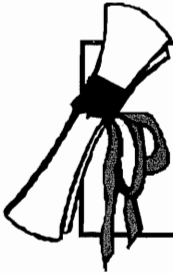




EAGLE EYES

Volume 8, Number 2

Summer 2000



MELANIE DOWERS IS 54TH GRADUATE

Melanie Dowers from Boulder, Colorado, graduated August 2000 as Eagle Rock's fifty-fourth graduate. She entered Eagle Rock in ER 14, January 1998.

ROMEO AND JULIET IN HAWAII PRESENTED ON OUTDOOR STAGE

by Lois Easton, Director of Professional Development

Shakespeare. . . June. . . Hawaii. . . the Bobcat Gulch Fire. . . an outdoor amphitheater under the stars in the Rockies. . . a musical. . . What do all these ingredients have in common? They went into the Eagle Rock summer "extravaganza" production of Romeo and Juliet June 14, 15, 16, and 17.

Shakespeare: This is not Eagle Rock's first production of a Shakespeare play. The first was Midsummer Night's Dream in the summer of 1996.

June: Usually Eagle Rock has staged its summer productions in August, at the end of the summer trimester. This year, with the hope of having less rain, the production was staged in June. The early summer staging also meant that Presentations of Learning (POLs) could regain focus the last week of the trimester and that the last six weeks for the interns could be less chaotic. Still, rain did force the production inside one of the four play dates this June, and the weather produced 3 inches of sloppy snow the morning of the Saturday performance. Wet ground and cold temperatures marked the Saturday night production, made all the more incongruous because of the play's setting in . . .

Hawaii: "Imagine if you will," director Alison Trattner wrote in the program notes, "that the volcanic summits of Shaman, Bonepipe and Armadillo before you [peaks that overlook the Eagle Rock campus] stand shrouded — not in the smoke of Loveland fires — but in the green mists of the ocean breezes." Yes, the week of the play was the week of . . .

The Bobcat Gulch Fire: Between Eagle Rock and Loveland, the fire blazed, sometimes sending smoke and an acrid smell our way but mostly heading northeast, burning 10,000 acres before completely extinguished. The dry warm weather changed to rain and then snow during the latter part of the week of production and helped douse the fire but didn't exactly add to

the ambience of the production. Still, it was scenic, set in an . . .

Outdoor amphitheater under the stars in the Rockies: Five summers ago, Eagle Rock students in a mathematics class designed and built an outdoor amphitheater. Since then, Eagle Rock students and staff have presented a summer extravaganza there—usually a musical — for Estes Park visitors and residents. After Midsummer Night's Dream in 1996, the Wizard of Oz was presented in 1997, Big River in 1998, and Grease in 1999. All but MSD was presented as a musical, and Romeo and Juliet was to be no exception. . .



Matt Rutherford as a Guard and Nezzi Long as Sampson tangle outside the Capulet's charter tour shop.



Cori Rosengren and Eve-Lyn Benjamin were both dancers in the play.

tropical nature of this summer's production derives its source from the unique backgrounds of the players: our Romeo [student Kanoa Breeland] from Hawaii, our Juliet [student Tasha Pean] from Orlando, our Friar [Naheem Edmeade] from the Caribbean. Bit by bit, the cast helped to form our concept.

Musical: An obscure musical score was found that combined both the elements of a difficult love relationship and a Hawaiian setting. The music was surprisingly appropriate and touching, with book and lyrics by Lynn Ahrens and music by Stephen Flaherty.

Trattner expanded on the setting of our version of R&J in the program notes: "The

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**ARTICLE ABOUT EAGLE
ROCK APPEARS IN
EDUCATION WEEK**

*by Lois E. Easton,
Director of Professional Development*

A "Commentary" titled "If Standards Are Absolute . . . How One School Varies the Old 'Absolutes' To Make Sure Everyone Can Learn" appeared in the April 12, 2000 edition of Educational Week, a publication that reaches over 56,000 educators, mostly policy makers and administrators.

Focusing on Eagle Rock, the essay makes the point that achievement used to be a variable. "Students performed variously well or poorly. They earned (or were awarded) grades — 'A' for superior performance, 'B' for better-than-average performance, 'C' for average performance, 'D' for below average performance, and 'F' for insufficient performance. All but 'F' counted in terms of passing from one grade to another or graduating from high school.

"With achievement a variable, other factors of schooling could be absolutes. Time and place, curriculum, learning style and assessment techniques — all these could be absolutes. Nine months was the time period judged adequate for deciding if students were ready to pass from grade to grade. Sure, in some areas student achievement might be "A," and in others a "C" or "D," but the element of time — being in a grade nine months and having passing grades — was sufficient for entering the next grade. Being in a high school four years and passing all courses resulted in a walk across the stage and a diploma. For the most part, time could be an absolute, and school could be finished in twelve years.

"Similarly, place of learning could be an absolute. Students learned in school.

"Curriculum in high schools especially meant taking all required classes, often in a prescribed sequence, and choosing an elective or two. Style

of learning could be an absolute. Whole class methods were sufficient. Assessment forms could be absolute. All students would take the same tests."

The author, Lois Easton, Director of Professional Development at Eagle Rocks, makes the point that, "Of course, I am painting these absolutes with a broad brush. Caring teachers in supportive schools figured out how to make time, place, curriculum, style of learning, and assessment techniques fit individual learners."

Still, the essay argues that things have changed. "In this age of standards, all students are to be held to the same expectations. Achievement is an absolute, not a variable. The refrain is usually, 'All students can learn.' Embedded in that refrain are the standards developed by a state or district: 'All students can achieve these standards.' The underlying meaning is that all students must demonstrate at least a certain level of achievement in order to pass from grade to grade and eventually clutch a diploma signifying graduation."

Then, Easton makes the point that, "at Eagle Rock we are discovering that, in order to make achievement an absolute, everything that was absolute in the old formula must become a variable. Time, space, curriculum, style of learning, and assessment must be variables in order for the absolute that is achievement to occur. The refrain should be, 'All students can achieve the standards IF time, space, curriculum, learning style, and assessment techniques are variables.' All students can learn if the learning experience is tailored to the needs of the student."

The rest of the "Commentary" provides examples of how Eagle Rock holds its students to the same high expectations, related to the Colorado State Model Content Standards but how we manage to vary the conditions for learning so that all students can learn.

If you would like a copy of this article, please contact Easton at 970-586-7109 or by mail or email at leaston@eaglerockschool.org.

**EAGLE ROCK GRADUATE
HIGHER EDUCATION FUND
CONTINUES TO GROW**

by Dick Herb, Director of Operations

LATE-BREAKING GOOD NEWS: The Starr Foundation of New York City has awarded a grant of \$25,000.00 to the Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center in support of its Graduate Higher Education Fund. Here are totals as of August 2000, not counting the grant monies, compared to the last reported totals in April 2000:

	August 2000	April 2000
Gifts	\$169,994	\$156,255
Investment Gain	42,708	56,432
Awards & Expenses	13,387	10,593
TOTALS	\$226,086	\$223,280

Sales of those speedy little duckies this past spring as part of an Estes-wide fund raising effort called Duckfest were double this year. Duck sales brought \$6,650 to the graduate fund, and ERS races won over 40 prizes. Thanks to all who participated.

ROMEO AND JULIET AS A WORK OF ART

by Robert Burkhardt, Head of School

(Editor's Note: The following is from an e-mail that Burkhardt sent to parents and others as a regular communication from Eagle Rock. If you would like your name added to the group that receives these emails, email Burkhardt at rjbers@aol.com.)

Greetings from Eagle Rock. Somewhere years past I read a sentence in Ernest Hauser's *The Social History of Art*: "Only the work of art itself can raise the standard of taste." For years I thought it meant I should hie myself to the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C, where another look at Renoir's "The Luncheon of the Boating Party" would continue to restore my soul and uplift my spirits. This was true, but it was not the full story. Slowly I came to understand that the WORK of art would also raise the standard of taste. The truth of this came back to me over the past four days as Eagle Rock performed Romeo and Juliet.

The work was Naheem, creating a Caribbean persona for the friar, and pushing himself to be the best actor possible. He tells me he learned patience during the six weeks of the play.

The work was Sophia, whose beautiful singing voice and steely persona as Lady Capulet were clearly visible to the audience. Invisible were the times she tirelessly and imaginatively painted sets and pitched in anywhere help was needed.

The work was Steven, now coming into his own at Eagle Rock. Not only was his Tybalt mercurial and quick-tempered, his guitar playing and good humor brightened rehearsals and performances.

The work was Alison, who led this effort to put R&J on stage. I do not know how she maintained her composure while responding to innumerable details, imaginary brushfires, real forest fires and blizzards. She never lost her patience, always had a kind word, was clear in her expectations, and deserved the tremendous success she saw on stage Saturday night.

The work was Karolee, indefatigable at the keyboard, constantly adapting to crises, changes, cuts, missing personnel, moving a ton of equipment and more, but always with a laugh, a smile and a word of encouragement for everyone. Her wrists, aching after hours of rehearsals, will get a well-deserved rest this week.

The work was Kanoa, whose mischievous Romeo was anchored by a strong sense of self-discipline. His acting and singing improved every day of the six weeks, such that we were left wondering just how talented this young man really is. We certainly didn't see his full potential here, good as he was.

The work was Alex, whose humor made the nurse a favorite of cast members, most of whom left what they were doing when he was onstage to simply watch and appreciate his enormous talent at work.

The work was Tasha, whose beautiful voice, playful eyes and work ethic ensured the success of the play. She never complained, even when threatened by hypothermia while lying inert, scantily clad, on the steps of the "tomb" for twenty minutes each cold evening.

The work was Matt (both of them), who grew in their roles, despite little prior experience before the footlights. It was a pleasure to watch them, in rehearsal and performance, moving from a stilted awkwardness with Shakespeare's English to an easy familiarity with their roles and lines. These two, among others, prompted a wonderful assessment I heard from a member of the Saturday night audience: "I enjoyed the play so much because the students so clearly understood Shakespeare's language. They made it easy for me to appreciate the play."

The work was Will, new to Eagle Rock and a hard worker, quietly and diligently going about the tasks of sound, lighting, props and seemingly everything else. Will earned a wonderful reputation for himself during this play, and is now in demand as someone who can be counted on when time is short and results are imperative.

The work was Josh (both of them), almost inexhaustible in their energy, commitment and willingness to go the extra mile when others might not. We could not have had the play without these two.

The work was Ally, who also grew enormously during the run. Her singing, her presence, her commitment to the task, all these were inspirational for others. We are already looking forward to seeing her in future productions.

The work was Carin, the glue that held everything together. Carin drove herself mercilessly, always cheerful, always ready to drive somewhere to pick up an obscure object or anything else. How she made it through on such little sleep I'll never know. She has entered the realm of Eagle Rock sainthood.

The work was Jena, a whirlwind of quiet efficiency backstage. Focused, alert, determined, hard working, Jena exemplified selflessness during the run.

The work was Liza, making everyone laugh as she applied each evening's makeup.

The work was Abe, growing as an actor and a member of the pit band with each performance.

The work was Shaun, who frightened us all when he raged as Capulet at his errant daughter Juliet.

The work was Eve-lyn, a comedienne of extraordinary talent, who stole scene after scene with ad-libs, expressive body language, and a face apparently capable of registering every nuance in the human continuum of experience.

The work was Rick, whose love for Eagle Rock students is returned tenfold. Every year, as a labor of love, he comes to us from San Francisco. Every year, a new group of students comes to understand the true purpose of life as they work with this marvelously talented human being.

And the work was many more as well. Countless members of the Eagle Rock community and extended family were there when needed: graduates, former students, parents, friends, family members, students and staff not directly involved in the play. Victory has a thousand parents, goes the adage, and defeat is an orphan. Romeo and Juliet was an unadulterated victory for learning, for art, for theater, for individuals and the company, and for Eagle Rock as a whole. And the WORK of art has certainly raised the standard of taste around here.

A STUDENT REFLECTS ON BALARAT EXPERIENCE

by Ian Carl Stevens

(Editor's Note: Balarat is an outdoors camp sponsored by the Denver Public Schools. As part of their "Touch the Future" class, Eagle Rock students serve as "counselors." For a three-day period, they teach environmental science to inner city elementary students, run adventure activities, and help the students in many ways.)

Balarat was absolutely amazing. I really was loathe to leave the kids, and even a day later pangs of *sehnsucht* (German for "longing") frolic in my stomach. I remember my apprehension as the bus rounded the corner and came to rest in front of Moe [Monique Navarro], Ashanti [Ashanti Hassan] and me. I nearly tucked tail and ran up the trail, and as the kids filed off the bus I bit my lip a little. All for nothing. The anxiety quickly wore off, and I became increasingly comfortable with the students.

The first thing we did was take the kids toward Pond Camp to eat a snack and use the restrooms. I mingled with the boys and quickly discovered that this was an energetic group, albeit with potential to cause trouble, but well-behaved nonetheless. Eventually the girls returned from their break and sat near the boys. The three of us stood back and took in the sight before us — each surely wondering what the next couple of days would yield. Fun. That pretty much sums it up. We split the sixteen students before us into three random groups, and each Eagle Rock student took one group. I had a chipper crew of five students — two boys and three girls — and we adopted the team name "The Ticks." Zach, Daniel, Kristin, Estrella, and Sarah. All of them absolutely amazing people in their own right.

Zach was a slightly hefty, short boy with a round face that resembled a turtle's, glasses, and a terrific smile. He wore his uncle's t-shirts which draped over him like wet towels on a cold day, and he didn't say much at first. He took great pride in his ability to play word games with me, and there was scarcely a time when I

couldn't get him to smile with a joke or silly phrase.

Daniel was a different story altogether. He reminded me of myself as a fifth grader — exceedingly hyper, with a good brain and even a little style here and there. He always wore sunglasses and spiked his short blonde hair and talked. A lot. We grew closer and closer, and I ended up giving him a lot of personal attention — when he could focus, though it was rare, he was a stellar student.

This was Kristin's third trip to Balarat in this school year, so she was very well acclimated and knew quite a bit about the region and its ecology. She was very reserved and had an unprecedented air of maturity about her. Kristin was extremely attentive and intelligent, and I often let her teach her peers and add to my lessons whenever she could. I used her experience and knowledge to my advantage, and she helped mediate her peers on the team initiatives and even managed to participate, never complaining that she had already done that activity.

Estrella was just a ball of personality. She was one of the tallest members of my group and always willing to participate. She took a liking to me quickly and said "Skittles" (the nickname they gave me) with the most adorable smile you could ever imagine. I remember her excitement and energy at the hunting skills course, when she easily kept up with the boys in her group.

Sarah was far and away my favorite group member. Her mom had come along, but that didn't stop her from actively volunteering answers and channeling her energy successfully to the advantage of the group. She was reluctant to come with me at first, because she would be away from her best friend, but I was able to get her to stop moping and cheer up soon thereafter, with only a little prodding. She loved soccer, which interested me, of course, but most of all she was just a good person. An up-and-coming skateboarder, Sarah took a spill on the first night as we were descending from Mystery Wall, badly bruising her hip and scraping her elbow. Though she felt bad for a couple hours, and decided against painting with her peers, after a little walk and friendly conversation with "Skittles," she opened up and smiled a little. The last day she

was bonkers, bubbling over with excitement as she told me of her movie-in-progress and her friends.

Back to the story. After the kids were all refreshed and filled with a snack, the moment that had Moe, Ashanti and me so fraught with suspense and worry arrived — it was time to begin the Montane Ecology Hike. My group was extremely observant and respectful, and though a lot of information was thrown at them, they seemed to retain a vast amount. I often used the things we learned as "passwords" — for instance, in order to head down to dinner, I would have each student tell me one thing he or she had learned. Everyone was able to come up with some bit of the day's learning each time I asked, and my heart swelled with pride whenever one of the them said, "Hey, Skittles — is that a Douglas Fir?!" or identified some Balarat flora. I will forever associate the Ponderosa with Sarah. She had considerable trouble remembering the word, and I frequently pointed at a pine and said, "Name that tree!" I even went so far as to wear my house intramural shirt [Ponderosa House] for her. Eventually she was able to remember it and smiled shyly whenever I asked her.

That afternoon, I stationed myself at the hunting skills module and ran myself ragged with all sixteen kids in the class. Later in the evening, after a delicious spaghetti dinner and a few games, we all headed up to Mystery Wall for what was called a "night hike." Well, the hike was great — I took Daniel aside and he pointed out Vega to me in the northeastern sky, and he asked me just what a star was. After a short astronomy lesson, he went back to the group with a smile on his face and some facts in his brain. Unfortunately, the trip down wasn't so uneventful. My group took off at a running pace, with me straggling behind, and somewhere along the way Sarah took a tumble. She was a little distraught, and cried periodically, but eventually she cheered up, which really helped the evening. I learned an important lesson about kids that night — how tough they are! I saw lots of kids take falls or somehow manage to injure themselves, get up, and walk away. Amazing.

The second day was even better. We did the morning exercise, a hike to the

PRESENTATIONS OF LEARNING SPREAD TO PUBLIC ALLIES SITES —

by Dan Condon,
Former Eagle Rock Intern
Program Manager and Director of
Education and Training
Public Allies, Milwaukee

Perry Harris, 20, and his co-presenter the "Underdog" (a pre-recorded video of himself decked out in a dew rag and dark sunglasses) dialogued with each other for 15 minutes and explained that during their "Presentation of Learning" they would share their struggles, victories and lessons learned from their 10 month Public Allies Program apprenticeship experience. "Underdog" covered the personal development of Perry Harris while Perry, himself, covered his professional growth.

Perry explained that 10-months ago he was an aspiring rap artist from Milwaukee's central city, a devoted family man and a cook at Applebee's. He explained that the path he was on wasn't even close to providing what he wanted to contribute to his community. He wanted to make positive contributions to his neighborhood, his city, and his world. That wasn't happening from the confines of the kitchen.

I first met Perry through some diversity training work with The National Conference for Community Justice. About a year later I was pleased to see that Perry had decided to apply to Public Allies, and after an intense interview process he was selected into Milwaukee's sixth apprenticeship class.

Perry was placed at the Milwaukee Urban League where he worked to identify the needs of Milwaukee area African American young people and developed programs to meet their developmental

needs. He worked with schools, community leaders and various Urban League affiliates to collaborate in determining prospective needs of 9 - 18 year olds.

During his time with Public Allies, the Program Staff was aware of his personal and professional growth; however, during his "Presentation of Learning" Perry was able to discern for himself what he thought was his most powerful learning. Perry shared with confidence, "I am not willing to settle until I have reached my goal. And once I have reached my goal I will set a new one. I want my visions realized and I believe that there are steps I can take to ensure that they are realized. It may get rough and I may fail here and there, but failure is not defeat; it is an opportunity to learn."

Perry shared that after 10 months of being in an intense leadership development program he will no longer limit himself to picking up the classified section of the Sunday paper, looking at just the miscellaneous employment section, and is currently seeking admittance to the Milwaukee School of Art and Design.

Public Allies places a high value on the critical reflection of our participants' direct service activities. We believe that our Allies (participants in our program) learn more from reflecting on their experiences rather than the experiences themselves. Reflection leads to understanding, which in turn leads to more informed action. Reflection leads to a better understanding of social problems and to the quest for better solutions.

We adopted the concept of "Presentations of Learning" from Eagle Rock School and have implemented them as a baseline within our Continuous Learning Plan at all ten of our Public Allies Sites. We have found that the "Presentations of

Learning" are a very effective way to share with our alliance and with folks not familiar with Public Allies what our program accomplishes in a very powerful way —

Eagle Rock has its own web site and staff and students their own email addresses linked to that site. Formerly linked to the Internet through Poudre R-1 School District, Eagle Rock now has its own site: www.eaglerockschool.org. Staff and students can be reached through their internet names and eaglerockschool.org.

from the mouths of our program participants.

Public Allies envisions communities where people of all backgrounds, beliefs and experiences work together and share responsibility for improving their own lives and the lives of those around them. We identify a diversity of talented young adults and create opportunities for them to practice leadership and strengthen their communities in a new alliance with people from neighborhoods, nonprofits, business and government.

Public Allies is a national non-profit organization with its organization wide office located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin with sites in ten cities across the country. We take promising young leaders like Perry, aged 18 - 30, and place them in ten-month paid apprenticeships in non-profit "Partner Organizations." These "Allies" gather once a week in a training seminar facilitated by community leaders, nonprofit and business executives, and professional consultants. Allies also participate in "Team Service Projects" that enable them to organize their own innovative response to a community needs.

For more information on Public Allies contact Dan at 414-264-5616 or visit www.publicallies.org.

"Education Fund" - Continued

Next fund-raisers will be the October 7 Graduate Work Day and the December 2 Second Annual Silent Art Auction (date tentative). Everyone is welcome to shoulder some heavy work with us (or wash some windows) on October 7 and again participate in the Auction on December. Expect more information on these events at a later date.

The purpose of the Graduate Higher Education Fund is to support graduates of Eagle Rock School as they pursue higher education. The Fund was established by Board Resolution in October 1997. The Resolution outlined investment manage-

ment policies and policies outlining the selection of awardees. Our ultimate goal is to be able to provide graduate awardees \$2,500 each year they are in college, a total award of \$10,000. With an anticipated 35 to 40 graduates in college at a time, we need to plan an annual outlay in the range of \$100,000.

If you would like to make a gift, please make your check out to Eagle Rock School Graduate Fund and send it to P.O. Box 1770, Estes Park, CO 80517-1770, c/o Dick Herb. All gifts are tax deductible and donors will receive a letter of thanks and a gift receipt.

"Romeo & Juliet" - Continued

Mama Montague played by Cori Rosengren and Papa Montague played by Matt Mulloy look on their offspring in wonder.

The turquoise Montagues, sea colored, passionately protect their native roots and the ancient traditions of Hawaii. The fiery Capulets, across the stage, hail from Hollywood, and are happily investing their recently acquired fortune in tourist operations and vacation homes for family and friends."

Trattner continued her description of the processes the cast used to do a musical *R&J* set in Hawaii: "Yet know that a rose by any other name than William Shakespeare truly would not smell as sweet. Having navigated the difficulty of the text ... we celebrate the h a l l o w e d words: they have become smooth sailing. For six weeks prior to the production, as is our accustomed interdisciplinary spring venture, the entire Eagle Rock com-



The Nurse played in intern Alex Head tries to counsel a rebellious Juliet played by Tasha Pean.

munity explored the themes of 'Love and Loyalty' across the lines of prejudice and hate. We examined ancient feuds that have divided society through the ages from the Crusades to the slave trade; from the great world wars to the civil wars in the Middle East, Ireland and Bosnia; from world issues in 1595 to gang ideology in today's big cities. Together we examined and lamented the famous doomed loves in history, from Adam and Eve to Bill and Monica. Finally, we dove into the text itself and discovered: it's good."

Assisting Trattner as Director were Music Director Rick Roberts from San Francisco, Orchestra Director Karolee McLaughlin (Music and Performance Instructor), and Assistant Director Carin Short (Intern). Stage Manager was Josh

Brankman (Intern), and House Manager was Vincent Davis (Student). Graduate Eric Sterkel who has been with Up With People for over a year returned to do choreography, and Aikido instructor Jim Cox choreographed the fight scenes.

Robert Burkhardt, head of school, introduced and concluded the play as the Chorus.



Benvolio played by Eve-Lyn Benjamin tries to counsel a love-sick Romeo played by Kanoa Breeland.

Student Ally Alexander was the Princess of Verona, student Abe Neas was Paris, and student Matt Mulloy was Montague challenged on the other side by student Shaun Meehan as Capulet. Students Gabe Ferdinand as Mercutio, Eve-Lyn Benjamin as Benvolio, and Steven Layne as Tybalt performed valiantly.

Friar John was played by student Joshua Quiles, Balthasar by student Patrick O'Friel, Sampson by student Nezzii Long, Gregory by student Savio Borges, and Abram by student Spencer Pierson. Student Stacey Tennille played An Apothecary.

Lady Montague was played by student Cori Rosengren and Lady Capulet by student Sophia Weiss. The nurse was played by intern Alex Head. Student Matt Rutherford played a Citizen and an Officer; student Cori Rosengren was Guard 1; and cook Mike Glowacki was Guard 2. Patrick Burkhardt played Guard 3, and Eileen Burkhardt played the Page; they are son and daughter of head of school Robert Burkhardt.

Other staff children in the play were Carly and Everett Bowles, Nia and Ayanna Smith, Eli DeOreo, Alexis Flaherty, and Jerikah Phelps. Dancers were students Joshua Quiles, Cori Rosengren, and Eve-Lyn Benjamin; and interns Katy Chandler, Hilary Kopple, and Priya Prashad. Singers not otherwise in the cast were student Melanie Dowers and Life After Eagle Rock staff member Lan To.

The orchestra was composed of Rick Roberts and Karolee McLaughlin at the keyboards, Robert Burkhardt on trumpet, Dave Noble on bass, Abe Neas on guitar, and Matt Mulloy and Ashton Rose on percussion.

Michael Flynn
Human Performance

Richard Gordon
*Learning Resources
and Information*

Colleen Graham
Human Performance

Linda Sand Guest
Director of Curriculum

Dick Herb
Director of Operations

David Hoskins
*Science and
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Tim Phelps
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James Sherman
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Jeanne Sherman
Administrative Assistant

Brian Simoneau
Cook

Philbert Smith
*Director of
Students*

Lan To
Life After Eagle Rock

Alison Trattner
Language and Literature

Bonnie Vavra
*Business Administration
Specialist*

ERS MOVES TO TEN WEEK CLASSES

by Linda Sand Guest, Director of Curriculum

After a full year of discussions, the Instructional Team of Eagle Rock School has elected to revise the class schedule. In the past, two sets of six-week-long classes were offered each trimester. The philosophy behind such offerings included the presupposition that students who had not found success in traditional programs would be less intimidated by courses of shorter duration. Additionally, courses offered could be considered as individual units normally offered in more lengthy traditional classes.

For example, rather than offer a full year or even a semester of algebra from a more traditional mathematics program, ERS could offer what would normally be considered a single unit from that program over a period of six weeks. Eagle Rock students would take several courses (or units) until they had accumulated enough credit to equal all requirements of high school algebra. In theory, and often in practice, this system worked well. However, concerns arose which the new system is designed to address.

One of the most significant concerns with the past system involves the depth at which students and instructors are able to explore complex subjects. In a six-week class, students meet four times a week for six weeks or a total of twenty-four class periods. Often, one or two of those periods are introductory in nature and another one or more are utilized to allow students to demonstrate their new knowledge. If students are out of class because of illness, field trips for other classes, an all school event, or other reasons, it severely limits the time available for new information to be introduced and learning to take place.

An example of this concern might be taken from a class on the Civil War. The causes, events, personnel, and ramifications of the War Between the States are immense. Even today, the flying of the Confederate flag dominates news programs. Imagine how much more could be studied in ten weeks of class as opposed to six weeks. The same could be said of twelve weeks or twenty weeks. However, courses of ten weeks seem more likely to address the original concerns of the need for courses of shorter duration than traditional schools and the need for greater depth of content.

Instructional Specialists at Eagle Rock are charged with the task of "orchestrat[ing] the immersion of the learner in complex, interactive experiences that are both rich and real." [Caine and Caine, 113, 1994] We strive to create challenges within classes which are personally meaningful yet not so stressful as to interfere with learning. Courses of ten weeks in length allow greater opportunities for these experiences and challenges to be presented and internalized. Hopefully, one of the outcomes will be greater retention of learning.

As with any school, Eagle Rock students enroll in classes with a view to earning credit(s) toward graduation. Each course description lists a number of options for earning these credits. One student may be working to complete an essay of opposing ideas within a history class while another student in the same class wants to earn credit to meet a graduation requirement for a presentation on national issues in American government. Yet another student might work toward art credit in the same class by rendering drawings as part of a sketchbook.

By allowing students to select the credit(s) they wish to earn in each course taken, they are able to individualize their learning plans to complete all credits they need to graduate. At times, six weeks simply seems too short to complete the tasks necessary to obtain all the credit a student might be capable of learning, given a longer time in the class. By offering a class of ten weeks, students have a greater opportunity to complete polished assignments for credit; to earn more than one credit toward graduation from one class; and are more able to complete projects which earn credits in a variety of content areas.

One of the last concerns to be discussed here revolves around courses presenting integrated curriculum. We rarely learn in isolation. The model of schooling which separates mathematics from history from English literature is a remnant of a time when assembly lines ruled and workers were asked to complete only one task. We now understand that the human brain is a parallel processor and that we are often able to learn best in ways which combine a variety of subjects at the same time. Eagle Rock is encouraging instructors to work together to present courses which integrate the curriculum.

For example, "Let the Games Begin" is a course which teaches the history of the Olympics, asks students to recreate an Olympic experience for the entire Eagle Rock community, and presents the music of the Olympics through the talents of the Eagle Rock band. If three or more instructors (in this example the Social Science Instructional Specialist, the Human Performance Instructional Specialists, and the Music Instructional Specialist) are working together to teach one course, six weeks is an extremely limiting time to do justice to the contributions of each instructor.

We are acutely aware that no scheduling system is ideal. There will be lessons to learn from this change. We hope that those ideas which contributed to the decision are justified by the results. Most likely, revisions will be required and adjustments will have to be made. Eagle Rock is dedicated to educational reform and, as such, we will continue to experiment while attempting to offer the best educational program possible.

Caine, R. N., and Caine, G. (1994). Making connections: Teaching and the human brain. Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley.

"Romeo & Juliet" - Continued

Stage crew manager was intern Josh Brankman; prop manager was intern Carin Short. They were assisted by Ashanti Hassan, Laronda Moore, Leia Hill, Jena Argenta, and Tamee Culp. Lighting was designed by graduate Brian Hanson whose designs have contributed to the last few productions as well. He was assisted by Ian Stevens, Monique Navarro and Nezzii Long. Sound crew was directed by student Savio Borges, assisted by William Richards, Vincent Davis, Alex Head and Richard Gordon. Set construction was accomplished by Josh Brankman, Michael Christner, and Andy Reichart. Costume designers were graduate Eric Sterkel and parent Ellen Cooper, assisted by students Monique Navarro and Eve-Lyn Benjamin. Makeup was managed by Liza Richeimer, Monique Navarro, and Mahkaea Jackson-Sams. Program Design was by Vincent Davis and Carin Short, with publicity also handled by Vincent Davis.

"Balarat Experience" - Continued

large pond, and ate a wonderful breakfast of pancakes and sausage. The zip line that day was the highlight of the trip for many of these youngsters, and I watched as one elated student after another came flying across the gully. Even Sarah, with her sore hip and dented confidence, made it across. That afternoon, I took my group to the Duvall Mine. While half of the group headed to try their luck at panning, the others followed me into the mine drift. Once inside and seated on the benches within, we discussed how the mine was created, how gold was found and removed, what it was like to be a miner, and the risks involved. When I later read some of the kids' journals, I found that the mine, with its horrible reality of possible death, made a big impact. When asked to list one thing learned on day two, many of them wrote, "Miners can die." That reminded me just how impressionable kids can be. I made a point not to lie to them. Even a little bit. Throughout the trip, I tried hard to remember what my thoughts were when I was in fifth grade, and how I went about life, and recalled my attention to what adults said — fact is, when a grown-up told me something, nine times out of ten I believed it. As a result of this memory, I promised myself that I wouldn't hand out incorrect information and stuck to the promise quite well.

That very night, after a lengthy montane ecology lesson, everyone participated in a solo walk. I sat high and hidden on some boulders along the selected route and reprimanded a few runners along their way who had intended to catch up with friends in front of them. It must have been a little scary for them because most of the walkers I observed had adopted a speedy pace. That night, following a visit with Mark to Darwin

Awards.com and a whole bunch of laughing, I slept outside under a clear sky with an insufficient sleeping bag.

The third day was great. I ran the "Pond Life" activity and walked along the bank as the anxious youngsters tried their luck at bug catching and identification. It was a hit. Even the kids who were reluctant to look at or handle the creatures participated, and the morning passed without any trouble. Two days earlier, on the first hike, the kids had given the water the moniker "Dead Bird Pond" for the carcass discovered floating near the bank. Two days later, the swallow's corpse was recovered and laid out in the sun to dry. Kids are great.

There were but two major problems that presented themselves to me over the three days. The first was a teacher — a fierce hawk of a woman who admitted to alcoholism and resorted to screaming to bring her students under control. She often swore, and the kids picked it up quickly, saying, "Well, Ms. X does it!" The second was a parent. It was good for the student to have such a support system; however, the parent many times interrupted my lessons and answered questions that were meant for students. Although I was irritated at times, I kept my cool and managed to work around the obstacles.

Tears danced about the edges of my eyes as my friends boarded the bus. I gave each a handshake and a remark and waved sadly as the big yellow vehicle pulled away.

I miss them terribly and look forward to their letters and cards. The most important thing I learned from these wonderful people is that I should never take them for granted or underestimate them. These kids are extremely intelligent, and I have an entirely new outlook on the world of children.

AMERICAN HONDA EDUCATION CORPORATION

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