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Praise Children For Their Efforts, Not Their Smarts

By Donna Tripi, Principal

I have recently read several research articles regarding the role of praise in student performance. The goal of all parents and teachers is to develop students who enjoy learning, who take on learning challenges, and who are resilient in the face of obstacles. The findings of recent studies tell us that we can develop this motivation and resilience by praising students in the right ways.

Many children believe that their intelligence is a fixed trait – that they only have a certain amount of intelligence. When we praise children by telling them how smart they are, we confirm this mind-set. They seek tasks that prove their intelligence and avoid ones that might not. They will opt for tasks that are easier so as not to risk making a mistake or appearing not as “smart” as we perceive. They reason that being smart means that they should not have to put out effort to achieve results. They stop working when the curriculum becomes challenging. They underrate the importance of effort, and they overrate how much help they need from a parent (or teacher).

In contrast, students who believe that their intellectual ability is something they can develop (“growth mind-set”) through effort and education will work to achieve, take on challenges and stick to them. “Emphasizing effort gives a

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Las Vegas, Baby!

A record-breaking 320 people attended the March 28th annual gala, a major fundraiser. About \$110,000 in net profit was raised. Amy Payne, right, daughter of secretary Susie Payne, and her friend, Jacke Buaas, were showgirls. See page 7 for more photos and details. Photo by Katie Riveroll.

Teacher Feature

School Is An Adventure With Debbie Balmat



Debbie Balmat, 4th grade teacher extraordinaire

By Barbara Hagey

LJES Family Science Night is just around the corner. This fun evening of hands-on activities and experiments for students, siblings and parents is coordinated each year by 4th grade teacher and resident science expert Debbie Balmat.

In fact, Balmat organized the first Family Science Night at LJES even before she taught here. She was on maternity leave with her daughter Danielle (now a 3rd grader at LJES) and her son Zack was a Kindergartener in Ms. Jessica Sandoval's class (now a 7th grader at Muirlands). Ms. Balmat remembers talking with another LJES parent about the science night held at her former school and how great it would be to have one at LJES. Like so many committed parents here, the two moms looked at each other and said: “Let’s do it!”

Ms. Balmat grew up in the coastal town of Spring Lake, New Jersey. She always loved school and remembers lining up her stuffed animals along with her younger brother for “class.” Her favorite subject in elementary

school was reading. “I loved to get lost in the magic of a great mystery or adventure story,” she recalled. Ms. Balmat wasn’t particularly interested in science during her early school years because it was taught from books rather than through hands-on discovery. But her father is a doctor and her mother is a nurse, so science is in her genes.

‘I loved to get lost in the magic of a great mystery or adventure story.’

“My parents were always encouraging and supportive of anything I took an interest in,” said Ms. Balmat.

Ms. Balmat received her B.S. degree in Food and Nutritional Science from Marymount College in New York. She moved to San Diego shortly after graduating (she’d visited here during college Spring Break). After receiving

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Junior Olympics

By Kelly Wiskus, P.E. Teacher

"On Your Marks, Get Set, Go!" It's time to start getting ready for the La Jolla Junior Olympics.

This fun, exciting, FREE annual event is put on by the Kiwanis Club of La Jolla and includes students from all of the La Jolla elementary schools, including La Jolla Elementary, The Gillispie School, Bird Rock Elementary, Torrey Pines Elementary, Stella Maris Academy, The Evans School, The Children's School and All Hallows Academy. This year's event will take place at La Jolla High School's Edwards Stadium on Saturday, May 23. Ribbons are awarded to each participant for each event in which they compete and medals are awarded to the top three finishers in each event. Students may sign up for a maximum of 3 of the following events: Obstacle Course, Softball Throw, Broad Jump and 50-100-200 meter dash. There is also a Boys and Girls relay team race and 400 meter Fastest Boy and Girl in La Jolla races.

A SPIRIT Award trophy is awarded to the school with the highest percentage of students participating. Students wanting to participate must sign up in advance by filling out an Official Entry Form.

Students will also have an opportunity to practice for this event through activities in PE as well as organized practices after school beginning in May. Please watch for eblasts and next month's Tidings for more information.

T-shirt Design Contest

Attention Artists!!! We are looking for creative students to design this year's LJES Team Junior Olympics T-shirts. If you have a design idea, please submit to Coach Wiskus by May 1st.

The Junior Olympics is an exciting, FREE, annual event is put on by the Kiwanis Club of La Jolla and includes students from all of the La Jolla elementary schools. This year's event will take place at La Jolla High School's Edwards Stadium on Saturday, May 23rd.

Upcoming Events

- **April 6th-10th**
Spring Break, no school
- **Wednesday, April 15th**
Principal's Chat, 11:30 a.m. LJES Auditorium
- **Friday, April 17th**
Family Science Night, 6:00-8:00 p.m.
- **April 27th-May 1st**
Testing, No After School Science, No Knowledge College
- **Friday, May 8th,**
Amigos Fiesta, 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
- **Saturday, May 23rd**
17th Annual Junior Olympics

Thank You From Donna Tripi

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Gala Chair, Christina Andrews, her gala committee, and the Board of Friends of La Jolla Elementary, Inc. for an awesome gala. Everyone had so much fun with opportunities to win wonderful auction items, good food, jiving music, gaming tables and, of course, great company! It was one of our most successful galas ever, raising much-needed funds that will directly benefit our children.

Thank you to all who provided underwriting and auction items for the event and to all who attended. Your support made the event the success that it was.

- Donna Tripi

Special Thanks

The PTO thanks:

- Susie Payne and Wendy Hamilton for organizing our amazing readers program, Readers Are Leaders.
- Valerie Juboori and Susan Walker for hosting the welcome breakfast for Readers Are Leaders.
- All the amazing community members/parents who read to our children at Readers Are Leaders.

Friends of LJES thanks:

- Christina Andrews for chairing this year's gala and overseeing such a fun and profitable event.
- Natascha Vossen and the rest of the Silent Auction committee (Elizabeth Andrews, Liz Roemer, Melinda Gaffney, Kayt Hathaway, Elise Kjos, Carrie Morris, Ameer Alagiri, Jean Steel) for working against the economic odds and securing such a diverse group of items.
- Members of the Gala Auction Item Collection team: Lisa D'Angelo, Cindy Hickman, Jen Snyder, and Jean Steel.
- Liz Roemer for handling music.
- Melinda Mahony for so capably handling classroom art projects for the gala.
- Christie Duguid for chairing the gala decoration committee and working with Angie Goodwin, Kelly Dougherty and Catherine Rehm to create such a beautiful event.
- Katie Riveroll and Mark Collins for obtaining so many sponsorships.
- Amy Gates for handling the teacher raffle.
- Carrie Morris, of Smashing Designs, for donating her graphic design talent.
- Sara Craig, Cindy Hickman, Jen Snyder and Dawn Villela for their work on data input.
- Seldom McGee, of Baja Silkscreen, for Logo Wear.
- Fran Shimp, Paola Avila and Sigurd Kallhovde for their labor on software and logistics.
- Dina Buckley and Dolly Webster for organizing the preview party.
- The Riveroll family for opening up their home so graciously and making the Gala pre-party a memorable night.
- Renee Bridge, Donna Scurio, Stephanie Sweeney, Marie Browning and Jo Kallhovde for handling check-in at the gala.
- Paola Avila, Cindi Stratton and Fran Shimp for handling check-out.
- Every parent who attended the gala and/or donated items for the auction, or who gave to underwriting.



Kelly's Column

How To Get Your Brain Fired Up For Testing

By Kelly Wiskus
P.E. Teacher

Testing in the classrooms will begin at the end of April. Here are some tips to help children do their best.

Your brain and your body rely on each other so pay extra attention to getting enough water, nutritious foods, exercise and sleep during testing days. Some foods have even been found to aid in the learning process. Foods such as milk, nuts, seeds, fruit, rice and oats release natural memory enhanc-

ers called CCKs (cholecystokinin) which is made of tryptophan, choline and phenylalanine. These chemicals actually "pump up" your neurotransmitters (brain messengers) to increase memory and thinking power. It is also helpful to exercise a little before taking a test to get your blood flowing throughout the body and to get your brain "fired up". Finally, yoga and deep breathing exercises will bring extra oxygen to your brain and body to become calm and relaxed. Good luck and remember to always try your best!

In PE in March, the students have been developing their hand-eye coordination by working on tossing and catching with scoops as well as striking skills with paddles and hockey sticks. In April we will continue practicing hand-eye coordination through basketball and volleyball skills.

Congratulations to all of the 5th grade students for completing the Fitnessgram and continuing to prepare for the Presidential Fitness Test coming up in April.

Kelly Wiskus can be reached at kwiskus@sandi.net.

► Tripi: Emphasizing Effort Can Boost Confidence

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child a variable that they can control," states Carol Dweck, whose research team worked with fifth graders at a highly competitive public school in Manhattan. "They come to see themselves as in control of their success. Emphasizing natural intelligence takes it out of the child's control and it provides no good recipe for responding to failure." Students in the growth mind-set see effort as a way to increase their intellectual abilities. "In the face of failure, these students escalate their efforts and look for new learning strategies."

Dweck repeated her study with students of different ages, boys versus girls, and students of different socioeconomic backgrounds, with the same result – praising students by telling them that they were "smart" had the same negative effect on their performance. They concluded that giving students the label of "smart" might actually cause them to underperform. Students praised for their ability to work hard to solve difficult problems far outachieved those praised for being "smart."

Another key aspect of praise is ensuring that it is specific rather than general so that the child knows exactly what he/she did to earn the praise (and thus can get more). This focuses the child on the process of learning.

Praise also needs to be sincere and to be given when it is earned. Judith Brook, an NYU professor of psychology explains, "It has to be based on a real thing – some skill or talent they have." "Once children hear praise they interpret as meritless, they discount not just the insincere praise, but sincere praise as well." Over-praising was actually perceived by students to mean that they did not have strong ability and teachers and other adults felt they needed encouragement.

The research in psychology and neuroscience supports the growth mind-set, that we can truly enhance our intellectual development through learning. What we can learn from this research is to direct our praise at helping students to focus on the process of their learning—their efforts to learn. Dedication to learning and persistence are the key factors in student achievement.

Some examples of specific praise focused on process/effort are as follows:

- "I like the way you tried many different strategies on the math problem before you got it."
- "You really studied hard for the spelling test, by reading the words over many times, practicing them and having me test you on them. It really worked."
- "I like that you took on a challenging project for science. It will take a lot of work to design the experiment and write it up, but you will learn so many new things."

I hope you will join the teachers and I as we work to praise students for their efforts to increase their learning and achievement.

Ms. Tripi can be reached at dtрпи@sandi.net.



Pasta For Pennies

The Student Council spent much of March collecting and counting coins, as part of a project called Pasta for Pennies, which raises money with the goal of finding a cure for Leukemia and Lymphoma by 2015. They raised over \$1,770. The council asked students to bring in spare change laying in their rooms, backpacks, or pockets. The money was collected from March 9th to the 27th. The winning class will receive a Pasta Party from Olive Garden.

Submitted by Claire Andrews, President of Student Council.



Lobbying: A Right and a Duty

By Edward Furtek, Ph.D., J.D.

Despite negative connotations associated with "lobbying" (defined in the Federal Register as direct contact with a government official with the intent to affect the outcome of a decision on a particular matter), its legitimacy can be traced back 800 years. The Magna Carta, written in 1297, implicitly affirmed the right of English subjects to petition the king. That charter is widely viewed as one of the most important documents in the history of democracy and an inspiration for the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In addition to protecting the freedom of religion, speech, and right of assembly, the First Amendment specifically prohibits Congress from abridging "the right of the people ... to petition the Government for redress of grievances."

There are few eras in American history as rich as today's with grievances for "we, the people" to address. Resolving: 1.) over-whelming budget deficits far into the future; 2.) failures of public agencies' entrusted with ensuring consumers' safety and protecting against natural disasters; and 3.) confusion in elections denying voters reliable outcomes requires broader participation of citizens in the political arena. The purpose of this article is to help citizens "influence those who make public policies that affect our lives."

Unfortunately, many voters believe lobbying is something only well-financed "insiders" can master successfully. Refuting this assessment,

Ed's Lobbying Tips

- Know your issue
- Develop a plan to put your priorities into law
- Understand and monitor legislative processes
- Address your opponent's argument against your plan
- Meet and maintain contact with lawmakers' staff
- Write letters and opinion articles to media outlets (including online media)
- Build a network of like-minded persons and groups

Former House of Representatives Speaker "Tip" O'Neill argued, "all politics is local." This axiom informs the practice of lobbying.

All lobbying begins in the local community because that is where the problems of "real" people occur. It is also where government responses to local problems are tried and tested. For these reasons, personal stories conveyed by constituents are often more powerful tools for change than professional lobbyists' established access to decision makers.

Meetings with elected officials – either in their capitol or district offices – have the value of "personalizing" your concerns.

There are several tasks to manage when you lobby an issue. To be a successful advocate you must: know your issue, be able to address opponents' characterizations of it, explain its ramifications, and develop a strategic plan to translate your priorities into law. In addition to mastering subject matter associated with your issue, you need to draft clear, concise advocacy messages and tailor them for use in new and diverse communications technologies. Where independent mass media continue to explore local problems, letters to the editor and editorial statements authored by esteemed community leaders can still convey the national significance of your lobbying campaign.

Meetings with elected officials – either in their capitol or district offices – have the value of "personalizing" your concerns. Do not be disappointed, however, if your "scheduled" meeting with the "Member" is passed off to their staff. They are usually better informed than the Member, more likely to do heavy lifting on your behalf, and enjoy more productive relationships with their committee staff peers. Nurture your relationship with these young professionals. They may become your best


sources of critical information and the most effective volunteers for your cause.

So that your lobbying bridges the gap between rhetoric and action, you must understand the timing and relationship of diverse legislative and administrative rules and procedures. This enables you to develop a strategy of when, how and with whom you engage your message. In most instances, monitoring and participating in the tiered and diverse distribution of committee and sub-committee agendas requires the organization of a "coalition." An informal network of groups and individuals who share your concerns, a coalition will broaden your base of political support and extend your reach to decision makers outside the geographical boundaries and beyond the committee jurisdiction of your elected representative.

As citizens of a democracy we have a right to hold our government accountable and a duty to ensure it is worthy of our trust. To be accountable, elected representatives, government agency officials and their staff must understand how we feel about issues affecting our lives. By getting involved in the political process, we can proactively shape the public policy agenda in a timely manner, monitor the transparency of its deliberations, and build trust through the relationships and processes we engage.




Dr. Ed Furtek and his spouse, Kathleen Ritzman, have two children at LJES: Mariah is in grade 5 and Luke in grade 2. Dr. Furtek has 30 years experience in government relations. He spent 10 years in the office of U.S. Senator John Glenn (D-OH) where he served as Chief of Staff and worked as a lobbyist in the University of California's Office of Federal Relations in Washington, D.C. for five years. He joined U.C. San Diego in 1992, and was promoted to Associate Vice Chancellor for Government and Community Relations in 1996, a post he held until his retirement in 2007.



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see page 5 for details



Friends of LJES Plans Facelift of Marine St. Frontage

For safety and legal reasons, Friends of LJES, our school fundraising group, plans to redo the Marine Street frontage of our school, which is the "front door" of our campus.

This project has been developed by members of BLOOM, an arm of Friends. The Marine Street frontage plan calls for a separation of areas that include a place to pick up students on foot, ample space to support a safe pairing of students to parents driving through the pick up lane, and a place for parents to sit to wait for their students.

There are two main reasons for the Marine Street construction project – to improve student safety and to bring our front entrance in compliance with federal disability laws.

As you know, pick up traffic has always been difficult at LJES, but it has grown worse in recent years as our student population has grown. In the fall, unsafe behaviors occurred on nearly a daily basis – double-parking, driving in the oncoming traffic lane, jaywalking, and students walking off on their own to find their parents. In December 2008, we created a traffic committee and debated the options. When students returned from winter break, a set of new procedures was in place. The new procedures were announced in Tidings and in e-blasts.

Though traffic is better as a result of the new procedures, we need new physical hardscape and landscape to support our efforts. The plan by Van Dyke Landscape Architects calls for new entry steps, 3 new cast-in-place seat walls, new concrete paving, and a new fence and gate. It eliminates the grass area, as we now require students to stand in line (according to their last name) until an adult arrives for them. We are also removing bushes that preschool-age children used to hide in and play in. The concrete seating walls are important because they give parents and pre-school age children a comfortable and safe place to congregate while waiting for school to let out.

The second reason behind the frontage plan is the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Americans



The Marine Street frontage plan calls for similar cement benches as makes up the Girard Avenue seating circle, pictured above.

with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law in July 1990. It seeks to eliminate discrimination against individuals with disabilities. It ensures equal access to facilities and educational benefits.

As a public school that operates on government funds, our facility must be updated to meet ADA standards. We have several students who have physical disabilities. We also have parents, grandparents and community members visiting our school who have limited mobility. But our front entrance is not easily navigable by someone in a wheelchair or with leg braces: the ADA approved curb is a distance from the front entrance and the walkways to the front door are too steep.

We are seeking financial support for this project. Please contact Dina Buckley at dinab@san.rr.com if you are interested in learning more.

Advertise in Tidings

To place an ad in the Tidings, please contact Sharon Jones at 858-456-2039 or sharonlj@san.rr.com. Rates: \$75 business card size (3.5" x 2"), \$100 quarter page (3.75" x 5"), \$175 half page (7.5" x 5"), \$300 full page (7.5" x 10"). Checks should be made out to LJES PTO, Inc., and mailed or dropped off at the school office: 1111 Marine St., La Jolla, CA 92037, attention Sharon Jones. Or you can pay via the online store on the school's website (www.sandi.net/ljes). Payment must be received PRIOR to publication. Ads must be submitted by the 15th of the month prior to publication. Submit ad graphics in digital format, either as a postscript file or a 300 dpi (minimum) raster image. Email lisastarr@cox.net if you have questions about formatting.



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- and much, much more!



Readers are Leaders

Among those participating in the annual Readers are Leaders event were, clockwise from top left, Cornelia Feye and Jim John, Anne Marie Welsh, Denise Parnell, Donald Moore, and Robert Thiele.



► Teacher Feature: Debbie Balmat

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her teaching credentials, she taught at Jefferson Elementary in the North Park neighborhood for several years. This is her 7th year at LJES.

Ms. Balmat feels parents can best support their child in school by encouraging them to be life-long learners and by taking an active interest in what their children enjoy. She encourages parents to participate in activities with their kids and to continue to read to them well after they can read for themselves. "Reading is such great together time", she said. "I love to read to my 4th grade class -- to

Ms. Balmat feels parents can best support their children in school by encouraging them to be life-long learners and by taking an active interest in what their children enjoy.

have their full attention as they listen to a story unfold."

Outside of school, Ms. Balmat and her family

like to spend time outdoors in Hawaii, Mammoth Mountain, Catalina Island, or the neighborhood park. They also enjoy game nights together. And speaking of family activities, mark your calendars for Family Science Night on Friday, April 17th. Thank you, Ms. Balmat, for bringing this wonderful event to our school.

Ms. Hagey is the mother of Carolee, a second grader. To submit an idea for a Teacher Feature, email her at bhagey@pisces.cts.com.



What happens in Las Vegas...

This year's gala drew a record-breaking attendance of over 320. It was basically a sold-out event! Final numbers are still being worked out, but we know we essentially met the goal that was set for this fiscal year. This means that we can keep the programs alive/operative for LJES kids -- thanks to our wonderful families! This sums up the spirit and character of our school, by having proved how much we, as parents and guardians, value our children's education, and, on a more cosmic level, honor and value the world's future, by investing in a better quality of education for them. A task this big is not easy, but together, with your support, we can weather the looming budget cuts for the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

As for details of the great event, gambling was extremely popular with around 200 people visiting the tables-- some of whom had never been to Vegas! The rock band was sizzling hot and so were the parents, judging from the number of "happy feet jiggling to the drum beat" on the dance floor. Stuart and Pilar Gimber took home the wine cellar raffle, Stina Lake won the diamond David Yurman ring, Dina Buckley scored the Prada purse, and Sigurd "Mr. K" Kallhovde won the Raymond Weil watch. Dressed up as Elvis were: Scott Goodwin, Leon Chow, David Duguid, Todd Lyons and Wade Griffis. Everyone stayed till late even after "Elvis(es) had left the building." We hope everyone had a great time. As Elvis would say (and we all chant along): "Thank you....Thank you very much!"

This article was written by Friends of LJES Gala Committee members. See page 2 to read the names of folks who put on this gala, so you can thank them in person.





Viva Amigos Fiesta!

Mariachis, Piñatas, Aztec Dancers Come to LJES for Annual Party

By Katie Riveroll and Mary Perrine

Mark your calendars because on May 8th from 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. our entire campus will turn into one big Mexican fiesta! This is a perfect time for LJES children and their families to enjoy a fun-filled afternoon of games, refreshments, food and live entertainment.

Mariachis will stroll around campus, real Aztec dancers will be performing, and tasty Mexican food and snacks will be for sale.

Well-known dance instructor, Aida Flores, will once again be giving free after-school lessons to willing participants to learn typical Mexican dances during the last two weeks of April and first week of May. For more information about the dance classes or if your child would like to participate,

commitment to all weeks of practice. The practices are one hour long, once a week, fun and free. They will be after school. We will let you know when classes start after the break. Also your child will get the chance to perform center stage at the Amigos Fiesta.

For your convenience, the PTO will pre-sell game bracelets for access to all of the games, dinner tickets and concession tickets. Concession tickets will be used instead of cash so you can purchase all the yummy treats, piñatas and Mexican toys available. Some booths will require a small fee to participate.

Game bracelets purchased before May 6th will be sold at a discount price of \$5. On fiesta day they will cost \$10. So get your game bracelets soon! We are excited to say that this year tickets and bracelets can be purchased online through www.pay-schools.com.

We highly encourage using the online store as it's simple and easy and really helps us keep track of your order. You can also visit us on Pizza Wednesday starting April 22nd thru May 6th where we



The Amigos Fiesta offers fun crafts, games, mariachis, dancing, tasty Mexican food, and much much more! Left, Sam Lolly gets into the Fiesta spirit. Right, authentic Aztec dancers are a crowd-pleaser.

will be selling all of the above. You may also fill out a form in the office with your payment and place it in the file folder labeled "Amigos."

We need LOTS of parent volunteers to coordinate activities, help sell tickets and help man the booths. So... dust off your sombreros and join our team to once again make this fun-filled family event a huge success. We couldn't do it without you and guarantee it will be lots of fun!

Contact Katie Riveroll (858-551-6061 or katieahumada85@hotmail.com) or Mary Perrine (858-459-6514 or js13@san.rr.com) if you have questions or would like to sign up.

Katie Riveroll is the mother of Annie, in grade 2, and Billy, grade 4. Mary Perrine is the mother of Katherine Perrine, grade 2, and Bob Perrine, grade 4.

*Amigos Fiesta
Friday, May 8
3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
Game bracelet: \$5 in advance,
\$10 at door
Volunteers Needed!*

please contact Mary Perrine at 858-459-6514 or js13@san.rr.com.

Children must sign up before April 15. It's important that if you intend to dance that you make a



Sienna Larson (left) and Anya Issakov (right) explore the properties of liquids at Family Science Night 2008. This year's Science Palooza will be jam-packed with everyone's favorite hands-on science activities.

Kids + Parents + Science = FUN

Family Science Night 2009
Friday, April 17 from 6:00-8:30pm

Come to LJES on Friday, April 17th at 6:00 p.m. for the annual Family Science Night. This year, you and your kids will have the opportunity to play "Science Fictionary," see "Attack of the Killer Ladybugs," create "Slimy Science," and participate in many more fun, hands-on activities designed to complement the science curriculum at LJES.

Family Science Night is a very popular event at LJES. This year's theme, "Science Palooza," features a medley of favorite science activities and demonstrations. Nationally-acclaimed La Jolla High science instructor, Martin Teachworth, has generously agreed to demonstrate his "Disk of Doom," "Chair of Death," and other Xtreme physics equipment.

This very special FREE event is part of a national educational outreach program that provides parents and children with an opportunity to explore science together. Funding for the event has been provided by LJES PTO. For more information, please contact Lisa Goodin (lisastarr@cox.net) or Debbie Balmat (dbalmat@email.com).