

EAGLE EYES

Volume 7, Number 2

Summer 1999

ERS SHAKES, RATTLES, AND ROLLS IN PRODUCTION OF "GREASE"

by Lois Easton, Director of Professional Development

"In the tradition of our annual summer extravaganzas – Garcia Lorca's *Yerma*, '95, Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, '96, *The Wizard of Oz*, '97, and *Big River*, '98 – we were almost reluctant to bring you *Grease* – a lightweight, rock & roll musical with a somewhat dubious moral and ethical code," wrote Director Alison Trattner in the program notes for this summer's production, staged August 4, 5, 6, and 7.

She continued "According to some of our students, it was time to just let go and have some fun. Still, we did not dive recklessly into the life and times of Rockdell High. Twelve weeks ago our entire community plunged into a cross-disciplinarian exploration of the 1950s, from beatniks to Betty Friedan, from Eisenhower to Elvis, from Mingus to McCarthy to Mao to Martin Luther King." [See story, pg. 2]

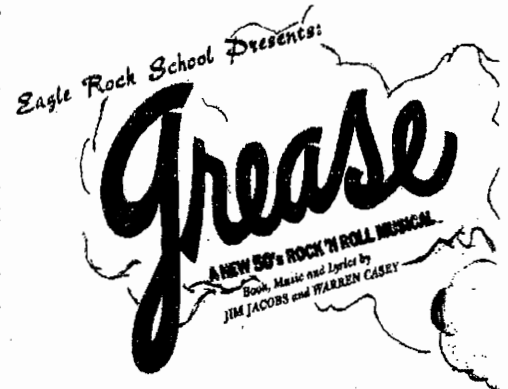
According to Trattner, "Many poodle skirts and pop bottles later, we were better able to observe how the suburban lives of Rockdell teens unfolded, oblivious to the political oppression around them, and epitomizing the deadly homogeneity of a decade." ☺

"At Eagle Rock, where we fan the flame of individuality until it is irrepressible, and in a society where stereotypes have become so very dangerous, rehearsing *Grease* with a double cast allowed us to defy some of the story's cliches with a vengeance. Nevertheless, we fretted over the finale, so anti-Eagle

Rock: If your friends don't like you for who you are, change and become like them!!!!?? And so, in the last scene, we invited you to view Sandy's leather pants and Danny's letter

sweater less as a capitulation of integrity and more as a cultural exchange. . . something like the gift of the Magi. Regardless, if you get chills, and they're multiplyin' and you're losin' control, we hope you will sit back and thoroughly enjoy these summer nights! We sure have."

Music Director, Rick Roberts from San Francisco State University worked on Eagle Rock's last two musicals but is making "Grease" his last collaboration with Eagle Rock. Working on his doctorate in education from SFSU, Rick has just finished his 18th season with the University of San Francisco Players, and is currently a professor as well as the musical director of the university's vocal program. Roberts collaborated with Karolee McLaughlin, ERS's music teacher who was director of the orchestra. Mary McGuire was Artistic Director and in charge of props.



See "Grease" - Page 4

EAGLE ROCK SCHOOL LAUDED FOR SERVICE-LEARNING ROLE

(reprinted with permission from *The Trail-Gazette*, June 2, 1999, p. 1)

National Award Cites Successful Blend of Civic Responsibilities

Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center has been recognized with a distinctive citation that acknowledges the school's excellence in service-learning. The school has been named as a National Service-Learning Leader School through a new presidential initiative. The recognition was accorded to only 70 schools nationwide.

Service-learning combines academics with community service in a way that

benefits students, teaches civic responsibility and strengthens communities. As part of its award, Eagle Rock was asked to lead other schools in starting or improving their service-learning programs.

"These schools are models of what is working in education," noted Harris Wofford, chief executive officer of the Corporation for National Service, which administers the award program. "They are on the cutting edge of a growing service-learning movement and their experience and success will serve as examples to others."

Through service-learning, students apply their course work to community issues in relevant and meaningful ways. For example, Eagle Rock has undertaken community service projects in a variety of areas, such as building a handicapped-

accessible pier at Lake Estes, building the new Salud Clinic, helping with construction of the MacGregor Ranch Nature Museum, building a new deck for the Visitor Information Center, helping with renovation work at Rocky Ridge Music Center, and performing numerous tasks in support of the Estes Valley Youth Center.

Additionally, Eagle Rock students help each year with set-up of the Scottish-Irish Festival, work as marshals for the Catch the Glow Christmas Parade, help with trail construction for the National Forest Service and Rocky Mountain National Park, and have performed countless other assistance projects.

Apart from Estes Park area projects, students also have expanded their reach

See "Service-Learning" - Page 3

**A publication of
Eagle Rock School
and Professional
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FIFTIES UNIT PREPARES STUDENTS FOR "GREASE" —

by Lois Easton, Director of
Professional Development

The summer extravaganzas which began with "Midsummer Night's Dream" during the summer of 1996 have always been preceded by related academic learning. This year, in anticipation of presenting "Grease," students studied the Fifties.

For the first four weeks of the six-week block, students rotated through one-week interdisciplinary courses on the following topics: *Pop Culture, Global Citizenship, Advancements, and Us Vs. Them: The Pot Begins to Boil*. At the end of the four weeks, having experienced each of the interdisciplinary units, students chose an area of concentration.

Some students concentrated on music in a mini-course entitled *And the Beat Goes On*. They learned the chord progressions of the 50s and continued to study pop-culture through music. Others focused on beat poetry and jazz in a mini-course called *Beatitude*. In *We Shall Overcome*, students studied "a tide of change which would end up rocking America — the Civil Rights movement."

Some students used technology of the 90s to create a multimedia presentation related to the 50s, in the process refining their ability to use a variety of electronic resources. Others used film, research projects, and class discussion to examine in depth topics surrounding the Cold War, the arms race and nuclear threat. In *How We Learned to Love the Bomb*, students studied the arms race and nuclear threat from mutually assured destruction in WWII to nuclear terrorism today.

In *From Bobby Socks to Leather Jackets*, students flung open the closet doors of teens of the 50s to examine what guys and girls were wearing. Their task was to match those fashions with characters from "Grease." They created water-color renditions of the costumes so that the costume crew could create the actual costumes.

Finally, in *Technological Advancements During the 1950s*, students chose one technological advancement to investigate. They did compositions and presentations about the advancement they chose.

Evidence of their work appeared throughout "Grease" — not only in the costumes but also in the scenery that portrayed political, entertainment and sports figures from the era and in the interpretations students gave the characters they played.

CONGRESS CITES EAGLE ROCK FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE WORK

(excerpted with permission from *The Trail-Gazette*, June 25, 1999, p. 11)

Former gang member Jeremy Martinez never thought he would speak before members of Congress and their staffs in Washington, D.C., but the Eagle Rock School senior did just that at a Congressional reception held Thursday, June 24.

Martinez talked about how his life has been transformed by serving others. He's not alone. Millions of students are learning to become better citizens and better students through service-learning programs offered at their schools.

Seventy schools from across the country were honored this week in Washington as National Service-Learning Leader schools through a new presidential initiative that recognizes schools for their excellence in service-learning. Eagle Rock School in Estes Park was among the 70 schools honored.

(See related story on p. 1)

Service-learning is part of a new approach to learning at Eagle Rock School. Teachers serve alongside students, and service is integrated into every course. For example, the environmental science class in partnership with local environmental groups gathered data from water testing in local waterways, compiled it and gave it to local agencies to determine the state of the watersheds and to create action plans for management.

A history class, in partnership with the local YMCA of the Rockies, completely restored a 100-year-old log cabin and learned about history at the same time. Other service projects have included trail building, tutoring, teaching science to elementary students, restoring buildings, historical restoration, environmental and community clean-ups, and working with the disabled.

Representatives from each Leader School arrived in Washington, D.C., Thursday [June 24] for a congressional reception, followed by an award ceremony and educational workshops Friday through Saturday.

"Service-Learning" - Continued

in many helpful ways. The school coordinates an annual Christmas gift caravan to the Pine Ridge Sioux Indian Reservation in North Dakota, has built a playground in a park in Lyons, and has undertaken projects as far away as California.

School head Robert Burkhardt said students are indoctrinated early into the service-learning concept, beginning with a three-week wilderness experience that helps initiate each incoming class. During the wilderness adventure, students are also required to perform a service project within the back country.

Burkhardt said each Eagle Rock student averages 500 to 600 hours of service-learning every year, relating to projects that can range from building new playground equipment for Stanley Park

to serving daily meals on the Eagle Rock campus and working on other campus projects.

Burkhardt and students Jeremy Martinez of Denver, Jena Argenta of Manteca, California, and Marchello Moore of Chicago, Illinois, will travel to Washington, D.C., later this month to attend a congressional reception and educational workshops

(See related story on page 2)

Burkhardt said it is regrettable that the Eagle Rock delegation will not be accompanied by Garth Lewis, the school's service-learning instructional specialist. Burkhardt said Lewis is the primary motivation behind the service-learning projects, and is almost wholly responsible for creating the program that exists at Eagle Rock today.

A recent study by Brandeis Univer-

sity indicated that students who participate in service-learning are more engaged in learning and perform better in school than students who do not. Further, service-learning students largely enjoy helping others and learning in the process.

The National Service-Learning Leader Schools program is administered by the Corporation for National Service, which provides Americans of all ages with opportunities to improve communities through programs such as AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and the National Senior Service Corps.

Burkhardt said the school will use its Washington training to help other schools achieve similar service goals within their respective communities. "We have a role to help other schools know what they can do and how they can do it," he explained.

UPDATE ON GRADUATE HIGHER EDUCATION FUND

by Dick Herb, Director of Operations

Three major fund raising events have occurred since the last issue of "Eagle Eyes." The Estes Park Duckfest brought in about \$3,350. Staff, families, and friends of Eagle Rock bought "duckies" for \$20.00 each, for a total of 165 duckies which were thrown into the Big Thompson River along with several thousand others on May 1. The winning duck (alas, not an Eagle Rock duck!) took its purchaser to Hawaii. Other winners received prizes donated by Estes Park merchants.

Second, Graduate Work Day netted \$4,600. Several parents participated. Joan Varney, parent of ER graduate Ariel came from San Francisco. Joe Secor and his daughter Ruth painted a house. Mike and Mary Hart, parents of graduate Catie, along with relatives Barb and Dennis Day moved a ton or two of rock at a local trout fishing operation. Ruth Whirl and son Casey cleared a few acres of pinecones. Cindy Peterson, mother of Emily, and Jim Strong resealed a sizable deck. Staff, volunteer tutors and alumni also lent a hand for this important ERS community event.

Finally, fifty ERS students and staff handled a huge clean-up on a property that had collected enough junk to fill four 40 cubic yard roll-off dumpsters. The property owners contributed \$3,000 to the Graduate Higher Education Fund for the morning's work.

The results of our efforts and investments are summarized below:

	<u>March Position</u>	<u>July Position</u>
Total Gifts	\$117,160	\$129,511
Investment Gain	17,072	31,557
Awards & Expenses	<u>3,000</u>	<u>4,259</u>
	\$131,232	\$156,809

Thanks to all who have contributed their time as well as to those who have so generously hired us. The next Graduate Work Day is scheduled for Saturday, October 9. If you are interested in helping, hiring or contributing to the Graduate Higher Education Fund, contact me at 970-586-7120 or email me at rlherb@psd.k12.co.us.

ERS DEMOGRAPHICS	
(as of July, 1999)	
Arkansas	1
Arizona	1
California	14
Colorado	22
Illinois	5
Indiana	1
Massachusetts	1
Maryland	2
Michigan	2
Minnesota	1
Montana	1
New Jersey	2
New Mexico	2
New York	5
Oregon	2
Texas	4
Utah	1
Males - 36	Females
	31
Caucasian	29
Native American	2
African American ..	20
Asian	5
Latino/Latina	11

"Grease" - Continued

Lighting was by ERS graduate Brian Hansen, and sound was by intern Alex Head and instructor Richard Gordon. Amanda Paulson, intern, was stage manager, and former staff member Heather Solar did makeup. Choreography was done by Kris McConnell, graduate dance student at CU. Set construction was the product of intern Andy Reichert and instructor James Sherman. Michael Christner, instructor, was head of special effects. Intern Marisha Simons and former intern Mary Beth Mulcahy were in charge of costumes. Interns Alex Head and Lindsay Warner were in charge of publicity. Warner also prepared the program.

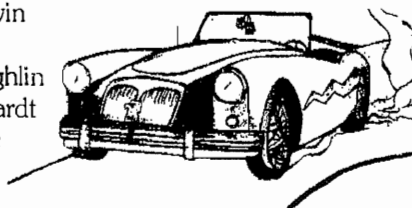
Casts A and B alternated performances, with Cast A performing Wednesday and Friday and Cast B on Thursday and Saturday. Cast A and B members and their roles are noted below:

<u>Role</u>	<u>Cast A</u>	<u>Cast B</u>
Sandy	Melanie Dowers	Loula Tesfai
Rizzo	Talia Alarcon	Charlotte Jones
Frenchy	Eve-lyn Benjamin	Whitney Bell
Marty	Charmaine Mitchell	LaRonda Moore
Jan	Monique Navarro	Ashanti Hassan
Patty	Amy Sedillo	Amy Sedillo
Stefie	Stephanie Woodruff	Stephanie Woodruff
Cheerleader	Sweets Baldwin	Sweets Baldwin
Cha-Cha	Antoinette Macias	Antoinette Macias
Danny	Vincent Davis	Vincent Davis
Kenickie	Chris Rose	Sajah Rowland
Doody	Dustin Yoshimura	Manny Mussenden
Roger	Mike Martin	Howard Knox
Miss Lynch	Danielle Guerra	Danielle Guerra
Blanche	Sandy Rivera	Sandy Rivera
Teen Angel	Danielle Williams	Quitton Anderson
Eugene	Kareem Hernandez	David Nguyen
Johnny Casino	Reggie Sanders	Jacques Fournet
Vince Fontaine	Robert Burkhardt	Robert Burkhardt
Vi	Tamee Culp	Allie Alexander
Craterface (Leo)	Alex Ortiz	Reggie Sanders
Coach Flynn	Michael Flynn	Michael Flynn
Large Wrestler	Michael Glowacki	Michael Glowacki
Mom	Kathryn Sharpe	Kathryn Sharpe
Beauty School Dropouts:	Antoinette Macias	Antoinette Macias
	David Nguyen	David Nguyen
	Amy Sedillo	Amy Sedillo
	Sandy Rivera	Dan Mirsky
	Celeste DeOreo	Celeste DeOreo
	Marisha Simons	Marisha Simons
	Sweets Baldwin	Sweets Baldwin
	Stephanie Woodruff	Stephanie Woodruff
	Ally Alexander	
Pom-Poms:	Amy Sedillo	Amy Sedillo
	Sandy Rivera	Sandy Rivera
	Stephanie Woodruff	Stephanie Woodruff
	Celeste DeOreo	Celeste DeOreo
	Sweets Baldwin	Sweets Baldwin
	Melanie Dowers	Loula Tesfai
Little Sisters:	Janis McLaughlin	Janis McLaughlin
	Eileen Burkhardt	Eileen Burkhardt
	Alexis Frisbee	Alexis Frisbee
	Jerica Phelps	Jerica Phelps

The orchestra featured Jacques Fournet and Celeste DeOreo on guitar; Ana McDaniels on flute; Karolee McLaughlin on piano; Gillian Jones on percussion; bass guitarist Dave Nobel; Matt Mulloy on bass drum; Robert Burkhardt playing the trumpet; and Sean Ambrose playing tenor horn. A marching band was composed of children of staff members: Everett Bowles, Patrick Burkhardt, Nia Smith, Ayanna Smith, and Carly Bowles.

Sets were designed and built by James Sherman, Andy Reichert, Ian Stevens, Ben McCarthy, and Gabriel Ferdinand. Trevor Kaho and Drew Henderson helped with props. The cars were refurbished by Mike Christner, Jeremy Martinez, Alex Ortiz, and Jena Argenta. Stage crew members were Ben McCarthy, Gabriel Ferdinand, C.J. Bush, Jeremy Martinez, Trevor Kaho, Rey Benally, Jena Argenta, and Courtney Osterfelt.

Publicity crew consisted of Lindsay Warner, Emily Peterson, Mike Fowler, Kisha Harris, and Lois Easton. Brian Hansen ran lights with Ian Stevens and Elizabeth Hennigan. Alex Head ran sound. Helping Mary Beth Mulcahy and Marisha Simons with costumes were Ariann Wade, Sweets Baldwin, Dorian Thomas, and Danielle Williams.

**Eagle Rock School**
(Continued)

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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

Judy Jones
Registrar

Janice Lee
Administrative Assistant

Jeff Lemon
Head Cook

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Service Learning

Ted Long
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Chris Mason
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Tim Phelps
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James Sherman
Society and
Social Studies

Brian Simoneau
Cook

Philbert Smith
Director of
Students

Alison Trattner
Language and Literature

Bonnie Vavra
Business Administration
Specialist

JOB EXPERIENCE GIVES STUDENTS TASTE OF REALITY

(excerpted with permission from *The Trail-Gazette*, June 16, 1999, p. 4)

Eagle Rock Learners' Guild Class Provides Practical, Meaningful Business Interaction

by Heather Bruckner

Eight Eagle Rock students have spent the past six weeks in the off-campus reality of Estes Park. Students at Eagle Rock have gained hands-on experience and teamed up with the community through a class called Learners' Guild. Accounting, rock climbing, child care, horsemanship and medical services are among the chosen careers.

Students spend one trimester, six weeks, exploring the "real world" with internships two days a week. "There is nothing more valuable to students than seeing their school and academics relate to the real world," said Alex Head, an English intern and Learners' Guild instructor. "They make an association with how it will help them in the future."

Participants also extensively research their career of choice through papers, business proposals and presentations. "This school focuses on a lot of alternative education," said Jason Cushner, a Learners' Guild instructor and co-founder [of the class]. "We needed a class that was not so contrived." A class like Learners' Guild helps the students with academics, socialization and work experience.

Positive Life Changes

For some Eagle Rock students, the Learners' Guild experience has created inner satisfaction and self-confidence. Eighteen-year-old Courtney Kelly, who works at Autumn Hill Farm in Boulder, is the perfect example of a changed life. Kelly grew up in Oregon riding horses in the hunter/jumper and dressage styles. In her past year at Eagle Rock, there have not been any opportunities to ride.

For Learners' Guild, Kelly helps out at Autumn Hill grooming, tacking and riding horses. "This is so awesome for me," she said. "I'm so happy, and this makes my life a lot easier."

"It (riding) is my passion," Kelly emphasized with a smile. "It gives me some-

thing to work for." Her ultimate goal is to participate in the equestrian events at the 2012 Olympic Games.

The past year at Eagle Rock has been difficult for Kelly, and rediscovering her passion for horses has given her a new outlook on education and motivation. "I really have that balance back in my life," she said. "It's really important for me to have that balance. I'm doing a lot better at school in general."

Cushner expressed amazement and pride regarding Kelly's development through Learners' Guild. "It is so amazing to watch her with this passion," he said. "She has been the most eager and efficient. She has shown a tremendous amount of growth."

Josh Weiser, a 17-year-old student working at Colorado Wilderness Sports, has learned to look at work with a whole new attitude. "I learned that I can have fun at a job and be satisfied," he said. "I can actually look forward to coming to work."

Another Learners' Guild student positively affected by his job is Mike Fowler. He spends two days a week in the child-care field at Kreative Kids. "Sometimes things are so stressful at Eagle Rock, and this relieves all the stress," said Fowler. Fowler was originally interested in law enforcement, but ended up in child-care; his father is a prison warden, and his mother is a home child-care provider. He has learned how the two seemingly different fields are related.

"So many kids think cops are bad," said Fowler. "I want to change that — they need to learn the truth from a young age." His activities include hiking, playing games, field trips and, as he said, "having a lot of fun."

Practical Knowledge

Students leave Learners' Guild with more than personal growth — they gain practical workplace skills. They are also responsible for research and projects related to the internships.

Sixteen-year-old Kycia Harris is pursuing her interest in fashion design by working at the Village Store. She designs and matches outfits, which she has always enjoyed doing on her own. "I have learned a lot, like how to use a cash register and how hard it is to find clothes to wear for work."

Harris' mentor at the Village Store, Katie Webermeier, also brought her to the

Denver Merchandise Mart to learn about new fabrics. After extensive pricing and comparison research, Harris created a business letter and proposal for the Eagle Rock staff to purchase a sewing machine and serger.

Weiser also created a proposal for the school staff to build a bouldering wall. "After all of this research, I think I will come out of Learners' Guild with a decent amount of experience," said Weiser.

At Colorado Wilderness Sports, Weiser and Elizabeth Hennigan also learned retail skills, such as cash register use and inventory, through their internships.

Kelly said she has learned a lot about being responsible. "Since I drive to Boulder twice a week, I have learned how to figure out the financial stuff, like gas money" she said. Her major research project is the history and art of dressage. Kelly plans to take Learners' Guild during her next trimester as well.

Eighteen-year-old Tamee Culp hopes to attend the University of California at Berkeley and be a surgeon. She has had the opportunity to work in the emergency room at Estes Park Medical Center observing and learning. Aside from her hospital observations, which are confidential, Culp has overcome shyness and learned many social skills.

"I know that I need to be prepared for anything that comes through the door," she said. "As a doctor, you're expected to be up for anything."

Bonding With Community

Learners' Guild provides an excellent opportunity for students at Eagle Rock to interact with the Estes Park community. Local businesses have opened their doors to the students as employers and educators. "In general, people are so open to it (having interns)," said Cushner. "The community has been really receptive."

This year's participating businesses and mentors are Wilderness Sports, Autoworks of Estes Park, Estes Park Medical Center, Kreative Kids, the Town of Estes Park, The Village Store, and Autumn Hill Farms. Other Eagle Rock participants were Alex Ortiz at Autoworks and Marchello Moore at the Town of Estes Park Finance Department.

"We are trying to address students' individual affinities in education," said Head. "These types of classes help them be responsible and independent."

HOMAGE OFFERED WITH LOVE

(and thanks to Allen Ginsberg)

by Robert Burkhardt

(Robert wrote this poem as part of his work in one of the four Fifties courses offered this trimester, "The 50s: Global Citizenship")

Each day I see the best young minds in America,
 Who rush from morning exercise to cold-water showers on
 snowy days and drink tainted water from purloined
 kitchen glasses,
 Whose unmade beds lurk behind draped sheets creating souks
 of secrecy where letters from loved ones or incense
 candles burn into their hearts and sometimes onto the
 furniture,
 Who stumble to Thursday morning classes limping from
 wounds sustained on a dream of fields where victory
 chases defeat but never quite succeeds,
 Who sit 'round tables after meals dissecting days or planning
 for posterity as hurried helpers spray table surfaces with
 Ajax,
 Who sometimes listen in Gathering but mostly sit there va-
 cant-eyed against the droning calls for rides to town or
 another meeting in some forgotten room where once
 again the staff shores fragments against ruins,

Who want to run but can't. . .won't
 Who want to stay but won't. . .can't,
 Who look for love in all the right places only to find they are
 wrong and who trudge the paths of possibility like
 Diogenes seeking honesty but are frightened by their own
 faces in the mirror of reality,
 Who listen uncomprehendingly to music from another place
 and tap a beat to help them understand but find the
 echoes more than they can bear so turn the silence up to
 ten,
 Who sit in classes listless looking out a window at a moun-
 tain ledge where life's elusive as fragile petals of the spring,
 Who see the truth and tell the others only to be tormented to
 bitter tears by cave-dwellers,
 Who reach across abyss of hearts to touch another's soul,
 Who stay up late for Lenin plotting revolution,
 Who sleep in Sunday mornings when they can and wonder
 where it all is going,
 Who drink in life and make their peace and sip at certainty's
 soda through sullen straws that finally they toss to raise
 the glass and drink it whole,
 Who leave their childhoods behind to recapture the alluring
 innocence as laughing life undresses itself for their touch
 and all is openness and wonder and a shooting star of
 ecstasy.

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A SHRUG THAT LETS THE FRAGILE SEQUENCE BREAK: THE SIGNALS FROM LITTLETON

(What follows is a speech given by Mark Phillips at the May 27, 1999, San Francisco State University Honors Convocation, a major pre-graduation event honoring over 100 students and with an audience of about 800 faculty, parents, and others. Phillips visited Eagle Rock in October, 1998, and has kept in contact with Eagle Rock in a variety of ways since then.)

Thank you, President Corrigan. Students, families and friends, faculty, administrators, and honored guests, it is a privilege to be invited to address you on this important occasion. First, I congratulate you honors graduates and the families to whom you bring honor. I address my comments to you. . . as a call and a challenge. All of you will live in communities. Many of you are or will someday be parents, and most of you will send your children to public schools. It is to this aspect of your now and future lives that I direct my remarks.

Two events in the past year, one shared and one private, have been on my mind. First, the tragic Littleton school siege, and second, the experience my wife and I had last fall less than a hundred miles from Littleton at Eagle Rock School, near Estes Park. So I want to take you to Littleton and Eagle Rock and use as a thread the poem "A Ritual to Read to Each Other," written by the late American poet William Stafford.

Eagle Rock is a school funded by Honda and designed to provide schooling for 90 at-risk students from all over the country. It isn't Utopia but it is a place where, despite a student body filled with many adolescents who are dealing with anger, alienation, broken homes, and violent environments, it would be almost impossible to imagine students acting violently to each other or towards the school.

William Stafford writes:

*If you don't know the kind of person I am
and I don't know the kind of person you are
a pattern that others made may prevail in the world
and following the wrong god home we may miss our star.*

In Littleton, they clearly missed their star, and there is an image of cliques and of the emotional violence of students visited on each other. Do not forget that emotional violence often precedes physical violence. What were the opportunities for those students to truly know each other? And if you tell me that there have always been cliques, I say that isn't good enough. And if you tell me that there are cliques in other schools and that without guns there would be no violence, I say you are right but that this pattern that others made prevails and allows inter-clique emotional violence to continue and is indeed following the wrong God home.

And the social critic Camille Paglia recently described clique formation in high schools as a pitiless process that has remained amazingly consistent for the past 60 years.

Eagle Rock has student groups, too, and maybe even a clique or two, but the ethos is one of community. Eagle Rock is a town meeting every morning where differences are dealt with and verbal violence is responded to as unacceptable because everyone is to be given respect and violations of this code will be dealt with by the whole community.

And Eagle Rock is Sajah, a student from the East Bronx, who says to me, "I saw my best friend gunned down by this

other gang and he died in my arms; I made up my mind then to turn my life around before it was too late." And for Sajah everyday at Eagle Rock is a meaningful opportunity. More than a few Eagle Rock students have experienced real violence and, having done so, can hardly trivialize it.

And it is Sweets who came out of a hellhole school in Trenton and is blossoming into a potential future leader for her community.

And Eagle Rock is Haimanot and Loula Tesfai who were minutes from execution in Eritrea before their release was bought by a wealthy relative. And one is a charismatic leader and dancer and the other a deep and insightful writer.

And Eagle Rock is Jose Anthony Diaz from Manhattan who was our personal tour guide and who told us that he was expelled once but has been given a second chance and, "No way I'm gonna blow it this time!" He's been back out there. He knows what he almost lost. Eagle Rock is a special place.

And Eagle Rock is also Ariel Varney, now a sophomore at SFSU who, when she visited with my teacher trainees recently, said: "Not a single day goes by that I don't think of Eagle Rock. It is with me all the time." Can you imagine a Columbine student saying that or a student in almost any of our high schools?

And Stafford writes:

*For there is many a small betrayal in the mind,
a shrug that lets the fragile sequence break
sending with shouts the horrible errors of childhood
storming out to play through the broken dike*

And we are reminded that all it takes is a shrug, in this case one act by two kids, to break the fragile sequence that holds a school together. . . that holds a community together. . . and the dike that is our illusion of control does break. . . and for the moment the shouts of these children are heard all across the land. And, again, all it takes is one shrug. . . and the consequences are indeed more fragile than ever in a world in which emotional violence can easily be converted into widespread and tragic external violence. . . in which guns can be obtained by children. . . and in which images of violence are natural and pervasive parts of the media landscape.

Stafford writes:

*And as elephants parade holding each elephant's tail,
but if one wanders. . . the circus won't find the park,
I call it cruel and maybe not the root of all cruelty
to know what occurs but not recognize the fact.*

At Eagle Rock, all students go through a rite of passage, an initiation, something which the mythologist Joseph Campbell noted has been lost in our contemporary urban and suburban worlds. They go on a 21 day wilderness trek, climb mountains, literally hold each other's fates in their hands as a shared rope helps them transcend rocks and mountains. They learn just how tragic a shrug can be. . . and how one wandering will impact the whole community.

To know what occurs but not recognize the fact! In Littleton the signs were omnipresent. . . a letter filled with violence. . . a website filled with violence. . . a report from another parent to the sheriff. . . essentially ignored. Were they all asleep? And now that it has occurred, is the fact truly recognized? There is no absence of people with answers. . . metal detectors. . . uniforms. . . better control. All answers in search of the right question which almost no one has asked. The fact is that most high schools are filled with the undercurrent of emotional violence that ultimately erupted at Littleton. The fact is that for every

"Littleton" - Continued

Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold there are hundreds of students who have had the fantasy but stopped short of the act. The fact is that this would not happen at Eagle Rock because there the fact is recognized that, if you build a meaningful, challenging shared experience which involves continual calculated risk taking, students will neither feel nor act violently towards each other. And we are told that the comfort level in Littleton is high. . .and clearly there is little shared meaningful healthy excitement. Building a comfortable environment for yourselves and your students is not the answer and does not recognize the fact.

I was struck by a comment of actor Peter Coyote who, in discussing a retrospective showing of Akira Kurosawa's great film Dersu Uzala, about a man who is a product of the wilderness, noted the importance of remaining connected to the wilderness, and pointed out that civilized man suffers by comparison. "All of our 'advantages' from another point of view, actually weaken us, have softened our physical bodies and weakened our characters." Physical and intellectual and emotional challenge. . .shared. And how much of that was in Erik's or Dylan's lives, and how much is or will be in the lives of our children and our children to come?

Screenwriter Stephen Schiff, who grew up in Littleton, recently wrote in the New York Times about how Littleton has lost a sense of place and a sense of character. . .all replaced by what Schiff calls Mall-land, an anonymous commodified landscape. Writes Schiff, "In this world meaning evaporates; in a world of monotonous getting and spending, the need to shake things up, to make a mark. . .any mark. . .may overpower everything else, including sense." Schiff then goes on to say that, while many blame media violence and the easy access to guns, he thinks something else is also at work here. "Children who grow up with a sense of place and character know the difference between gunfire on television and real gunfire; they know the difference between the fake deaths of movie actors and the final deaths that can be inflicted on others. The trench coat mafia's particular brand of evil may have stemmed from a terrible absence — a loss of perspective that might be one of the unforeseen consequences of a loss of place." Most high schools have nothing to do with character or place and are very much part of the anonymous monotonous landscape.

At Eagle Rock there is an intimate connection to the land and to the place. Students are still creating the school, both the physical plant, which they continue to build with their hands, and the shared experience of learning. From that early wilderness experience to the daily town meetings to the service learning in which they all engage in Estes Park, there is an intimate sense of place and the landscape of their daily lives is rich and challenging and meaningful and anything but anonymous or monotonous.

And Stafford writes:

*and so I appeal to a voice, to something shadowy
a remote important region in all who talk:
though we could fool each other, we should consider —
lest the parade of our mutual life get lost in the dark.*

And I appeal to a voice in you to recognize that our lives truly are mutual and to make certain that this fact does not get lost in the dark of our own everyday routines. . .and Dylan's mother called to change her hairdresser appointment when she found out that her son was one of the perpetrators. . .and a whole school and a whole community was clearly in the dark regarding many of its children. And are we too? We need to not fool ourselves or each other. In Littleton they did — the

sheriff who ignored the warning, the school officials who slept through multiple signals, all of those who were not aware that Dylan and Eric were part of their mutual lives.

And Stafford concludes his poem with these words:

*for it is important that awake people be awake,
or a breaking line may discourage them back to sleep;
the signals we give — yes or no, or maybe —
should be clear; the darkness around us is deep.*

Are we awake? How easy it is to go back to sleep. And if we think that it was just there in Littleton at Columbine, in that one place during that one day, with those two boys. . .we are missing it. . .not recognizing the fact. . .fooling each other. . .and have already gone back to sleep.

Anthropologist Angeles Arrien talks about the processing of the living dead, the many among us who are biologically alive but spiritually dead, and describes four rivers which can help us avoid becoming part of that procession: the river of challenge, the river of inspiration, the river of surprise and the river of wonder.

And I wonder how many of those rivers run through the lives of those students at Columbine. . .and did any of them run through the lives of Eric and Dylan? And why does it surprise us that they sought their challenge and inspiration and surprise as they ultimately did? There is a lot of evidence to suggest that the Mall-land of Littleton described by Schiff was one with considerable spiritual bankruptcy.

At Eagle Rock the rivers of challenge, inspiration, surprise and wonder fill every day for every student. There is little time to be asleep, and energy runs productively high late into the night. And will those rivers run through your lives and those of your children?

You don't have to go to Colorado to find this dream realized: Reno Taini's and Ed Lopez's Community Environmental Education program in Daly City; Wayne MacDonald's and Karen Tiu's Urban Pioneer Program at San Francisco McAteer High. These programs both run by SFSU graduates are mini-Eagle Rocks, without the mountain setting and the Honda endowments but fundamentally and spiritually the same. These programs are created for kids on the margins, kids at risk — but whose children aren't at risk these days? And the margins keep extending.

So I ask you to help create in your communities, your schools, in the lives of your children, a sense of place, a sense of challenge and inspiration and surprise and wonder. I ask you to help create places where children and adolescents and adults can find a meaningful and shared challenge in the act of creating. I ask that, even as you travel into hyperspace, you also connect yourselves and your children to the land. I ask that you do what you can to restore the ritual of meaningful and healthy initiation to the lives of your children.

I hope that some of this will serve as a challenge to you. . . as you work to create your communities and schools for your children. I hope you will remember the signal that has been sent from Littleton. . .and from Eagle Rock. . .

The darkness around is indeed deep and we need to send out the signal that says, "Yes, we are awake," and, that in a world increasingly filled with anonymous and monotonous physical and spiritual landscapes, the beacons of light provided by Eagle Rock and other oases will be ones which we can create for ourselves and our children as well.

I thank you for the opportunity to have shared these thoughts with you. . .and wish the very best for you and your families.