

TAMISCAL *times*

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Take Time to do Things Poorly

I am a lousy banjo player. That is not false modesty; I really am a very bad banjo player. Yet I seize any opportunity to bust out my banjo and torture those around me by struggling through various folk standards. The other day I had the wonderful opportunity to get together with a large group of other mediocre musicians and spend a few wonderful hours butchering songs. (I was the worst player in the bunch.)

As we were strumming and singing it occurred to me that beyond our musical abilities, we were a fairly accomplished group. I'm pretty sure that we were all college graduates. Several of us have advanced degrees. We are functional parents, professionals, spouses, employees and citizens any one of whom could claim authentic expertise at something, something other than making music. And yet, on that elementary school- sponsored family outing where we had been encouraged to "bring musical instruments!" we all really wanted to sit around for an extended period and do something we are bad at. It was a blast.

One person commented as we were packing up our instruments, "I haven't had so much fun in a long time. We'll have to do that again." It suddenly occurred to me that functional adults are often attracted to activities for which they have little talent or hope of developing true expertise. How many of us are okay dancers, bad golfers, mediocre tennis players, tolerable painters or plodding mountain bikers who nonetheless love to do those things? Many "successful" adults become successful just so they can spend time doing things at which they are not so successful.

I think it is worth keeping that in mind as we guide our children through high school. One of the marks of a well- rounded person is the ability and willingness to engage in activities that are not central to his or her own academic or professional success. In the competitive world of modern American schooling, it is all too easy to lose touch with our duty to guide our children toward balanced, meaningful lives; instead we focus an enormous amount of energy on their achieving narrow academic goals.

Certainly these are the years when our students must work hard to master basic material to prepare for the future. But this is also a time when they should be trying things out. Some may even be gaining the maturity to understand that an early talent isn't going to translate into a world- class

(Continued on last page)

Alternative and Proud.

Sure, your school is different. You're always running into people who have never heard of it or who have it confused with something else.. Sometimes you feel like explaining. Sometimes you don't.

One thing is for sure... you know that Tamiscal is "the place to be." And yeah, you're proud... not like rah-rah proud or anything; it's just that you are onto something cool and you don't mind showing it off a bit.

Now is the time to slip into your new limited edition Tamiscal Firebird T-shirt. Why not? It's smooth cotton texture simply cries out "comfort!" while the artistic design and color scheme whisper, "style." When people compliment you on your good taste there's no need to tell them that it only cost \$10.00.



Better yet, kick it up a notch and go for The Firebird Package. You'll get the t-shirt, the green reusable drinking cup, the ID card discount sticker, a yearbook and a ticket to this year's formal dance all for \$100.00. So go ahead and flaunt it a little... Tamiscal style... alternative and proud.



COUNSELOR'S CORNER

by Susan Berkhout

We have been very busy with our seniors since school opened. Beginning with the senior meeting the first week of school, we have moved into the college application process.

An e-mail has gone out to all parents of seniors whose e-mail addresses we have inviting them to schedule senior chats. Please have a meeting at home with your student about college BEFORE you come to your senior chat. Discuss the realities of your budget for college; find out what schools your child is thinking about etc. With some preliminary work on your part, the senior chat time will be much more productive than if we have to start from scratch, and we only have an hour for the chats.

We have also scheduled three college application workshops where we start the on-line applications for UC and the CSU and the Personal Statement for the UC application. Seniors **must sign up** to attend these workshops because space is limited.

CSU Application Workshop

2-4 PM on Tuesday October 14th in library

UC Application Workshop

2-4 PM on Tues. October 21st in library

UC Personal Statement Workshop

2-4 PM on Mon. Nov. 3rd in library

Just a reminder, the cutoff for GPA is 3.0 for the UC and 2.0 for the CSU. Students cannot apply unless they meet minimum GPA and have the 15 required courses.

I work closely with our College and Career Specialist, Julie Gannon, and we often send out information via e-mail. If you have not been receiving our e-mails (so far they have gone only to senior and junior parents), please send us an e-mail so that we can update your address: jgannon@tamdistrict.org

Upcoming: **Junior Parents' Night: Wednesday, November 5th 7-8 PM in the HUB.**

As always, if you have questions about your student's transcript, graduation progress, etc. contact me via e-mail sberkhout@tamdistrict.org (preferred) or phone (415) 945-3757.



COLLEGE and CAREER CENTER NEWS

By Julie Gannon

Susan Berkhout and I are prepared to start this year's college and career search process with the new and continuing students at Tamiscal. Over 90% of the Class of 2008 indicated they will continue their education by attending college. Tamiscal students will be attending a wide variety of schools in eleven states including: Cabrillo, Berklee School of Music, Cal Poly, Warren Wilson, UC Santa Barbara, DePaul, San Francisco Art Institute, Grinnell, University of British Columbia, Prescott, UC Berkeley and Cornell. While the college option is not for everyone, there are many families who could benefit from some inside information on the planning process. With this in mind, there are several things parents and students can do to prepare early and have the best options available:

- **Be responsible for your own plan.** If you always thought you would attend a junior college but decide in your senior year you want to try for a four year school, be proactive. Find out if you have met the prerequisites you need and if not, enroll in the courses you are lacking. The sooner you do this, the easier it will be to qualify. Ask us for help. We can assist you, but only if we know what you want to do!
- **Pay attention to your transcript.** A letter grade of "D" may meet a high school graduation requirement, but it does not meet a college requirement. If you received a "D" in a course, you should check with Susan Berkhout or me to see if it will affect your eligibility.
- **Plan your test taking carefully.** If you are planning on attending a four year college, you will most likely need the ACT or the SAT, and/or the SATII subject tests. Research test prep, practice exams and study guides. Understand the differences in the tests and the times they are offered. We have information and are always available to answer questions and to help schedule the dates that will benefit you the most.
- **Make use of the resources available to you.** There are many internet sites that can walk you through the earliest stages of searching for a college. I post all information regarding testing, college visits, announcements and anything else related to the college/career area on the Prep HQ website. Every student at Tamiscal should be register on Prep HQ: <https://www.prephq.com/?id=tamiscal>. www.collegeboard.edu has an excellent college finder search option. www.csumentor.org will help you review all your coursework for eligibility to any California State University, as well as give you useful information on every campus in the CSU system. You can open an account as early as freshman year. www.princetonreview.com has some interesting information on student's opinions, in ranking format, on everything from Best Dorms to Best Overall College Experience. This site is fun and easy to read. <http://www.meritaid.com/> will give you information about how much merit (non need based) aid a school offers. www.fafsa.org addresses many basic financial aid questions. Don't be frightened by what you don't know. This site does a great job of breaking down the whole financial aid process. www.marineducationalfund.org offers free financial aid counseling and workshops.
- **Attend the conferences and meetings we offer.** Junior night, junior conferences and senior chats are held for your benefit. Attend these events and keep up to date on the entire process.
- **Utilize the College and Career Center.** Students are free to stop by and see me anytime the door is open. Anything you want to know about a school I can find out for you. The office is stocked with catalogues, reference books and view books from all over the country. Even if students have no idea what they want to do or where they want to be, they should stop by and check out what we have available to help them.

Steinbeck Museum Trip Coming in October

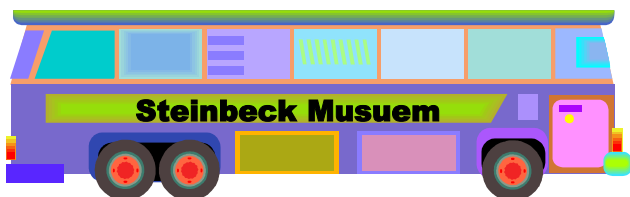
by Susan Berkhout

We have planned a trip to the Steinbeck Museum to enrich our American Literature curriculum and to give students an opportunity to experience the life of a farm hand. Check out the museum here <http://www.steinbeck.org>

After our visit to the museum on Thursday, Oct. 30, 2008, we will be staying over night at the Galante Vineyards/ranch. While our circumstances will be much less severe than those of the Dust Bowl refugees who came to California seeking respite from the dust, we will have the opportunity to feed livestock and participate in other ranch chores. We will be giving out a list of things to bring, including a sleeping bag.

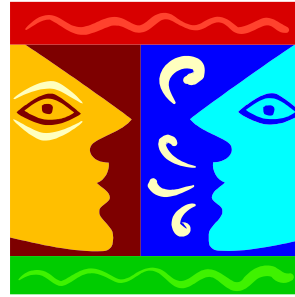
This is an excellent opportunity for Tamiscal students to get to know each other better and to get to know the staff who will be going as well. The cost for the trip is \$50 and scholarships are available for anyone who has need. We are giving preference to juniors because they are studying American Literature, but seniors, sophomores and freshmen should also sign up. We have room for 35 students and will take reservations on a first come, first serve basis. Students should check in with their CORE teachers for permission slips. The completed permission slip with a check for \$50 made out to Tamiscal Fund constitutes a reservation. In order to participate in the trip, students must be up to date in their school work in all Tamiscal classes.

Not that anyone cares, but we will be back by 5:30 PM on Friday, October 31st in case anyone wants to go trick or treating!



New Advisory Class at Tamiscal

by Nancy Tuhtan



We have *NCLB*, *HEE*, *PLC*, and *SST*: all acronyms commonly used in the

world of high school education.* Now we can add two more terms to this alphabet soup. The first is *SMART*. This is the abbreviation for *specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound*: the criteria by which we should form goals and then determine whether or not they are met. The second is one I created: *SPEAR*. This stands for *self-knowledge, personal responsibility, empathy, advocacy and resiliency*. Both *SMART* and *SPEAR* are being used by students in our new Advisory class to establish personal and academic goals and to learn strategies to reduce stress levels in their lives.

In addition, the advisory class helps students succeed by teaching them skills that increase their commitment to their school and community, develop greater awareness of connections between school and the future through job shadowing and internships, improve verbal and non-verbal communication skills, increase awareness of significant contemporary issues and understanding of ethics and their application to living in the 21st. century. The class is open to all grades and runs the full academic year. Anyone interested in joining, please come talk to me. (**No Child Left Behind, High School Exit Exam, Professional Learning Communities, Student Study Teams*)

TAMISCAL times

Dates to Remember



October	8	All schools: Minimum Day - No Students in afternoon
	20	No Students: Staff Development Day
November	5	Junior Night 7-8pm
	10	COM holiday—campus closed
	11	Veterans Day Observed
	26	Redwood: Altered Schedule (Tu/Fri schedule)
	27-28	Thanksgiving Recess
December	9-12	Tamiscal Final Exam Days & Book Return
	10	Mock Senate 2-5; Senior Dinner 5 PM
	15-20	COM Finals
	16-19	District final exams - 12/19 End of First Semester
	20-1/5	Winter Recess
January	7	First Student Day of Semester
	19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Holiday
	20	COM classes begin
	26	No Students: Staff Development Day
February	4	All Schools: Minimum Day - No students in afternoon
	13-16	COM Holiday
	16-20	President's Day and Winter Recess
March	23	No Students: Staff Development Day
	18	Tamiscal: Open House 6:30-7:30 PM
	19	Tamsical: No Students: Teacher Scheduling Day
	19	Drake & Tam: Open House
	20	Drake & Tam: Minimum Day
	23	Drake & Tam: staff development day—no students
April	2	Redwood: Open House 6:30-8:30
	10	Redwood: Minimum Day
	13-17	Spring Recess
	19-18	COM Spring Break
May	16-22	COM finals
	18	No Students: Staff Development Day
	25	Memorial Day holiday
June	3-5	Redwood: altered schedule
	2-6	Tamiscal final Exams and Book Return
	8	Graduation Practice 1-3:00 PM at Tamiscal
	8-11	District Final Exams - 6/11 End of 2nd Semester
	9	Tamiscal Graduation 5:00 PM at MAGC
	15	COM Summer Classes begin

TAMISCAL Directory

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October 2008

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(message from the Principal, continued)

career. Maybe their dreams of playing professional soccer are beginning to look more like dreams than reality and maybe that kid who drew the best pictures in middle school isn't an artistic genius after all. But we must let them continue to do the things they love along with their school work and encourage them to branch out while they can. We may even (once in a while) have to sacrifice some or other high academic challenge in order to accommodate something that will foster a more balanced life. In the end, success is much more about the life one develops than about what the transcript and the resume looks like.

Without outside interests, the community theater stage, the watercolor class, the blue belt in Aikido, the volunteer time at the food bank, perspective can be lost. Being *just okay* at something and striving for competence rather than excellence brings intrinsic rewards and can provide needed perspective about the reality of living. Those "extras" are the things that give us the mental running room that we need to help us improve in areas in which we do have real drive and talent. Most adults recognize that. Certainly, our teenagers can benefit from the same realization.

*John A. Carroll
Principal*

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