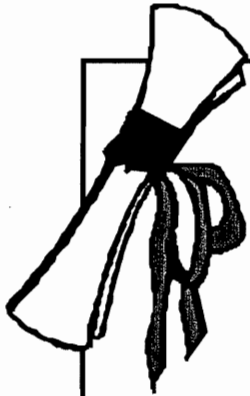




EAGLE EYES

Volume 8, Number 1

Winter/Spring 2000



TWO MORE GRADUATES MAKE IT 53; DECEMBER 1995 GRADUATE DAVIAN GAGNE ADDRESSES SCHOOL COMMUNITY

On April 14, 2000, two Eagle Rock students participated in the ceremony that acknowledged them as Eagle Rock graduates. These students were Marchello Moore from Chicago, Illinois, and Ruth Secor from Boulder, Colorado. Marchello gave his graduate Presentation of Learning (POL) on Thursday, April 13, and Ruth gave hers on Friday, April 14.

Also on Friday, April 14, December 1995 Eagle Rock graduate Davian Gagne, who is graduating this spring from the University of Denver, gave a post-graduate Presentation of Learning. Davian is the second graduate to return to Eagle Rock to give a post-graduate POL. December 1998 graduate Rachel Curran started what will become an Eagle Rock tradition with her post-graduate POL in December 1999.

EAGLE ROCK DEDICATES TOTEM POLE TO STUDENTS WHO NEVER GRADUATED

by Clara Pettem, *Trail-Gazette*

(Reprinted by permission of the *Trail-Gazette* from the April 5, 2000, story on page 4. Drawing from *Looking At Totem Poles*, written and illustrated by Hilary Stewart, University of Washington Press, 1993, p. 185.)

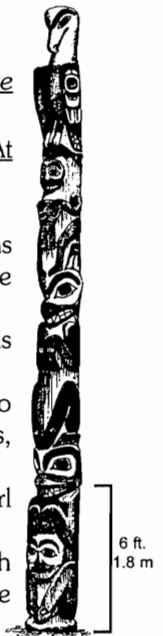
All the students that have left Eagle Rock School without their diplomas are not forgotten. A totem pole was carved in their honor in a class about the Pacific Northwest. Members of the "Eagle Clan" gathered at the alternative school on the rainy day of Thursday, March 20, to raise the towering creation.

"Today we are blessed with real Northwest weather. It just wouldn't be right if it was sunny," teacher Garth Lewis said while surrounded by drummers, proud students and faculty.

The pole is a re-carve of an original that is standing in Juneau, Alaska. On the top, a proud eagle holds a Coho salmon in its claws. The white cedar stands 18 feet out of the ground. It took student carvers Casey Whirl, Abe Neas, Manny Mussenden, and Mike Fowler about 650 hours to create.

"It was definitely one of the hardest things I've ever done here, and I'm proud to have accomplished it," Whirl said.

The class, which studied the history, culture and carving techniques of the Pacific Northwest, was taught by Garth Lewis, James Sherman and Josh Brankman. The Mountain Woodcarvers School of Woodcarving supported the project with guidance and tools.



ACTIVISM MEETS ACADEMICS: THE "COMMUNITY PROBLEM SOLVING" CLASS

by Ariann Wade, Student,
and Jason Cushner,
Mathematics Instructional Specialist

Someone looking back at the products that come out of most classes usually finds tests, portfolios, or essays. However, in the "Community Problem Solving" class the participants emerged with projects to help with AIDS, a permaculture garden in the Navajo community, a workshop with other schools to help address teen issues, and other community based projects.

The class was designed to develop problem-solving skills in areas about which the students are passionate. Each student found an issue within a community that they felt needed to be addressed. The class revolved around teaching and supporting the students to find ways to make positive changes by creating projects to address those issues.

While the students worked on their projects, the instructors helped bring out the academics that naturally arose from doing those projects. Obviously, service was involved, but students also wrote letters for support and essays of opposing ideas to look at both sides of the issue, did statistics to analyze surveys, and studied science and environmental science related to sustainable agriculture.

See "Problem Solving" - Page 3

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Development Center**

Editor:

Lois Easton
P.O. Box 1770
2750 Notaiiah Road
Estes Park, CO
80517-1770

Phone Numbers:
(970) 586-0600

Denver Metro
(303) 442-7655

FAX
(970) 586-4805

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American Honda
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Education
Corporation**

Mikio Yoshimi
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and Professional
Development Center**

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Facilities & Maintenance

Robert Burkhardt
Head of School

Jason Cushner
Mathematics

Celeste DeOreo
Spanish

Lois Easton
*Director of Professional
Development*

TRIP BRINGS STUDENTS "CLOSE-UP" TO POLICY

*by James Sherman, Society and Social
Studies Instructional Specialist*

Each February I have the privilege of spending a week in Washington, D.C. with ten Eagle Rock students. The trip, sponsored by the Close Up Foundation, an educational organization that brings young people from across the country together in the nation's capital, is the culmination of six weeks of intensive preparation.

Students get to experience Washington "close up" and immerse themselves in the good, the bad, and the ugly of American politics. This year intern Josh Brankman and I accompanied ten of the finest young people I know on what would become an emotional and enriching journey for us all.

At first, however, it seemed that it might be a long and possibly very difficult week. Within hours of our arrival, one of the students suddenly had to return home, an event that was hard on everyone, given the closeness of the group.

Things seemed to be getting worse when, at the end of the first program day, Josh and I had a hotel room full of rather depressed and disillusioned young people.

"Everyone thinks we are 'tree huggers' or communists, or insane. When we raise an issue, no one knows what we are talking about. Are we the only ones who prepared for this?!" one sighed.

"They treat us like children," another said. "Now I remember why I dropped out of my old school."

We at Eagle Rock often take for granted the high standards of engagement, maturity, and passion for learning that our students display on a daily basis. The students in Washington had equally high expectations of their peers and the program and were, at first, disappointed. In any situation, however, Eagle Rock students display an inspiring capacity to rebound, and this was no exception.

True to form, as the week progressed the unique and irrepressible Eagle Rock spirit returned, and our students slipped comfortably into their roles as natural leaders. On the buses

that ferried them around the city, the Eagle Rockers continued to ask the tough questions, to shake the trees, to try to open minds that, for whatever reason, were initially closed to new ideas. Congressional aides who were expecting fluffy platitudes were instead buried under a barrage of serious and often penetrating questions on domestic and foreign policy issues. Mike Wallace would have been proud.

Every Close Up staff member approached Josh and me to say something like this: "Your kids are absolutely amazing. I've never seen such engaged young people. Tell me more about your school." A teacher from Michigan bemoaned the apparent apathy and lack of focus some of his students seemed to display. "How do you do it?" he asked. "Your students seem to be endlessly curious and incredibly well informed. They're even polite!" I told him simply that we trust them and try to treat them with respect. His look indicated that this was clearly a novel concept for him, one that perhaps merited further study.

One of the most memorable moments occurred during the final banquet. In a mock election, the student body elected as president a young man from a private Baptist school outside New Orleans. As he was thanking everyone, he made a special tribute to an Eagle Rock student: "When the week began, there was one guy I just could not stand. He was the opposite of me in every way. I thought he was crazy, and he never stopped asking questions. But I finally began to really listen to him. He made me realize that there are many ways to look at any situation. He taught me a lot, and I will never see the world the same way again. Thank you Casey" [ERS student Casey Whirl].

If one of Eagle Rock's guiding principles is creating and spreading positive change in education, our students are one of the finest examples of that philosophy in action.

There are those who would recoil from the thought of traveling for a week with ten teenagers. Before coming to Eagle Rock I might have too. Instead, every February I am lucky enough to share a fantastic experience with ten individuals who represent the best and brightest of their generation, who fill me with pride and with hope.

EAGLE ROCK STARTS ITS OWN CCC

by Melanie Dowers, Student

I've been at Eagle Rock School two years this past January. Two and a half years is a big chunk of time, but it has gone by very quickly. In this period of my life, I have seen many "phases" at ERS. I have seen many students come and many go.

There are a number of reasons why students leave ERS (besides graduation). Students leave either because they break non-negotiables or to escape conflicts that they are not comfortable dealing with for one reason or another. Sometimes they just flat out do not want to be here. The reason I absolutely cannot stand to see is one related to laziness. How can someone just give up on the best opportunity of their lifetime to sleep in, get excessive amounts of dings for missing KP, and many other little things that reflect on all other aspects of their commitment as a whole?

Eagle Rock has many expectations, and one cannot commit to things they are OK doing and then just say, "Forget the other stuff." It's a reflection of everything!

What I have found is if you let one area slide, it slides into other areas creating a domino effect. What started with just one tiny problem, like being one minute late for KP, becomes a huge problem. Then the student is being nagged frequently for messing up, and they trip themselves even more by trying to fight back instead of taking it in.

So how can we help students who suffer from laziness? Or maybe it is not that they are lazy; they just have a hard time adapting to our routine here. They might need some emotional support or someone with whom to do their homework. For every individual I believe there is a solution. Of course, there is only so much good encouragement will do — eventually students who lack willpower must develop it on their own. Nine times out of ten, the struggling student tries to fight the system instead of accepting lessons as something positive that adds to their own personal growth here. Like Robert Burkhardt, head of school, says, "They don't call it the daily struggle for nothing."

After pondering the problem and seeking advice and input from others, I created The Community Coaching Committee (CCC). The struggling student can

choose up to five members of the community as coaches. The committee meets with the student and discusses how committee members will commit to helping him or her. These solutions can range from waking the person up in the morning until they learn to do it on their own to reminding them to go to the library and do their homework.

So far, I have found some students referring themselves to the program and really working hard to change. Others, maybe, are not ready to take the step. I understand that I can't help everyone, and ERS is not always right for everyone. But how I think of the problem and solution is related to a story someone told me once about a little girl on the beach. Thousands and thousands of starfish had been washed up on shore. She starts picking up the starfish and throwing them in the sea, one by one. Her mother comes out and says to her, "What are you doing? It won't make a difference. There are too many of them!" The little girl looks at her mother as she throws in a starfish and replies, "It made a difference to that one, and that one. . . ."

If I help anyone stay here and overcome an obstacle — no matter what it is — I feel that the CCC has been successful.

"Problem Solving" - Continued

Students were supported in their projects through study of social movements of the past. Some of these movements were Civil Rights, Ku Klux Klan, Intentional Communities, and Ho Chi Minh's fight for his country. Discussion of these past social movements helped the class discover ways of confronting issues that were most productive and related to their projects.

Student projects addressed communities ranging from the Eagle Rock community to a more global community with an issue such as AIDS. Rey Benally, a student from a Navajo community in Arizona, planned an environmentally friendly permaculture garden to provide food and bring his native community together.

A support group for students struggling in the Eagle Rock community was created by Melanie Dowers. The support group consists of a panel of students customized for each student in need of assistance. See story above.

The problem Abe Neas wanted to address was social injustice, particularly the cruel way students treat each other in most schools. After reflecting on his past, he set up a workshop that he delivered at Fort Collins schools. The workshop consisted of a speech, a song he wrote and performed, a skit and an open discussion with the students that finished with them committing to what they can take on to improve their school environment.

Eve-Lyn Benjamin took on implementing a series of programs that would unite Eagle Rock and the Boulder County AIDS Project.

To help ensure the success of these projects, we created three structures for accountability. One was a log in which students wrote down what they would accomplish on their project by the next class. Second was a buddy system so that each student had another student holding him or her responsible for upcoming tasks and providing coaching. Third, each student had an instructor as a coach. One of the goals of the class was to lessen the teacher/student distinction. Therefore, the instructors had projects and received coaching from the students.

One of the signs that the "Community Problem Solving" class was successful is that students are still continuing to work on their projects, and the class inspired them to take on new projects, even after the class ended. Abe was invited back to speak to more classes. Eve is still working on setting up AIDS programs. Matt Rutherford was inspired by the class to lead a Community Reconstruction Day for the students, run completely by students. The class also presented a seminar on activism or service in academics at the regional Association of Experiential Education conference in Santa Fe, NM.

Ariann Wade commented, "I think, more than any other class, it intertwines our values of service, community, integrated academics and school without a hierarchy. Because of its alignment with Eagle Rock values, it should be a school-wide unit."

EAGLE ROCK STUDENTS GIVE AND GET A LOT AT SERVICE CONFERENCE

by Garth Lewis, Career and Service
Learning Instructional Specialist

A strong Eagle Rock contingent attended this year's National Youth Leadership Council's (NYLC) service learning conference. Four students and three staff went to Providence, RI, from March 18 to March 21.

The students — Natalie Newman, Eve-Lyn Benjamin, Stacey Phillips, and CJ Bush — did a presentation on the environmental science and service they have been doing over the years. This has been done in the form of a course called "Touch the Future," a program developed by Science and Environmental Science Instructional Specialist Dave Hoskins. In "Touch the Future," students learn about local ecosystems in the Rocky Mountains. The service component and peak experience in this course occurs when Eagle Rock students teach what they know to groups of elementary school children who come up to Eagle Rock for a whole day of outdoor education.

The workshop these students presented was entitled "Connecting Service and Standards, A Model That Works." It was attended by approximately 50 people. Each student had a chance to speak for about 10 minutes. The audience was engaged and many asked questions and wanted more information.

The conference is only in its eleventh year, but it still draws a crowd of about 2,600 people. A full one-third of those are high school students from all over the country. The rest of the participants are teachers, administrators, conservation corps members, and people in the National Youth Leadership Council. The conference is the largest of its kind in the country.

Dave Hoskins, Garth Lewis, and intern Carin Short were the staff members who attended the conference. Carin went to explore options in the service field for her life after Eagle Rock and was very inspired by the workshops and speakers. Garth Lewis attended as a conference planner-in-training. He is on the conference planning committee for the 2001 NYLC

service learning conference which will be held in Denver. He spent much of his time looking over the shoulders of this year's planners and taking notes on what to do next.

Also at the conference was the much-loved John Oubre, former Director of Students at Eagle Rock, who was there to present the new school he and others have been putting together in the Bay Area in California.

There were some outstanding plenary speakers at the conference this year. Dorothy Stoneman, who began the organization YouthBuild, and four YouthBuild members, all teens, talked about the value of work programs. Howard Zinn, author of *A People's History of the United States* spoke on the nature of democracy and the importance of involvement. The keynote speaker was Dr. Cornel West, author of *Race Matters* and *Restoring Hope*, who gave a riveting one-hour speech on the future of our country, race relations, and the importance of uniting people for a cause.

Here is what some students had to say about their experience at the conference:

Natalie Newman commented, "One thing that West said that really struck me was that service should not be out of pity but compassion for someone. I like what he said about our generation and how we are the future for the change of the world and encourage those who are willing to take on that leadership role to continue."

Stacey Tennille stated, "Service (leadership for the common good) is being able to do for others without ever wanting back, knowing that what you do is going to be for everyone and not just to yourself."

Eve-Lyn Benjamin said, "I learned a lot from the speakers, as far as how our world 'really' is and the importance of service in this country and worldwide. I believe I learned more about human behavior, our future, and how lucky I am to be an Eagle Rock student. . . it made my passion for service grow. I know that there is a need for people that are in it the whole way. I know that I have to continue to expand my service work, to help others and myself reach the goal of being as one. I know my role in the world and what I want to change and what I want our world to be. A better place."

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
Environmental Science*

Janice Lee
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Service Learning*

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Mary McGuire
Arts

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Music and Performance

L'Tanya Perkins
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Social Studies*

Jeanne Sherman
Administrative Assistant

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Philbert Smith
*Director of
Students*

Lan To
Life After Eagle Rock

Alison Trattner
Language and Literature

Bonnie Vavra
*Business Administration
Specialist*

WOMEN'S MEETING FOCUSES ON "OUR STORIES"

by L'Tanya Perkins, Admissions Associate

An important aspect of Eagle Rock School is Gender Meetings. Gender meetings are held every third Wednesday throughout the trimester. This is an opportunity for the male students to come together with male staff and female students to come together with female staff to discuss issues important to them. Although staff lead the groups and determine what will be done at each meeting, students do have considerable input.

In the past year, the female staff found a need to address the struggles young women go through to find their identity. Staff noticed that young women were struggling with setting boundaries, expressing their sexuality, and just finding their identity, not only within the Eagle Rock community but in our society in general. So, to address what it takes to become a woman, the female staff decided to bring back a time-honored tradition. We decided to tell "Our Stories."

Traditionally, our grandmothers, aunts, and mothers have told the stories of their families and used these stories to teach us their struggles, joys, pain, and successes. Life has demonstrated to us that preaching and formal teaching does not always make an impact on young minds. I know it didn't for me! Instead, hearing my elders' stories gave me "road maps," "stop signs," and guidance for my life. Those are the lessons I remembered, not the preaching.

Women staff in the community agreed to tell their stories, not editing them but being honest, candid, and straight forward, and answering any question(s) the girls asked. This required us as a community to create a "sacred space" for the stories. All females who came into this space agreed that what was said would not leave it. They agreed not to talk about these stories to anyone other than to each other.

We organized the stories in a generational format. In this

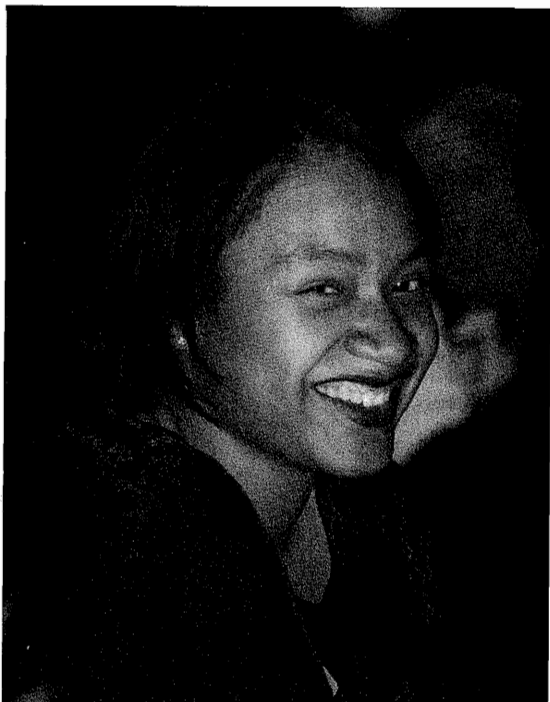
way, the young ladies were provided the opportunity to see how the era we each grew up in impacted us, as much as did our individual cultures and geographic locations. The eldest in our community presented first. We are down to the women who were born in the fifties. Our female students have witnessed — and will continue to witness — the impact the women's movement, Vietnam, civil rights, and all of the social change of the sixties provided women in our country. We have represented in our community woman raised all over the United States, from various traditions and backgrounds.

On the night a story is being told, the staff member determines how the space will be set up. Some have done drumming, others a poem, music, or incense. Some form of ritual is done to create the "sacred space," to prepare for what is about to be said. The ritual creates a serious and sacred atmosphere for the story which is being given as a most precious gift to all of us. We are sharing parts of our soul, how and what we went through to get to where we are today.

So far, this format has been a success on many fronts. The students have gotten to know female staff members on a much deeper level. Women staff are seen in a more humane way by female students who also gain some understanding of how and why people respond and react as they do.

Women's Meetings have also provided renewal for the staff. Before presenting, staff members are usually nervous and concerned. Afterwards there is a 'glow' about them. I believe they have gotten a chance to hear themselves and find wonder and pride that they made it this far through their obstacles. They find a new sense of strength, comfort, and reborn purpose.

Women's Meetings teach young ladies that life is full of experiences. It is not how you go through an experience — it is the grace and style of how you come out of it. Women's Meetings help us look in the mirror and know that we are being the best we can be at each moment. That is what is important about being a woman.



STUDENT STEPHANIE BALDWIN HONORED BY AAUW

by Lois Easton, Director of Professional Development

Stephanie "Sweets" Baldwin, an Eagle Rock student from Trenton, NJ, was recognized by the American Association of University Women in their Salute to Women's ceremony March 14. According to an article in the local paper, the *Trail-Gazette*, she is one of four women who "have committed themselves to the community by going above and beyond their job duties" (*Trail-Gazette*, March 29, p. 5).

The award ceremony was held at the historic Stanley Hotel. Other honorees were a music teacher, a high school student council advisor, and a woman who works with the Estes Valley Victim Advocates. This was the AAUW's twelfth Salute to Women.

Sweets entered Eagle Rock in May 1997. The award was previously won by Eagle Rocker Haimanot Tesfai who graduated in December 1998 and joined Up With People for a national and international tour. Tesfai is at Antioch College.

GRADUATE HIGHER EDUCATION FUND GROWN

by Dick Herb, Director of Operations

The purpose of the Graduate Higher Education Fund has been 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 management policies and policies stipulating the selection of awardees.

Many Eagle Rock graduates receive generous financial aid awards from the colleges they attend. Yet, many are short the few thousand dollars in incidentals per year that are not covered by financial aid. It is our hope to cover a significant portion of these final costs so that graduates are not burdened financially and are freed to experience their highest education to the fullest.

The fund enjoyed 55% growth rate in 1999, 31% added through investment gain and 24% from gifts and fund raising events. While growth of principal remains a high priority in these early years, we targeted the \$200,000 level of funds invested as the time when awards would be increased from \$1,000 to \$1,500. We plan another increase to \$2,000 at the \$300,000 level.

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, the annual outlay will be in the range of \$100,000. Our ultimate long-term goal is to build the fund to \$3,000,000.

Current standings of the fund are printed below:

	<u>Nov. 1999</u>	<u>April 2000</u>
Totals Since Inception (10/97)		
Gifts	\$138,175	\$156,255
Investment Gain	27,080	56,432
Awards & Expenses	<u>7,670</u>	<u>10,593</u>
TOTAL	\$172,925	\$223,280

Two Graduate Work Days per year have been the cornerstone of fundraising activities, earning \$10,000 per year. This past December, the first annual Art Auction was held on campus. Organized by Mary McGuire, Art Instructional Specialist, art produced by professional artists, students and staff, plus professional services (fix my computer, mow my lawn each week, take me on a canoe trip) were sold in a silent auction format. Held in Eagle Rock's new One Room Schoolhouse, food, live music and socializing enhanced the evening and made for a festive and successful occasion.

As this article is being written, we are busy selling racing ducks (yes, you read that right — ducks) to enter into Estes Park's annual Duckfest race down the Big Thompson River. Almost 5,000 ducks are thrown in and float about two miles downstream to the finish at the Wheel Bar. The event raises nearly \$100,000 per year for Estes Park charities — the Eagle Rock Graduate Fund being one. Last year (our first in this event) Eagle Rock earned \$3,400 in sales and those Rockers who purchased ducks then won their fair share of prizes (this writer won 3 out of his 5 ducks). This year, ERS hopes to come close to \$4,000 in sales.

Please consider a gift to the Eagle Rock Graduate Fund. All gifts are tax deductible and you will receive a letter of thanks and a gift receipt. If you plan to make a gift, make your check out to:

Eagle Rock School Graduate Fund
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