truly love.



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Notes On The Run

“Birth Of A Learning Curve”

by Monica Cassier

In December, I ended a job I'd had for 7 years. I'd been on the job so long I could do it with my eyes closed, on auto pilot, hands free. I left to 'pursue greener pastures', to 'expand my knowledge base'....in honesty I left to 'pursue more dough' and to 'expand my bank account'. I'm as pragmatic as the next person and darn if those kids of mine don't expect an education beyond high school.

Call me a sucker.

Leaving the old gig wasn't an easy decision: I liked the company and people a lot. Then we were acquired by a giant logo so big it is only eclipsed by Coca-Cola. It wasn't a bad thing at all; it just didn't strike me as my thing. I like the 'small pond' ideal: it keeps me motivated, accountable. My last few days at my former employer were frenzied; I respected the opportunity for having worked for them enough to leave them with my whole effort. At the end of my last week, as I was catching my breath, I realized the finality of my situation. My first thought was this: Here endeth the lesson. I was closing a chapter on a book with the smug satisfaction that I'd move seamlessly on to the next chapter.

I was wrong. Very, very WRONG.

I started my new job in January. And within a few hours I was reminded of a couple things: Labor pains

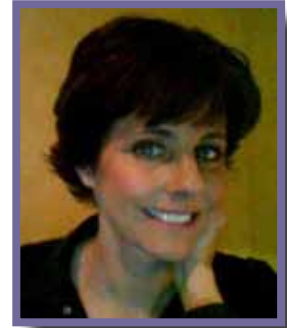
and the subjunctive tense in French. OK, stay with me here, this may take some explaining.

I started in a similar job in software but in a completely new 'space'. In software that means more the purpose of the application and less about the moon and stars. Learning

“It suddenly occurred to me that learning is very similar to giving birth: you work hard, sweat, breathe heavily, fret, and wish to the heavens for it to be over.”

a new space means not only what it does, but how it is applied across different business types. Which leads me to labor pains.

It suddenly occurred to me that learning is very similar to giving birth: you work hard, sweat, breathe heavily, fret, and wish to the heavens for it to be over. Then, when the process is done and you're looking at the product of your work, you forget the pain. You feel joy and self-satisfaction. I'm convinced if anyone remembered how hard the learning curve is, they'd never switch jobs. I'm also wholly convinced that 'lifers' – those who stay with a company their entire careers –



are not unmotivated or lacking in adventure, but remember how brutal it is to 'ramp up'.

On to the French subjunctive tense. Learning this new software space and conquering all the unknowns transported me back to my days of learning a new language. You can learn the alphabet, get the hang of conjugating verbs, and learn some idiomatic expressions. During the process, you can giggle that a term of endearment is “my little cabbage”. The English equivalent is probably something along the lines of “sweet pea”. Produce, apparently, is the universal language. In English, we have pragmatic tenses. You know when to use them. But we have no subjunctive tense. It's based on 'maybe', on feeling. This linguistic mystery is all too apparent in French. I personally think if the French had employed it during WWI instead of the Maginot Line, WWII could have been completely avoided. To me, it's a complete mystery.

I remember my days toiling to understand this tense that French toddlers could pick up with such ease and wishing I had some Gallic Rosetta Stone. And I look at my children now struggling over algebra or some other concept with new eyes: I've forgotten the frustration. For years they've expressed theirs

Continued on page 15:
Column “Notes on the Run” ➡

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Interest Rates Rise Slightly Have Home Prices Bottomed Out?

by Danny Murphy

Robious Corridor Magazine

"Quantitative Easing 2 pushed rates up as expected. Now what?"

Danny Murphy

"Despite the rise in interest rates in early November, just after the implementation of the Federal Reserve's second round of quantitative easing (QE2), mortgage rates still remain low by historic standards. However, as the economy improves mortgage rates will gradually rise. Freddie Mac Chief Economist, Frank Nothaft, predicts mortgage rates to stay in the range of 4.75% to 5.00% in the early part of 2011 before inching higher during the year. Even if mortgage rates gradually rise to 5.50%, it would be the third best year on record, just behind 2009 and 2010. So, 2011 looks to be another exceptional year for low mortgage rates."

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"How will general home sales look this year?"

Danny Murphy

"On January 26th, the Federal Reserve kept their key interest rate unchanged at 0.0%-0.25%, stating that the housing sector continues to be depressed. Currently, leading indicators suggests that home sales may be bottoming out and will pickup in the coming months. Measures of home prices, on the other hand, have been mixed at best. But, with high levels of home inventories from short sales and foreclosures, as well as the regular

seasonal patterns, the strain on home prices remains in 2011."

Robious Corridor Magazine

"What's the local housing market going to look like for 2011?"

Danny Murphy

"Central Virginia Multiple Listing Service is reporting that area 64 continues to experience downward pressure on home prices. Prices dipped 11.76% in 2010 from 2009. In December 2009 the median home price in the Robious Corridor was \$401,056 – 12 months later, median home price was \$353,902.

There were 397 closed sales in our area in 2010 compared with 451 closed sales in 2009. High amounts of inventories will continue to weigh down home prices for 2011. But as the local job market continues to improve, home prices should slowly begin to firm up toward the end of this year."

Robious Corridor Magazine

"Has the Dodd-Frank bill helped or hurt the lending process?"

Danny Murphy

"The government wants to keep money cheap and flowing, so the Dodd-Frank bill was designed to protect the consumer. However, instituting more guidelines and rules actually have resulted in making the process more expensive for lenders who then pass on the increased costs to consumers."



Robious Corridor Magazine

"What else should homebuyers consider?"

Danny Murphy

"Many potential homebuyers have been waiting to purchase a home at affordable rates and prices, but waiting much longer could prove to be costly as we will likely see home prices and mortgage rates move higher in the year ahead. The days of financing a home with no money down are long gone and not coming back. It's truly a different ball game. Homebuyers must plan and prepare before going through the process of buying a home because there still is a lot of uncertainty that needs to be worked out in the coming year. The process for financing a home will be overwhelming for those who haven't prepared. Homebuyers today, more than ever, need to be consulting with a mortgage professional that is knowledgeable and experienced in the mortgage financing process. If you need this help please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at (804) 897-9120 ext. 304" ■



Danny Murphy

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Salisbury

2721 Arrandell Road

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Salisbury

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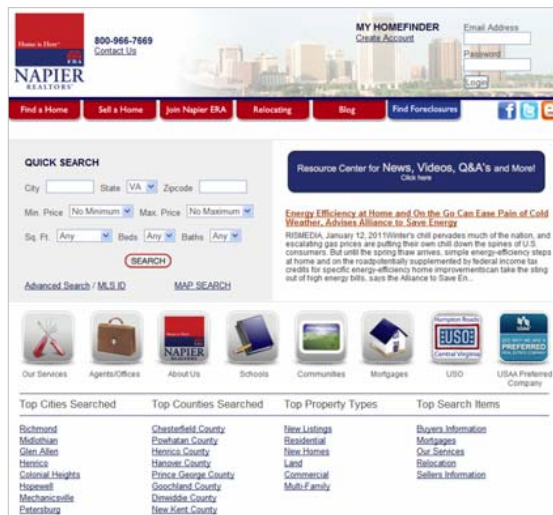
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Mom, Can I Get A Puppy?

If you are a parent, it's likely you've heard this one before, "Mom, can I get a puppy?"

Sure, your son or daughter wants a dog, but you hesitate knowing that in reality it's going to be you who ends up taking care of a, well... another kid.

15 year old David Paxton, a student at Trinity Episcopal School (now a 19 year old student at UVA), made this same request. "I begged my parents for years to get a dog, but they resisted by saying that looking after a puppy would be a big commitment. I didn't believe them at the time. I gave up on the idea, until reading in the newspaper about raising guide dog puppies through the non-profit organization Guiding Eyes for the Blind... this renewed my interest."

Guiding Eyes for the Blind (GEB) is a group of volunteers who have found joy, fulfillment and satisfaction in giving their time and



David with Jeoper when Jeoper is full grown

resources to help others by raising guide dogs. Their headquarters is in Yorktown Heights, NY, but they have regional offices in 12 states including one here in Richmond, that's how David found them.

To David, raising a guide dog seemed like the perfect opportunity to finally convince his Mom to let him get a four legged friend without an open ended, lifetime commitment. But there was a catch.

The responsibility of raising a guide dog began two months prior to the puppy's arrival. As a requirement of the Guiding Eyes process, David had to attend pre-placement classes to develop his 'parenting' skills, and in the first six months there were weekly classes to support David in training the dog properly.

A Guiding Eyes "Puppy Raiser" provides the foundation from which one half of a successful guide dog team is made. Puppy Raisers are essential volunteers who raise a GEB puppy for about 14-16 months, providing the dog with the love, socialization and basic obedience skills it needs to succeed later on in guide dog training. After careful consideration, the Paxton's decided to let David have his friend and become a Puppy Raiser.

"Jeoper" came into the Paxton's home in the summer. He was a ten week old Labrador retriever unable to do much for himself. David would feed him, bathe him, play with him, and take him out for trips. And each



David with Jeoper when Jeoper was a puppy

week, David and Jeoper would go to classes to learn new things.

Jeoper, in many ways, proved to be just a small hairy child. From the beginning, David responded like any new parent might. He would get up in the middle of the night when he heard Jeoper crying. He would feed him and cut his nails. And, predictably, the bond that developed between Jeoper and David was indescribable due to the countless hours they spent together. As part of the ongoing Guiding Eyes training, they went to classes to reinforce Jeoper's good behavior and to expose him to different environments preparing Jeoper for his future career.

"Reading Jeoper's first report card from the evaluations and training from Guiding Eyes gave me the same sense of pride that I think every parent feels," David recalled.

After 18 months, Jeoper left David so he could go get his specific training on being be a Guide Dog from the New York training center.

"From the outset, I knew that Jeoper would leave me. However, when it came time for him to go, it was still very difficult. After 18 months of 'parenthood' and developing a truly special bond, I sent Jeoper off to his Guiding Eyes 'college' in New York knowing the only other time I would see him would be at his graduation. And then he would belong to someone who truly needed him. The one thing that consoles me is I'll always know Jeoper is making a significant difference in someone's daily life and for years to come."

Jeoper, because of a 15 year old boy's love and care, successfully completed his Guide Dog training

in New York and then went on to additional training so he could be placed with a special needs person. Jeoper was eventually matched with an individual from New Mexico and is now living and working in Albuquerque.

For David and his family, the out of pocket costs to raise Jeoper included dog food, leashes, treats, a bed and toys. GEB supplied the crate, frontline and heartworm tablets, and David and Jeoper's weekly training and support. A local Veterinarian donated his time for check-ups, and all vaccinations were paid for by GEB. The cost of Guide Dog training is \$45,000. The individual in New Mexico who received Jeoper paid nothing.

If you would like to learn more about becoming a "Puppy Raiser" like David Paxton, please visit the Guiding Eyes for the Blind local website – www.gebrichmond.com or the national website www.guidingeyes.org ■



By: Thomas Jordan



By: Joey Dorsch



By: Margaret Weinhold



By: Kay Shepherd

Local Principal Talks

Dr. Thomas G. Aycock, Headmaster At Trinity Episcopal School



1. Tell me a little about yourself, for example your career experiences, certificates/endorsements, and describe your leadership style.

I've been Headmaster of Trinity Episcopal School since 1990. Prior to Trinity, I served as the Headmaster of two other independent schools located in North Carolina: Ridgcroft School in Ahoskie and Hobgood Academy in Hobgood. I've had the privilege of serving as a Headmaster for nearly 35 years. Before going into the administrative side of education, I was first a teacher and a coach. In my earlier years, I taught history and physical education, coached football, wrestling, basketball and baseball, all while continuing to work on my masters and doctorate degrees. I received my undergraduate degree from Atlantic Christian College, now known as Barton College, in 1969. I received a Master of Arts in Teaching in 1974, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction in 1982, both from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In the past, I was honored to serve as President of the North Carolina Association of Independent Schools, as well as President of the Virginia Association of Independent Schools. I received the Alumni Achievement

Award from Barton College for outstanding service in the field of education. My leadership style can best be described as fostering an environment of positive relationships through collaboration. I believe in working together with the faculty, administrative staff and students to build a school community that is supportive, welcoming, inclusive and nurturing; an environment where students feel a sense of belonging and understand they are important. I believe once that core environment is established, everything else falls into place. Inspiration is all around us. We just need to look for it.

2. Who has been the most influential person in your professional life, how did that relationship lead you to becoming a school principal?

When I was in graduate school at the University of North Carolina, my advisor, Dr. William Peacock, inspired me in ways that have had a life-long impact. He was a teacher, counselor, mentor and standard-setter. Dr. Peacock created an environment of enthusiastic learning. He had the ability to bring out the very best in people with his positive approach, and his students knew and could sense his commitment to them and to education. At one point in his career, Dr. Peacock had been a school principal. He inspired me in my own career choice and desire to look for the very best in my students. I still think of him today.

3. What role do you think technology should play in the classroom and in the school? How important is the integration of technology into the curriculum?

When it comes to integrating technology into classroom learning, we are still exploring the true potential technology offers for both teaching and learning. The key for educators is to understand technology's purpose, and integrate its use in effective and meaningful ways. Students have grown up with technology all around them. They are accustomed to it and have learned so much more because they have these tools. Because technology is continually changing, educators must be willing to also change and find ways in which the technology can help us to be more effective. That said, I still believe strongly that the single most important factor in the making of a great school is the degree of excellence in the connection between teacher and student.

4. What have you read lately that has influenced the way you lead faculty and change the way you approach education?

Trinity's faculty and staff frequently share books, and I'm usually reading several at a time. One book I've found to be fascinating is an investigation into the effects of exercise on the brain - entitled *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain* by John Ratey, MD. Through aerobic exercise, Ratey convincingly writes that we can beat stress, lift our mood, fight memory loss and sharpen our intellect. I've always been an advocate of a good exercise program, both on campus and in my personal life. This book, however, provides some very convincing research on the relationship between exercise and the brain.

Continued on next page ➡

5. If resources were not an issue, what programs or policies would you like to implement in your school and why is this important to you, the faculty, and the students?

I would offer more professional development opportunities to Trinity's faculty and staff. Continuing professional education is an important part of any career. For educators, professional development helps us stay on the cutting edge of both research and educational practice.

6. What are the greatest challenges to educating students today?

One area today that didn't exist when I was a student is that students now have so many different voices and forms of media available to them. The amount of information is staggering, and students are faced with trying to sort it all out and make some sense of it. And although students are at ease with technology, it is a challenge to manage all that information. That is why it is increasingly important for schools to help their students acquire certain core values – honesty, integrity, teamwork, discipline and empathy, thus providing a stronger foundation for decision making.

7. In your opinion, what makes a great School Principal?

I've always considered it important to emphasize the positives and strengths of those around you. Believing in someone and communicating that belief to them, tends to bring out the best in people. When I look back, the individuals who had the greatest impact on me were those who noticed when I did something right. Great principals and headmasters are those who can appreciate and recognize the greatness in those around them. ■

"Notes on the Run" continued

in a variety of forms but my response has basically taken the same form: buck up, put on your big kid britches, think, and deal with it. And now, I'm in their place. AGAIN. I'm faced with the French Subjunctive in the form of a software space and the clock is ticking. And the labor pains start. I think back to Lamaze classes, that silly concept that regular breathing will help you cope. Until the anesthesiologist gets there. Regular breathing helps nothing but to keep you living. Between that and the birth, we have to just use our minds and hope like heck there isn't a pop quiz.

So here I am, mid-learning curve, in pain and breathing for all I'm worth. And I envy the future because when I get there, I'll forget how hard these current weeks have been. I'll feel the comfort of the learning amnesia. And I'll fix dinner and smugly cluck to my homework-grumbling children to buck up, put on their big kid britches, think, and deal with it. But definitely not in the French subjunctive. ■



By: Maggie Harper



By: Matthew Calliban



By: Kara Rogien

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50 Ways to Feed Your Lover

by Jenna Weaver



jennaweave.blogspot.com

Nothing warms the heart and soul in the midst of winter like a freshly home-made soup. For a tasty departure from the everyday tomato or chicken noodle from a can, why not try this delectable creamy curry carrot soup?

Carrots are a staple around our household. They make a great snack or side dish, raw with dip or plain, sauteed into stir-fry or sliced and cooked. Their vitamin content and essentially zero-fat makes them a welcome addition to the table. Pureeing the carrots in a food processor and cooking them down with milk, curry and other spices brings out the best of their natural flavor and imparts new sensations to your favorite old veggies.

I suggest serving this with crusty french bread. The french bread pictured is some my Father made. I will have to get the recipe from him and share sometime, because its the best!



Creamy Curry Carrot Soup

(makes about 4 servings)

- * about 2 lbs carrots - peeled
- * 3 cups milk
- * 1 cup water
- * 1 tablespoon beef flavored soup base (I chose to use the powdered beef seasoning, but beef broth/ stock**, or beef boullion cubes would also work)
- * 1 shallot - minced
- * about 5 cloves of garlic - minced
- * 4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) of butter
- * 2 teaspoon curry powder
- * 1/2 teaspoon paprika (for garnish)
- * basil for garnish

***If you use beef broth or stock, use less water*

In large (5 quart) pot combine the butter, garlic, and shallot, and cook over medium heat until tender. Meanwhile, puree peeled carrots in food processor until pulpy. (Chopping the peeled carrots into smaller pieces first makes this process easier.) Add water, milk, curry, and beef seasoning to pot - stirring to mix. Stir in pureed carrots. Cook on medium heat for 10-15 minutes - softening the carrots. Set the burner to low and let soup simmer for another 15 minutes - seasoning with salt and pepper to taste. Garnish with paprika and fresh basil leaves.



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Exit Laughing: “My Son Is A Wuss”

by Michele Dixon



Dear Son: While it remains my intent to support your individuality and provide to you an environment that encourages self-assurance, I fear that some aspects of my parenting – in both action and communication – have been less than truthful. It is time, then, to set the record straight and to confess my concern for your future. Recent events, which I cannot ignore, contribute to my growing sense of alarm regarding your perception of the world and the degree of comfort to which you believe you are entitled. As I endeavor to facilitate your full comprehension of the gravity of my concern, I will state my case clearly and directly, using the vernacular wherever decorum permits. Now is the time for your ever-loving mother to be brutally honest with you:

You are a Wuss.

We received an inch and a half of snow on December 16 – and you spent hours the night before asking me if your school would close. The

official announcement arrived before dinner, which you took as license to roam about the house all night, playing video games and tromping up and down the stairs for snacks. Your maneuvers kept your stepdad and me, who both had to report to work in the morning, in a perpetual state of wakefulness. And for what? For an inch and a half of snow...that also closed school on the 17th. Kid, you're not living in the real world.

The real world, a la when I was in high school, meant that nothing short of a blizzard would close the schools. You woke up to six inches of snow on the ground and, after listening to a long list of school names on the *radio*, you were lucky to get a one-hour delay. Then you trudged to the bus stop – a real bus stop, not the kind that's at the end of your driveway – and stood there. Your mother didn't drive you a tenth of a mile and you didn't sit in her car, warm and dry. You bundled up in a hat and gloves and you stood there and waited. If you'd gone to my school, you stood there in plaid polyester skirt and ugly blue shoes because the nuns would give you a demerit if you showed up in blue jeans and boots. The good news was that you didn't have to worry if your ears froze – you could hear the bus coming from a mile away because the school district's nod to safety was to slap some chains on the bus tires and let 'er rip. Once you got on the bus, the nonstop droning noise from the chains made it impossible to have a conversation with your friends. The noise literally ruined your brain for the rest of the day...

think of it as riding inside a huge yellow metal vuvuzela.

Before you remind me that I grew up in Pennsylvania, where an inch and a half of snow isn't even acknowledged, let me point out that my school never closed, not for any amount of snow. The nuns who taught me lived right up the hallway from the classrooms; they never had to set a foot outside and they expected you to show up come hell or high water. The only way I got a snow day was if the public school district who owned the bus I rode on closed – and I was still responsible for the next day's homework because my school stayed open. How'd you like THEM apples?

Speaking of homework: what's up with your curriculum? Why do you get to be exempt from exams for having a B? Where I come from, if you were in the class, you took the exam no matter how well you were doing for the semester. We didn't have a reduced schedule, either. We had one or two days of classes and exams combined, all day long. We also didn't have the atrocity known as “No-Fear Shakespeare”, we read and were expected to understand Shakespeare the way he wrote it. There's definitely something wuss-like in your need to see, “Yo, Romeo! Where you at?” to

“Now is the time
for your ever-
loving mother to
be brutally honest
with you:
You are a Wuss.”

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By: Caitlin O'Neil



By: Davis Fairfield



By: Ava Moslow

understand classical literature. Here's some literature that I expect you to understand: those sticky-notes that I put on the walls above the thermostats? They say, "Do Not Touch." If you're cold, put on a sweatshirt or, better yet, put some pants on; shorts are for summer months. Stop jacking up the temperature in our house to sub-Saharan levels. Dominion Virginia Power is adding me to their "Super Best Customer" list and Columbia Gas is planning a party in my honor – because you can't wear a normal, seasonal amount of clothes. Try some layers, you creampuff.

If you can't understand the cause-and-effect relationship between your desire to sweat and my need to stick to a budget, I can sing it to you. You probably won't get the connection, though, unless it appears on YouTube or is available to download from iTunes. Technology has increased your wuss-quotient, too. Try this on for size: save your dollar-a-week allowance until you can afford to buy the \$7.99 album. Tape a penny to the tone arm of your stereo because the album skips from over-playing or has scratches from your trying to land it on the beginning of a track. And don't complain that the football game you want to watch is not televised when you can stream it live on your computer. How would you like to live in a world that has only three TV channels and a UHF channel that you only got when the wind blew in the right direction?

You've never experienced the terror of the nightly test pattern –

"I love you too much to allow you to wallow in your wimpiness any longer. While I can't stop the forward march of progress, I can make sure you feel the pinch of personal enterprise."

the playing of the national anthem followed by the complete loss of all TV signals. You are weak, kid. I apologize for the part I played in making you so wimpy. Like every generation before me, I want you to have a better life, a life rich with the experiences and opportunities that I did not have. I'm afraid that, by trying to make your life better, I made it too easy. It's not too late to change, though. I love you too much to allow you to wallow in your wimpiness any longer. While I can't stop the forward march of progress, I can make sure you feel the pinch of personal enterprise. Go shovel the driveway. ■



By: Micayla Sadler



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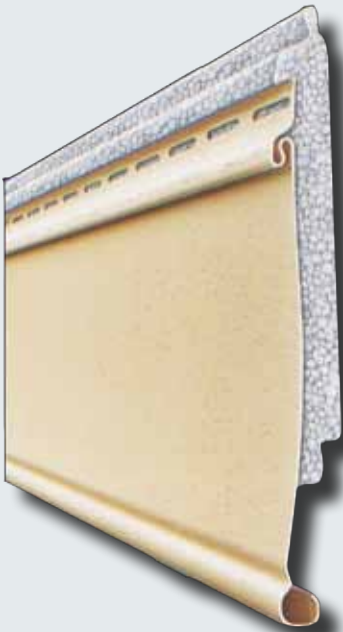


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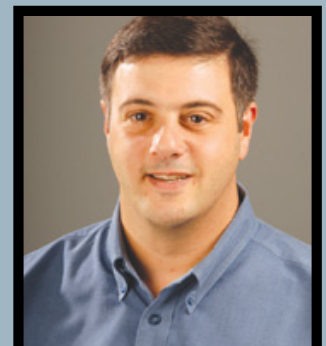
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