A POST OAK HIGH SCHOOL?
by John Long, Head of School

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APRIL 21-22, 2010

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By John Long, Head of School

This is a story about eight wooden blocks and a five-year-old girl. The eight wooden blocks are nestled in a hinged wooden box. The five-year-old girl is sitting alone at a small wooden table. She is very good at arithmetic, her teacher tells me, but rarely chooses to work with this kind of spatial, three-dimensional puzzle.

That’s interesting, because in an expression of her mathematical genius Dr. Montessori developed learning materials integrating arithmetic, geometry, and algebra. It’s also interesting to note that there is a significant body of contemporary research exploring the relationship of spatial ability, mathematical achievement, and gender (687,000 Google entries).

These eight wooden blocks are called The Binomial Cube because they are a concrete representation of the algebraic binomial \((a + b)^3\) although our five year old will not encounter the algebraic presentation until she reaches Upper Elementary four years from now. The blocks include one small and one large cube and six prisms of two different sizes. You stack them in two layers to form a composite cube. There is one right way to put them together.

I watched as she built the bottom layer of the cube inside the hinged box. She knew it was not right—I could tell from her body language—but even so, she attempted to fold up the sides of the box, checking to see if the blocks fit. They did not, so she tried again. And again. And again.

She turned sideways in her chair and looked across the classroom. She turned back and tried again. Still no better. From the other side of the observation window I could see her error. I was only six feet away from her. I wanted to reach out and fix it, to show her how to do it, to make her problem go away. She had been working at this for eight or nine minutes and was stuck. She stopped again, got up, and went to talk to her teacher. Her teacher came over to the table and sat down. Two other children came to watch. They held their hands behind their backs in “observation pose.” She explained her dilemma. The teacher spoke a few words. One of the two observers, another five-year-old girl, reached out and turned one of the cubes. The sun emerged from behind the clouds. The teacher watched and the other children watched as she put the fourth piece in place on the bottom layer and quickly put the four blocks in place on the top layer.

She closed the box and put on the lid. It all fit. It was right. She had done it. Herself. With a little help. She looked up and smiled.

Her teacher and the other two children walked away. She opened the box and took out the blocks again. She rebuilt the puzzle. She looked up again and smiled. She walked over to her teacher to report her success and her teacher matched her smile.

She went back to the table and took out the blocks again. She rebuilt the puzzle and smiled again. She took out the blocks a fourth time and rebuilt the cube. And a fifth.

Finally, she was done; satisfied for now that she knew how to build this puzzle. She looked around the classroom. She was ready now so she carried the box back to the shelf and returned it to the place it belongs. She went on to other work.

What did she learn while honing her spatial ability? She chose this work herself and initially experienced frustration. She could have been defeated by that, given in to her negative feelings and simply avoided that work or anything like it in the future. Instead, she persevered in the face of difficulty. She asked for help when she needed it and this simply reaffirmed her image of herself as resourceful. She repeated the construction successfully, experiencing the emotional satisfaction that comes from mastering something difficult. Next time she encounters an intellectual or physical challenge, she will know that she is capable of mastering it. She will know that she has resilience and resourcefulness as well as intelligence at her command. She has advanced the construction of her own brain for a lifetime of success.

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Class pictures

Wednesday, April 14

Please do not schedule any appointments for your children on this day. We are not able to reschedule or make-up class pictures and would like everyone to be included.

Volunteer with graphic design skills needed

The 2011 Gala Invitation Committee is looking for parent volunteers with graphic design skills to work on the committee. If you are interested, please contact Christina Cantu at christinacantu@postoakschool.org.

Opera song lyrics - online!

Parents: you can find the lyrics for the opera Pearl online in the Parent Community. You can get to the parent community by clicking on “Community Login” on the bottom right of the homepage. Your username is your first and last name together, i.e. “johnsmith.” If you cannot remember your password, leave that field blank, and click submit—your password will be emailed to the address we have on file for you.

Host family needed

A host family is needed in April for a visiting Montessori administrator from London, England. Jane Luertkens is the head of the Elementary school at the Maria Montessori Institute in London. She works with Lynne Lawrence, executive director of Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) and head of the school. Please contact Lower School Director Mirani Smith if you are able to provide accommodations for Jane.

Important dates—school year 2010-11

Watch The Weekly Post and our website for more information about next year’s academic calendar. Here are a few dates we have already determined:

- Aug. 16–20: First week for Elementary and Middle School
- Aug. 23–27: First week for Infant Community and Primary
- Nov. 24–26: Thanksgiving Break – school closed
- Dec. 20–Jan. 3: Winter Break – school closed
- Jan. 17: Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday – school closed
- Feb. 21: Presidents Day holiday - school closed
- Mar. 14–18: Spring Break – only students with expanded-year contracts attend
- April 22: Good Friday – school closed
- May 27: Last day of school
Get your opera tickets!

Get your tickets now for the 2010 production of the opera *Pearl* by the students of The Post Oak School! Pearl will be performed Saturday, April 24, at 7:00 pm at Episcopal High School in Underwood Theatre.

**Pearl**

* A production by the students of The Post Oak School
* **Presale:** $10.00
* **At the door:** $15.00
* April 24, 2010 • 7:00 pm
* Episcopal High School • Underwood Theatre

Tickets are $10 each for children and adults and are available for purchase on the website. They can also be purchased in the front office during the week of April 12–16. Online purchasing ends on Thursday, April 22, after which time you can only purchase tickets at the door for $15 each.

Tickets purchased online can only be retrieved the night of the opera at the will-call table.

Volunteers needed for the opera!

* I only have an hour, would that be helpful? YES!
* I only have time to do stuff at home, would that work? YES!
* I work during the day, and only have time on the weekend, would you like my help? YES!
* I don’t sew costumes or work on the computer, are there other types of work to do? YES!

Any and all help is appreciated especially during Opera Week (April 19 - 24). Please contact the Opera Chairs: Munira Janmohamed or Claudia Rojas-Jimenez. Even if you have only an hour, please offer your help.
Opera • Pearl
Saturday, April 24, 7:00 pm at Episcopal High School
Page ideas created by Marketing Crew:

CREW FROM NICKERSON’S CLASS

“We have worked hard, but we’re almost done. It will look fabulous, and it’s sure been fun!”

CREW FROM LOCKETT’S CLASS

“We’ve built with Darwin, created the sets. We’ve prepared it all – it’s the singers’ turn next!”

NARRATORS

“But there was another drama, never included in the chronicles of the Colonial South, that was taking place, an underwater drama in the rivers themselves.”
Lemonade Day!

Lemonade Day is Sunday, May 2! Sign up for this fun and FREE educational activity for children of any age. Just fill out this form and return it to the front office at The Post Oak School by Wednesday, April 14, so that we can distribute the FREE backpacks you will need to set up your stand. It is that simple! For more information you may go to www.lemonadeday.org.

**Lemonade Day Participant Information & Consent Form**

- Complete a form for each Participant or Register Online @ Houston.LemonadeDay.org

**Participant Contact Information (For notification and tracking only)**

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<td>Have you participated in Lemonade Day before? □ Yes □ No</td>
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<td>Are you on facebook? □ Yes □ No</td>
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**School Information**

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**Caring Adult Contact Information (For notification and tracking only)**

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**Parent/Guardian Consent**

As the parent/guardian of the child named below, I consent to my child’s participation in Lemonade Day. I understand that Lemonade Day is a family event, and I agree that I (or another responsible adult that I approve) will assist and supervise my child. I understand that the organizers of Lemonade Day are not and will not be responsible for supervising my child.

I also understand that certain municipalities may have certain health and safety requirements so that my child can participate in Lemonade Day. I agree to comply with these requirements. (Go to www.lemonadeday.org click on Houston and go to Forms and Resources - Health Dept. Guidelines.) I also understand that the certain municipalities must be provided the name of the person who will supervise my child and the exact location of my child’s lemonade stand ahead of time.

I agree to release, indemnify, defend and hold harmless the organizers of Lemonade Day and anyone associated with it or Lemonade Day from any and all claims for personal injuries or property damage resulting from my child’s participation in Lemonade Day, even if such injury is caused by the negligence of theirs.

**Must Have Signature**

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FAX TO: 800-684-2060 or
MAIL TO: Lemonade Day 1800 West Loop South, Suite 1875 Houston, TX 77027
Bearkats
Spring Signing Day
April 28, 2010

Sign up for the 2010-11 sports seasons!

Students currently in grades 5, 6, & 7: join us on April 28 between 11:30 am–1:00 pm in the gym for pizza and to learn more.
Astronaut & mountain climber speaks to Post Oak audience

Astronaut and Mount Everest climber Scott Parazynski, M.D., spoke as the guest lecturer for Post Oak’s Annual Spring Lecture on March 30. The title of his presentation was “The Sky is NOT the Limit.” He was introduced by parent Dr. Mario Kapusta, who knows Dr. Parazynski from spinning class.

While he was an astronaut, Parazynski flew five space missions, made seven space walks (including one on the Russian space station Mir), and traveled more than 23 million miles in orbit.

Parazynski began climbing mountains in his teens, and has climbed in the Alaska Range, the Cascades, the Rockies, the Alps, the Andes and the Himalayas. On his second attempt to scale Mt. Everest in 2009, he became the first astronaut to stand on top of the world.
Upper Elementary talent show

Upper Elementary students hosted a talent show on April 1. Here are some photos from the event.

Music for Our Children’s Ears

Meeting of the F.I.S.H. group (Families Integrating School & Home)

Friday, April 16
Common Room

Presented by:
Tamara Basham and Deidre Lodrig
1. Foot race.
2. Putting together a collaborative book about "Fatima" the elephant, who weighs 11.5 tons.
3. "Manta rays live in the ocean ... manta rays swim."
4. Puzzle time!
5. Math practice.
6. Elementary students serve Infant Community children for class community service.
8. Learning to understand the concept of teens.
9. Skip counting with the short bead chain—all 10 of them.
10. How to fold a napkin with precision and focus.
11. Faculty judge Middle School "top chefs."
12. Working with a pin map.
13. At peace in the reading corner.
14. Orly Kluk's class sings and dances about meteor showers in their play "Spaced Out."
Monday, April 12

Conference Day
Classes not in session; only students with expanded-year contracts attend: Middle School in session

Carpooling is cool!
Have you thought of carpooling? It saves on gas, lightens the traffic in our driveway, and saves time. Consider calling a Post Oak neighbor to share the driving duty.

How Green Was My Weekly Post?
We print The Weekly Post each Friday. If you’d like to save paper and ink, consider reading the news online. Contact Shannon Neufeld (shannonneufeld@postoakschool.org) to arrange an electronic subscription.

Parent Basketball
Wednesday Nights
If you are interested in joining this informal Wednesday pick-up game at 8:00 pm in the Post Oak gym, add your name to the weekly notice by emailing parent Alan Ying at alan.j.ying@gmail.com

Barbara Hacker’s green tips of the week
Re-use file folders!
Are you in the habit of tossing—or recycling—file folders that have “outlived their usefulness? Place stickers over the tabs, and you can use them again. Or invest in hanging files, which make it easy to swap out tabs (please purchase folders made of recycled material).

Honey do. A couple of teaspoons of honey work just as well on a sore throat as commercial cough syrup—and are much safer, especially for children. (But never give honey to infants under the age of 12 months.)

Keep track of school events with our online calendar—or download a fresh copy of the school’s printed calendar, all at http://www.postoakschool.org

The Weekly Post appears on most Fridays of the regular school year.
You can receive a printed copy from your oldest child, or a PDF version online.
Submit letters, articles, or photos in electronic form by 5 pm on the Tuesday before publication to Communications Coordinator Shannon Neufeld (shannonneufeld@postoakschool.org).

THE POST OAK SCHOOL: founded in 1963 and accredited by both the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) and the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS)
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