

# RIEL FAMILY NEWS LETTER

VOL. 2 NO.2 FEBRUARY, 1992 PRICE ONE CENT THE COPY-FREE TO FAMILY

## SPECIAL RELATIVE OF THE YEAR PROGRAM PLANNED

A FAMILY LETTER FROM LISTY GILLINGHAM

### Christmas Party Review

I would personally like to thank everyone who contributed to the Riel Super Party. It was a Christmas celebration that showed a lot of spirit and love.

I did poll people at the party to determine if they were content with the style of the party. Most people were up for something different that involved the kids *real* participation. So here is my proposal. I would like to match each aunt and uncle with a niece or a nephew. It would be the responsibility of each person, big or small, to correspond with their match on special holidays and special occasions. The kids would be encouraged to write notes, draw pictures, or make whatever they like for their special relative for the year. At Thanksgiving we could evaluate whether or not we would like to do something special for Christmas or not.

Since we are out-numbered by kids vs. adults, I thought we could pair up some of the kids to make it easier on those parents. I have given a sample of my proposal so that you could see how it would work.

Adults		Kids	
1.	Dad	1.	Brett
2.	Mom	2.	J.J.
3.	Rich	3.	Michael
4.	Liz	4.	Jessica
5.	Ed	5.	Curtis
6.	Jan	6.	Kristy and Annie
7.	Margaret	7.	Nathan and Christopher
8.	Bud	8.	Bryce
9.	Francie	9.	Megan
10.	Jose	10.	Scott
11.	Carol	11.	Michelle
12.	Jeff	12.	Kevin
13.	Robert	13.	Timothy
14.	Karla	14.	David
15.	Listy	15.	Brian and Katy
16.	Bob	16.	Craig
17.	Birdy	17.	Dustin
18.	Bruce	18.	Jason



Now here's the hard part. I need to know if you are interested in trying this new suggestion. It's very easy. Just call us at 464-3701 and say "Yes, we are in!" or "No, count us out." We have an answering machine and it's very good at taking messages. I need to know before Dad decides to publish the next newsletter, so that I can publish the official matchings for the year. Thanks Tons!

Listy Gillingham

RFNL011

**VACATION NEWS**

The Ed and Jan Riel family enjoyed another camping trip, this time at San Clemente State Beach Park. Unlike the last trip there were no stolen surf boards. However, Nathan wore out the rear tire on his bike, and skidded and fell. No harm done except for some skinned knees and elbows. Ed commented that he experienced more spills than rides on his board. Those big waves are tough to catch!

You all are reminded that the third deposit on the Francie Forty celebration was due on February 1. In case you forgot, it's not too late to send in your reservation money. In case you have forgotten, the celebration starts on Friday, July 17th and ends on Sunday afternoon.

**BIRTHDAY CALENDAR**

Birthday celebrations with Grandma were a little mixed up in January. Megan's celebration was delayed due to conflicts with the school schedule. However, Margaret reports that Megan had a very special party at home, in that two ponies were rented, and rides in a pony drawn cart were enjoyed by all. However, Grandma did get a head start on February by taking Brett out for a celebration. There was a trip to a Boy Scout supply outlet for some important scout gear. After lunch at McDonalds there was a trip to the zoo and than to the Science Museum. Another great day, and **CONGRATULATIONS BRETT!**

**FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY CALENDAR**

Jose Castro	February 25	43
Michael Mehan	February 10	11
Brett Sorem	February 10	11

**JASEN BENESCH ELECTED TREASURER OF GREEN SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL**

We were informed recently that Jasen Benesch ran against and defeated 12 other candidates for the office of Treasurer of the Green School Student Council. He and his campaign manager (John) made a duel presentation before the entire student body, and the contents are recorded as follows:

John:	Remember this face It belongs to Jase.
Jasen	I'm no fool I do well in school
John	In math he's an ace He'll be no disgrace.
Jason:	So be really cool And follow this rule.
John:	In the treasurers race Put an X next to Jase.
Jason:	Remember I'm itchin' For the treasurers position.
John:	If you're looking for a jewel Jasen is your tool.
Jasen:	Let me state my case Treasurer's my place.
John:	So start a tradition

Jasen  
& John

Vote Jasen, it's your mission.  
Remember one more time  
Our candidate's rhyme:  
Remember his face  
It belongs to Jase.  
In the treasurer' race  
Put an X next to Jase.  
Remember this face  
It belongs to Jase.

In addition to the campaign speech, replicas of a \$100 bill were handed out in which the picture of Franklin was replaced with a picture of Jasen. **CONGRATULATIONS, JASEN**, we know you will do well in this important position.

**CAROL BENESCH INTERVIEWED BY L.A. TIMES REPORTER**

Some time ago the L.A. Times newspaper published an article on a new teaching technique being tested in the San Diego School District. This procedure, called Turning Point, is based on the idea that students will learn faster and more efficiently if traditional methods are replaced with a philosophy which allows considerable student interaction in the classroom. Students are encouraged to work together in small groups, to move about the classroom as they wish, and to learn in an informal manner. Several teachers involved in trying out this new concept were interviewed, including Carol. She was quoted as saying "The students understand that what we're trying to do is help them work in the best way possible." Carol pointed out that she has a son whose teacher also is involved in the program. "He's so pleased," Carol said. "He told me, 'We get to drink whenever we want to drink, and if we want to walk around we can!' I think it's a great way to establish rapport with many kids." No doubt some of the other teachers in the family will be interested in talking about this new idea with Carol.

**CHRISTEN CASTRO IN MODELING COMPETITION**

"On Jan. 5, 1992 I and my best friend, Tonya Tingesdahl attended Powers Development Center search for new stars, a modeling competition. While we were there we competed with about 500 other anxious girls. After Tonya and I did what we had to (consisting of walking down a 500 ft. modeling ramp, then stating our name, age and participant number) we went to little table that was off to the side where we purchased an 'outrageous organizer' (an European fad recently brought to the US) then wouldn't you know who was there but MARIO LOPEZ, from 'Saved by the Bell'. We received his autograph and each of us got a picture with him. A while later Brian Austin Green (David Silver on Beverly Hills 90210) arrived and we got his autograph and a picture of him. Then we left the room to make a phone call and wouldn't you know Mario Lopez came and stood right next to me and I whispered anxiously to my mom 'there's Mario' and he heard me! I turned around and he just laughed a little. I could feel my face practically burst into flames! Overall I had a wonderful time. Unfortunately I didn't get picked, but Tonya did. I am happy for her, she deserves it"

True story by Christen Castro.

Editors note - Due to lack of space the pictures will be in the next issue.

On Jan 5, 1992 I, Christen  
Castro, and my best friend, Tonya  
Tingstadahl attended PDC's (Powers  
Development Center) Search for  
new stars, a modeling competition.  
While we were there we  
competed against about 500 other  
anxious girls. After Tonya and I  
did what we had to (consisting  
of walking ~~over~~ down a 500 ft  
modeling ramp then stating our  
name, age and participant number)  
we went to a little table that  
was off to the side where we  
purchased an "outrageous organizer"  
(a European fad recently brought to  
the US) then ~~we~~ wouldn't you know  
who was there but Mario LOPEZ  
(later ~~from~~ from "Saved By the Bell")  
we received his autograph ~~and~~ and  
each of us got a picture with  
him. A while later Brian Austin  
Green (~~David~~ David Silver on Beverly  
Hills, 90210) arrived and we  
got his autograph and a picture  
of him (actually about ~~8~~ of him  
then one of all of us together)  
Then I left the room to  
make a phone call and wouldn't

you know Mario Lopez came  
and stood right next to me  
and I whispered anxiously to  
my mom "There's Mario!" and  
he heard ~~and~~ me! I turned  
around ~~and~~ and he just laughed a  
little. I could feel my face  
practically ~~was~~ burst into  
flames. Overall I had a wonderful  
time. I, unfortunately didn't  
~~get~~ get picked, but Tonya did.  
I am ~~so~~ happy for her, she deserves  
it!

◦ (This story is true!)

Written by

PS. The one of me, Tonya ~~and~~ has  
Brian in the middle  
Then the other picture ~~is~~ of  
Me and Mario!

For the Pratt  
family newspaper!

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

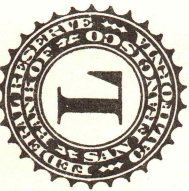
100

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

H<sub>3</sub>

THIS NOTE IS LEGAL TENDER FOR ALL DEBTS, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

L 07339303 A

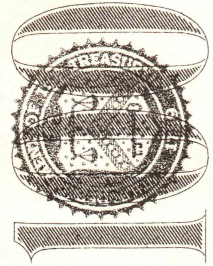


12

L 07339303 A



WASHINGTON, D.C. 12



12 *Angela M. Buchanan*  
Treasurer of the United States

SERIES 1981 *James A. Beven*  
Secretary of the Treasury

H<sub>48</sub>

ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS

100

100

100

latest noteworthy news items from the Benesch household:

Jason becomes Green Schools Student Council Treasurer. I am sending a copy of his speech.

John was his campaign manager. He gave his speech in front of the whole school & did a great job. He ran against 12 children & won! Look out world!!!

Also thought you might like this news article just for your interest

JOHN: Remember this face  
It belongs to Jase.

JASON: I'm no fool  
I do well in school.

JOHN: In math he's an ace  
He'll be no disgrace.

JASON: So be really cool  
And follow this rule.

JOHN: In the treasurer's race  
Put an X next to Jase.

JASON: Remember I'm itchin'  
For the treasure's position.

JOHN: If you're looking for a jewel  
Jason is your tool.

JASON: Let me state my case  
Treasurer's my place

JOHN: So start a tradition  
Vote Jason, it's your mission.

JASON: Remember one more time

&JOHN: Our candidate's rhyme:  
Remember this face  
It belongs to Jase.  
In the treasurer's race  
Put an X next to Jase.  
Remember this face  
It belongs to Jase.

# Learning to the Beat of Their Own Drummers

■ **Education:** Turning Point, a multi-year program in use at seven San Diego schools, lets students find the structure that works best for them.

By DAVID SMOLLAR  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Say you walked into a typical elementary school classroom and saw some students leaning against the window counter while reading their books, a few children on the floor painting, still others lounging in bean bag chairs with assignments, three or four talking with each other at their desks, and one or two walking back and forth to the pencil sharpener every 10 minutes.

The traditional reaction would be one of horror at the seeming chaos. How can there be learning going on with so few children seated properly at their desks to face the teacher at the front of the class?

Yet more and more, a visitor to San Diego city schools these days might encounter such classroom situations, as well as teachers who defend the scenes as anything but out of control.

Some 30 teachers from seven schools are volunteers in a multi-year program to give them practical ideas on how to make use of the fact that students learn in different ways. Now in its second year, the program helps teachers develop a bigger "bag of tricks," especially to reach the 25% or so of students in a typical class who seem never to connect with the material or the teacher.

By realizing that some students learn best by sitting still for hours on end, but that others need music or the help of colleagues or a drink of water every 20 minutes, teachers can also avoid lowering expectations for those who don't fit the particular learning style that the teachers themselves probably grew up with.

"I'm really, really enthusiastic about this effort," San Diego city schools Supt. Tom Payzant said. He believes the program, known as Turning Point, can play a major role in boosting self-esteem and academic achievement, particularly for the increasing number of nonwhite students who now form a majority in the nation's eighth-largest urban school system.

For several years, educators such as Payzant have pointed out that the traditional school system, and the methods to train teachers, continue to be centered on students coming to class with white, middle-class values, despite profound multi-ethnic and socioeconomic changes in the San Diego Unified School District.

Testing and college-preparatory data shows that large numbers of African-American and Latino students do poorly in urban schools here and across the nation.

"If we can get children becoming more engaged in learning by having our teachers more engaged in knowing the various learning styles of children, then there's a tremendous positive effect on the classroom climate and on achievement," Payzant said.

The teachers in Turning Point are equally enthusiastic, especially because it provides concrete suggestions and support both from special resource teachers and from their colleagues.

During a special six-week summer school session run by program teachers, only 10% of the 181 elementary students enrolled dropped out—a small number by summer school standards—and of 26 students given pre- and post-school reading

Please see **LEARN, B4**



# LEARN

Continued from B1  
tests, 73% showed reading gains of at least two months or more.

"I realize that when kids can work together on a math assignment, for example, they'll approach me more easily and say, 'We don't understand,' rather than being afraid to say something [individually] in front of the whole class and end up going home not understanding," said Harrison Boyd, a fifth-grade teacher at Fulton Elementary School in Paradise Hills. "And a child can tell another child in a way sometimes that makes more sense than what I can do as a teacher."

Boyd, in his third year of teaching after many years as a businessman, said education needs to change faster.

"In business, you naturally swallow your pride to fix or improve something," he said, reflecting how program teachers have examined their own assumptions about learning by thinking about how they best worked as students.

Sixth-graders of Boyd's colleague Valeria Davis were sprawled all over the room the other day writing letters to U.S. troops in the Middle East, causing some consternation on the part of her principal—not yet totally convinced by Turning Point—who looked in on the class and wondered about the noise level.

"But the fact is that I got 27 good letters written by the students," Davis said.

Ruth Rappaport-Power, one of eight teachers in the program from Green Elementary in San Carlos, said she is "now reaching some kids who haven't been at their top potential before."

"Last year, I'd scold them by saying, 'Put your bottom in your seat and do your work!' But now I let them work standing up, lying down, if that is what works best," she said.

Other teachers now let students have water bottles on their desk if

**'Last year, I'd scold them by saying, "Put your bottom in your seat and do your work!" But now I let them work standing up, lying down, if that is what works best.'**

TEACHER RUTH RAPPAPORT-POWER

they choose, and provide crackers and other snacks the children can have whenever they want. Some offer students the chance to work alone with music headphones, or simply wear headsets to eliminate general classroom hubbub that otherwise would distract them from their work.

"The students understand that what we're trying to do is help them work in the best way possible," said Carol Benesch, a first-grade teacher at Green whose own son has a teacher in the program.

"He's so pleased," Benesch said. "He told me, 'We get to drink whenever we want to drink, and if we want to walk around, we can!' I think it's a great way to establish good rapport with many kids."

If Benesch or fellow teacher Susan Maze-Murray has a student not reading well, they now sit down with the student and ask about ways to get into a book, rather than making decisions without involving the child.

"We'll talk, for instance, about partner reading, of pairing off with a friend, or trying a book in a subject they find interesting," Benesch said.

Added Maze-Murray: "What we're doing is allowing choices and responsibility-taking by the students, which makes learning for them more enjoyable."

At Green, a physical-fitness magnet school that draws large numbers of black children who are bused to the school, the program helps teachers make the non-resident students more comfortable in an environment outside their own neighborhood.

By letting students find a way to fit into the classroom, "we allow them to have a real home at the school," teacher Minia Goodwell said. She even has her fifth-grade students write about how they think they learn best.

But what the teachers make a point of saying is that they are not going back to the schools of the 1960s, in which some educators gave up control of the classroom and many students failed to learn. The guiding principle of the Turning Point program isn't whether the students are seated and quiet, or whether they are lively and noisy, but whether they are learning the material.

"When I assign something, it's still due the next day, and we call parents even more now, in terms of holding kids responsible for their choices," Green sixth-grade teacher Sandi Bennett said. During the special summer school, parents were called at least once a week to follow up on techniques.

"We have boundaries, we're not without structure," Tony Jackson of Fulton said. "I'll talk with a student and agree to try something, but if the results aren't what we want, we're going to try another way."

The bottom line is that students know they are expected to learn, he said.

The two resource specialists who coordinate Turning Point see pluses in the way program teachers have adapted to their own classroom needs the wide range of techniques available.

"It's not that we're going in and trying to revolutionize everything," Angela Bass said, emphasizing that the program uses many ideas already being tried individually in San Diego and elsewhere by teachers, and groups the techniques under the "umbrella theories" of learning styles and teacher expectations.

"I like to think we're reaching the untapped potential of many teachers and students," Bass said. "Hopefully, teachers initially find a piece that works and then expand from that."

Her colleague Barbara Bass cautioned that the changes do come easily for many teachers.

"That's why the first successes are so important, because teachers will relax a little as students start to improve academically," she said.

"I've learned that when you can't reach a kid, it's not that you're doing everything wrong, or that the kid is doing everything wrong, but rather it's 'What are we doing quite right?' and that's a change," said Jackson of Fulton.

The program is being gradually expanded this year to seven schools, under funding made possible as a result of a multi-million-dollar federal grant to assist in integration-related instruction.

Teacher participation remains voluntary, although both Bass and Jackson hope other teachers begin to wonder why certain "things" are happening in noisier classrooms.

Some teachers find it difficult to accept a room full of children sharing ideas, while others might gasp at the increased noise, though Bass prefers to call it a higher "energy level."

"One teacher felt that cheating if students were given math problems to solve," she said. "But when it comes to test, both students and teachers knew the material much better than they would otherwise . . . and such cooperation is part of [society's] work."