he minnows crowd together, dancing with the tiniest little steps, swimmingly. They stop. They sing. Of course, minnows can sing. And if minnows can sing, why not little girls? It is opera week at Post Oak.

A mom and dad stopped to speak with me this morning. Pearl is on everyone’s mind this week. Their two children were both on the crew two years ago when we produced the opera Harlequin. That is important work, and both were inclined to make that same choice again with Pearl. It seemed safe. Comfortable. Neither of them aspires to be on stage. But with a little encouragement, they joined the cast this year. On stage. Singing and dancing. At home, they’ve been singing songs from
Harlequin for the past two years, songs learned through osmosis by every member of the cast and crew, songs that have been gradually eclipsed by the music from Pearl since January. And they've been practicing choreography in the kitchen.

Each day here at school begins and ends with a gathering of all 153 Elementary students, their classroom teachers, parent volunteers, Post Oak music teacher Charles Dotson, substitute teacher (and dance instructor) Jamie Ward, and our visiting maestra and maestro Hollis and Bill Bokhout. At the end-of-day gathering groups are invited to demonstrate what they worked on that day. Yesterday’s session began with the crayfish singing her solo, a song celebrating heroic effort—a nine-year-old standing very small and alone in front of every Elementary student in the school. Standing very small and VERY TALL. Her voice was clear and strong.

At Post Oak, we work to create a social environment that supports leadership and risk-taking (After all, there is risk in standing in front of all your schoolmates singing solo. A supportive environment—where effort is encouraged, where mistakes are not mocked and where everyone’s success is celebrated—makes it possible to take such creative risks.) And so a nine-year-old will stand alone, and yet not alone, in front of all her schoolmates and sing, “I will try, I will try, I am not afraid.”

This morning’s gathering ended with a request for two volunteers, a boy and a girl, willing to step forward to sing. Many hands went up. Two ten-year-olds were chosen. To sing what? A little improvisation. Improv. Bill said, “Dialog in opera is sung. It is called ‘recitative.’ Say that.” And everyone repeated, “recitative.” Our two ten-year olds named their ad hoc characters. They needed a dramatic situation. A fight. About what? They’re married. No, something more interesting. The last piece of pizza. Yes! “OK, you’re going to have a fight about the last piece of pizza. You’re going to sing the fight. Are you ready?”

Would you, gentle reader, be willing to take on that spontaneous assignment in front of 150 of your peers? Our two students were amazing; they were operatic; they were humorous. “I want that piece of pizza,” he sang. “No, it’s mine,” she responded. Back and forth, they went in recitative to appreciative laughter and applause. If you can do that, what can’t you do?

Since January, children have had the Pearl CD and the music to their own song. This week they have been refining the song, learning the choreography, and putting the two together. They have seen everyone’s part. They now have a vision of the whole, and know more clearly toward what they as a complete cast and crew are working.

Saturday night the curtain will rise on the final production. The costumes, the lights, the props, the set—everything will be in place. If previous productions give us any insight, be prepared to be amazed. And yet in many ways it is even more amazing to witness the process, the hard work and practice, the humming and the skipping, the “very good, let’s do it again,” that lead to Saturday night.

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Appropriate actions for opera evening

- **Parents should apply stage make-up at home** before arriving at the theater:
  - base for everyone
  - eyeliner—top and bottom
  - mascara
  - cheek rouge
  - lipstick (girls, orange/red; boys, brownish/pink)
  - pull hair back out of face

Volunteers “tweak” make-up as needed when children arrive at the cafeteria.

  **Student schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:00</td>
<td>Sea currents, sea sirens, water nymphs, and oyster king arrive for additional prep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>EHS cafeteria opens for student drop-off (warm-ups will begin promptly at 6:15 with the directors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:15</td>
<td>Deadline for arrival of actors—already wearing costume and make-up!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents must proceed directly to the auditorium: do not wait with your child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:45</td>
<td>Deadline for arrival of crew members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>Show time!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Crew members have black “crew” shirts to wear on the night of the show. Crew members will sit together in a reserved section at the front of the theater (left side), and be recognized at the end.

- The Episcopal High School cafeteria will open for students at 6 pm on opera night. Actors should arrive no later than 6:15 pm. Please drop your child off at the cafeteria and proceed to the auditorium.

- Crew members should report to the cafeteria with the rest of the cast, and will be escorted to their seats by a staff member. Drop-off time for crew is no later than 6:45 pm. A handful of crew members will be “working” the night of the show, and may be asked to report earlier. You will be contacted personally if your child has a job assignment on the night of the show.

Thanks, as always, for your support.

More opera notes for parents:

**No photographs:** take pictures at home before coming to the theater. Flash photography is distracting to performers on stage. Remember that JH Photography will edit a video of the entire rehearsal and performance process.

**No flowers:** congratulate your young performer all you like at home after the show—but public displays at the auditorium call too much attention to individuals in what should be a community endeavor.

**All students** will be directed to the cafeteria after the performance. Parents are to pick up their children from the cafeteria.
**Opera • Pearl**

Saturday, April 24, 7:00 pm at Episcopal High School

Page ideas created by Marketing Crew:

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**The Triumvirate**

“We’re free, we’re free, we’re free to leave the king! You see, you see, the present made him sing! The heart, the heart, will open wide its doors! And love, and love, will end all our wars!”

---

**Sea Sirens**

“Pearl is our captive, to be sure No more intruders shall we endure”

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Use this form or order online with a credit card through the link on the left side of the Post Oak website. Please return this form to the front office at Post Oak.

| Student's name: | __________________________ |
| Class (of oldest child): | __________________________ |
| Phone number: | __________________________ |
| Number of DVDs: | ________ X $30/each = __________ |

Write checks to “JH Photography,” with “Post Oak Opera DVD” in memo line. Order online with a credit card through the link on the left side of the Post Oak website. DVDs will be available for pick-up on Monday, May 10, at Post Oak. Photos from Pearl will be available to view and purchase starting May 10 at www.JHPhotographyOnline.com/Clients/PostOakOpera2010
On April 17-18 the following Post Oak Pedallers joined 13,000 other bicyclists to ride the 150 miles from Houston to Austin: Students: Barker, Rob Pascoe, Ben Peters, Doug Peters, Clo Rooney, Mark Rountbert, Jeff Schneider, Ricardo Scornii, Alumni: Lou Posada, Nikhil Schneider. Parents of Alumni: Manuel Posada. Friends of Post Oak: Teri Gerber

by Grade 7

The BP MS150 was this past weekend, and all of the Post Oak Pedallers were eager to start the ride. At 7:15 am we set off. It wasn’t until after we started that I realized how much our training helped, not only physically, but mentally also. During the MS150, you are surrounded by other people trying to pass you, and going at a different speed than you, but thanks to Manuel Posada, we were all prepared to yell “slowing,” or “on your left,” and we also knew what to do when we were passed. Even though we weren’t able to avoid all injuries, whenever somebody in our group got hurt, we were there making sure that they were ok and that they didn’t need anything else.

I think that the MS150 was a very rewarding experience, and I’m sure that everyone was happy and relieved when they crossed the finish line, and saw everyone else cheering them on. Hopefully, next year we will have an even larger group, and I know that I’ll definitely be there. Thank you so much to all of the parents who helped us, and see you next year!
John Long ‘Profile’ featured on PBS

Head of School John Long will be featured in an episode of “Profile with Greg Scheinman” on PBS. Scheinman, father of Primary student [redacted], shadowed and interviewed Mr. Long at Post Oak in January for the piece. Past episodes of “Profile” have featured some of Houston’s most influential and successful leaders and entrepreneurs such as Tammie Khan, executive director of Houston Children’s museum, Scott & Stacy Simons of Chez Nous restaurant, Brock Wagner, founder of St. Arnold’s Brewery, and Deborah Canon, CEO of Houston Zoo.

Tune into PBS on Thursday, May 6 at 10:30 pm

Middle School book corner

Middle School students read a novel called The Chosen, by Chaim Potok, two weeks ago before our trip to Blackwood. It was a wonderful book about two boys with totally opposite religious backgrounds. The boys become best friends and help each other through the troubles of adolescence: however, their dads’ differing views on Judaism bring them apart. I would recommend this book to anyone looking for a good book to read.

— Grade 7

The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton is a novel about the struggles in society from the perspective of a not-sofortunate teenage boy named Ponyboy Curtis. Ponyboy is a part of a gang called the Greasers. The Greasers have an ongoing fight with the social upper-class group called the Socs. Throughout the novel you experience what it is like for Ponyboy to grow up in such a bad beat-up neighborhood. Whether it’s fighting with the Socs, going through family troubles, or trying to figure life out on his own, Ponyboy will always find a way to prevail. The Outsiders is a great novel about the struggle in social classes and breaks many stereotypes we have about each. This novel will surely make you think twice about how you label and treat others.

— Grade 8
1. Tamara Basham and Deidre Lodrig discuss children’s music to the Families Integrating School & Home (F.I.S.H.) group.

2. Preparing the soil for planting.

3. Middle School masks ready for painting!

4. Breathing exercises before art class.

5. Getting out the grime after working outdoors.
Spring Signing Day
Bearkats
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.
Barbara Hacker’s green tip of the week

Phthalates (found in flexible plastics) are being phased out of many products in the U.S. and Europe due to health concerns. Avoid vinyl windows, doors, and shower curtains; product packaging or food-storage containers with the #3 recycling symbol; toys made with PVC; other flexible plastics, including plastic wrap—it probably contains phthalates unless the label specifically says otherwise. Read labels on personal-care products, looking for phthalates in other forms; DEHP, di-(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate, Bis (2-ethylhexyl) phthalate, BeBP, benzylbutyl phthalate, DBP, di-n-butyl phthalate, DMP, and dimethyl phthalate. And when in doubt, go all-natural—because phthalates can be labeled “fragrance.”

Notice Board

**POPA Parent Party!**

*Let us say thanks to all the volunteers for all you’ve done throughout the year, with special thanks to our Opera Volunteers.*

Did you ever volunteer in the classroom, plan a luncheon, chaperone a field trip, work on an event or an errand for a teacher? Are you a room parent or a class captain? Have you done any work in support of your child and the school? *Then this event is for you!* Let us say thanks for all the work that parents do to make Post Oak such an exceptional school. Drop by to mix and mingle, enjoy a treat, and let us honor you.

**POPA Parent Party**

**TUESDAY, MAY 4, 9:00–11:00 A.M.**

At the home of:
Claudia Rojas-Jimenez

Crepes and breakfast treats

**POPA Parent Party**

Tuesday, May 4, 9:00–11:00 a.m.

At the home of:
Claudia Rojas-Jimenez

Crepes and breakfast treats

**Blood drive at Post Oak**

Thursday, May 6
8:30 am–2:30pm

Sign up online with Post Oak Code: UU59 at https://www.commitforlife.org

The drive is in honor of Post Oak mom Karen Swerdlin who recently needed blood for surgery. Karen is home and recovering well. If you have any questions about signing up, please contact Christina Cantu (direct: 281-822-8024).

**About the Weekly Post**

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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