

# SANTA BARBARA MIDDLE SCHOOL THE DIAMOND

The Newsletter of Santa Barbara Middle School

September/October 2008

## From the Desk of Steveo Lane

Head of School



Welcome to the 2008-2009 school year! On behalf of the faculty, staff and trustees of Santa Barbara Middle School, I warmly invite you to celebrate the upcoming year with us. We have many reasons to venerate our beloved institution. The school has survived and flourished for 31 years, and all leading indicators suggest that this year will be equally as exciting.

It is my privilege to announce the theme for this year, our 32nd Anniversary Year:

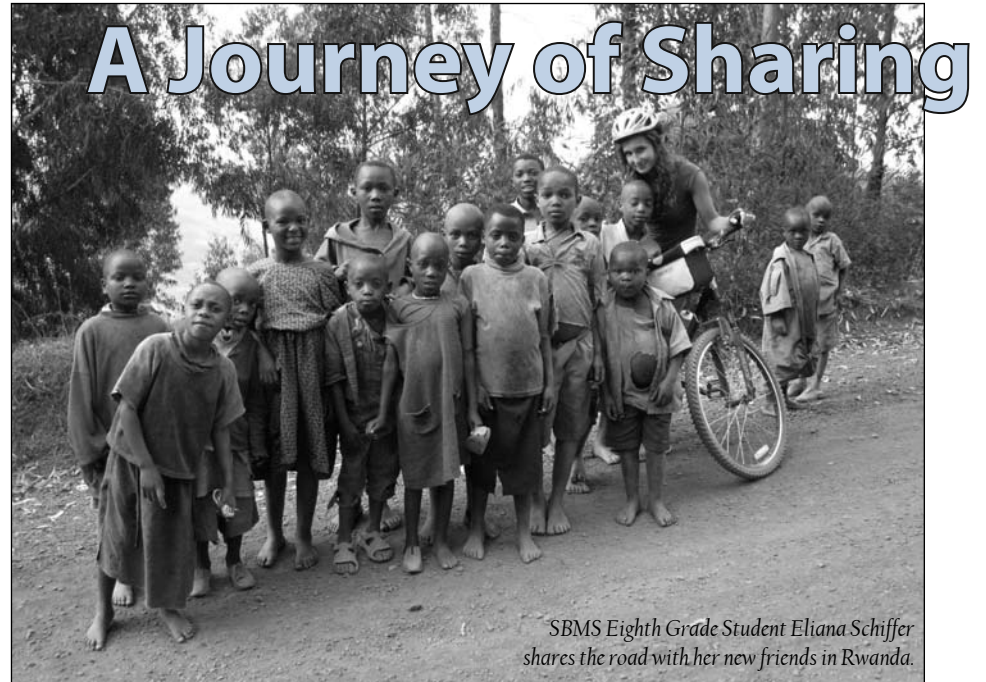
### Plan to Attend, Plan to Succeed

Our main objective as an educational institution is to mentor our students so that they develop positive attitudes regarding the mysterious chemistry of success. All students deserve to be winners at school and in life and our teachers often behave like coaches in order to get the best out of the kids.

This year we will expose our students to many challenges in our classrooms and out on the

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## A Journey to Rwanda:



SBMS Eighth Grade Student Eliana Schiffer shares the road with her new friends in Rwanda.

Seven students from Santa Barbara Middle School recently returned from a three-week journey in Rwanda, which they dubbed "Komera Team" (meaning "Be Strong!" in Kinyarwanda). The hills of Rwanda welcomed and challenged SMBS students Max DeGruy ('08), Alex Katnic ('08), Eliana Schiffer ('10), Britta Smith ('07), Rivers Wahl ('09), Sophie Wilson ('08), and Henry Wilson ('10), who were accompanied by SBMS Teacher John Seigel-Boettner, his wife Lynn and their two sons, SBMS Alums Jacob ('03) and Isaac ('04).

They pedaled from the savannah of Akagera in the east, to the volcanoes of Byumba and Ruhengeri in the north, along the shores of Lake Kivu in the west, and through the valleys of Butare and Nyamata in the south. Their mission was to meet, greet, and share the earth and sky with as many people as their two wheels introduced to them.

The following is an excerpt from Sophie

Wilson's journal written while in Rwanda this summer...

*For the past twenty-one days, I have been riding my bike with six Santa Barbara Middle School students in the Land of a Thousand Hills. The land I am talking about is the small country of Rwanda, located in Central Africa. Instead of driving across the country in cars like most tourists, we chose to ride our bikes over Rwanda's Thousand Hills. Early on in our journey, I came to realize that there was no way I could possibly get the same feel for the country in a car as I got on the bike.*

*When you're in a car, you are stereotyped. Stereotyped as a "muzungu," Rwandan for "white person." Wealthy enough to travel. Wealthy enough to think you can make a difference by going to third world countries and watching people through Land Rover windows. I believe that the best impression you can make to someone is from the saddle of a bike, defying all expectations of what a "muzungu" is.*

*When you ride by local people and say a simple*

*continued on page 4*

# Teacher's Corner

## New Math Teacher

A warm welcome to Ben LaBarbera, our new 8th grade math teacher!

Ben graduated from Westmont College in 2004 and worked as a software engineer at Raytheon until deciding that he wanted to teach. He then completed UCSB's Teacher Education Program in 2008. Ben's hobbies include traveling, camping, and SCUBA diving, which makes him a perfect fit for SBMS.



## How Some Teachers Spent Their Summer

Jim Brady and wife Robin went backpacking in the Wind River Range in Wyoming.

Caroline Deloreto ('99) and Hanna Waldmen ('02) taught students and lived in a mud hut on Lake Bunyuni in southwest Uganda.

Anne Chen and her Echelon teammates won the State Championships for Team Time Trial in the 180+ category.

Russ Lewin attended a UCSB Kavil Institute for Theoretical Physics seminar on "Particle Physics in the Age of the Large Hadron Collider."

Dr. Judy Willis' books, *Teaching the Brain to Read: Strategies for Improving Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension*, and *How Your Child Learns Best*, were published.

Domi Smith and husband Ray went river rafting, dog sledding and got up close with some black and brown bears in Alaska.

# What's New In the Classroom

Before each school year begins, the faculty and staff of SBMS spend time analyzing our academic and electives programs to continually improve and expand how and what we're teaching in the classroom.

This year, students will benefit in the following new programs:

### Upper School

- English: An intensive writing program developed from the South Coast Writing Project.
- Math: 70 minutes more math class time every two weeks.
- Academic Fair: Students will examine topics of their choice through small-group, inquiry-based learning, or they can learn about the American legal system through the performance of the annual Mock Trial.
- Science: Generously donated by SBMS parents Bruce & Lisa Meares, students will use an internal anatomy digital camera to better understand

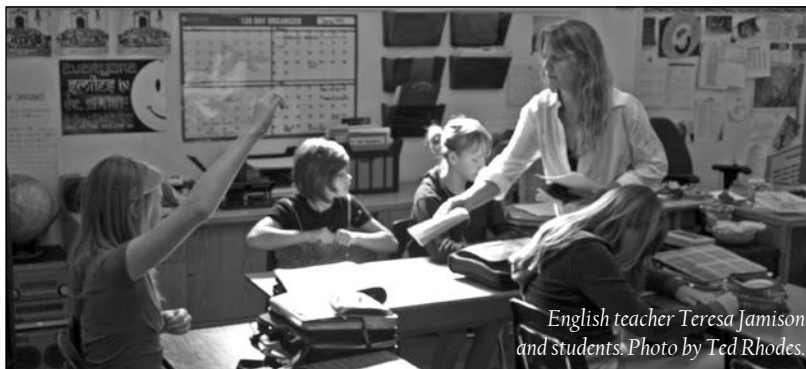
human biology. This is used by surgeons in the operating room!

### Lower School

- New Class Schedule: A full schedule of Cultural Studies, English, and Social Studies, so students will have each class continually throughout the year. This new schedule allows the mixing of students into different groups in their academic classes.
- Technology: A new interdisciplinary computer literacy class, taught by Domi, John and Teresa.

And everyone will benefit from the two new mobile wireless computer labs, promoting collaborative learning through technology.

Congratulations to 7th grader Harrison Gilman who was recently selected as 1 of 12 reporters for *Time for Kids* magazine. Over 600 students applied nationwide!



English teacher Teresa Jamison and students. Photo by Ted Rhodes.

# Beginnings Are Important

## Orientation Ride 2008

A slow descent into the fog from sunny Foster Park in Ojai brought 150 bikers to the ocean on our orientation journey on August 28, 2008. "This is awesome," exclaimed Graham Collector, a new 6th grade student, "it's only our second day of school and we're already on our bikes!"

We rode along the beachfront bike path to McGrath State Beach, set up camp, enjoyed a dinner of burritos, and had our first campfire where Steveo shared his thoughts on courage and perspective.

All were asleep by 9:30 pm and up before sunrise, packed and ready to ride by 8:30 am. We rode back to Emma Wood State

Park to finish our first week of school. While many of the returning students thought the trip was "too easy," 9th grader Eli Himovitz said, "It's a great first step for the new kids!"



Students start the year on a bike. Photo by David Teton-Landis.

# Let It Shine, Alumni

**Gordon McIver ('86)** writes: In our feverish attempt to overpopulate the world, we have created another stunning child: Esher Palo McIver! Esher was born at 4:45 am on January 3, 2008. The labor and deliver were quite speedy; in fact the doctor didn't even make it to guide the little guy out. The big surprise is the head of dark hair, given the toe heads that already make up our brood.

**Beh Kohl ('88)** writes: I have been living in Philadelphia for 15 years. I completed my medical training at U. Penn and am on staff as an anesthesiologist (my mother always said I was good at putting people to sleep....). My wife, Heather, and I were married in 2000 and we have 2 boys: Jacob, age 6; and Sam, age 3.

**Jessica Cohen ('88)** writes: As you may remember from our bike rides, I usually like to go last, but I'll chime in now anyway... My husband and I left Israel in 1997, and we've been moving all over this country ever since. I am a Hebrew translator, which I enjoy very much ([www.thehebrewtranslator.com](http://www.thehebrewtranslator.com)). We now live in Denver, and are busy setting up our new house. Adam teaches at the University of Denver, and I am translating a 633-page novel.

**Shannon Kenny ('88)** writes: I was fortunate to go to the Alumni Reunion with my dear friend Wendy (Martin) Ibsen and see so many familiar faces. It's interesting how present the memories of SBMS remain after all these years. I live in Santa Barbara with my husband and two daughters, Isabella, age 6, and Josephine, age 4. After pursuing a Masters Degree in Medieval Italian History, I am launching a program called Arte al Sole ([www.artesole.com](http://www.artesole.com)), a day camp in Tuscany which provides children with a fun taste of the culture and history of the region.

**Hans Rheinschild ('89)** writes: Our daughter was born on Friday, July 11, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. and her name is Cambria Rose. Cambria is a sleepy sea-side town in California that reminds Gina and me of our California beach roots; and the rose is a flower that can't be stopped. She looks just like Gina, and Wylder is a great older brother!

**Cecelia (Pattiz) Crowhurst ('91)** writes: I was married on July 8, 2008 in Paris at The American Cathedral to Timothy Crowhurst. Our reception was held at the Musee Jacquemart-Andre. All was quite magical and beautiful; we could not have asked for more. My husband is an investment banker at Goldman Sachs here in New York City and I graduated from Parsons School of Design in the AAS (Masters) Interior Design Program in May. It would be wonderful to see the school again.

**Marissa Mika ('96)** writes: I'm sorry I missed the Alumni Reunion in 2006. I was actually in Kruger National Park, South Africa with my husband. I completed my degree in public health at Johns Hopkins, and I am considering a PhD in the history of medicine and public health in sub-Saharan Africa. It's hard to believe that I used to sing Andrew Lloyd Weber tunes around campfire or that I could bike 50 miles in a day!

**Whit Jette ('03)** writes: I run the kitchen at Elements Restaurant when the chef's not there. Imagine a 20 year old running the kitchen at one of the top SB restaurants! SBMS definitely left an impression on me; I'm very grateful for that and food is my way of giving back. I also plan on moving to Australia for a year, so that will be a great experience to cook in a different country.

Share your news and photos!  
Email Whitney at [whit@sbms.org](mailto:whit@sbms.org).



1. Jeni Felcher Kimbrough ('92) & daughter Isis
2. Fox Purtill ('79) & daughter Pandora
3. Mat Butterworth ('82) & son Hugo
4. Kurt ('83), Mom & Former SBMS Teacher Cherry & Derin Stockton ('84)
5. SBMS Teacher Whitney Ingersoll & Aaron Boland ('92)

## We Need Your Help

Let's be real. The economy could use some help. Just as you may feel a pinch, so do we. However, SBMS cannot operate without the continued generosity of our parents, grandparents, alum families, and friends.

Like most independent schools, the tuition we charge does not cover the cost of educating our students and the need for financial aid continues to grow. This year, we need to raise \$378,000 to fund our programs and provide financial assistance to families who would not be able to attend otherwise.

Soon you will receive an electronic letter from a parent requesting an Annual Fund gift from you. We hope that you will take a moment to think about what SBMS means to you and your family, and we hope you will give as generously as possible. We welcome gifts of cash, stock, bequests, and your precious volunteer hours.

With gratitude,  
Christine Cowles & Laurie Lauer

## Mark Your Calendar

- Sept 18 Parent Town Meeting for 6th & 7th Grades
- Sept 22 - Sept 24 9th Grade Trip
- Oct 2 Back-to-School Night for 6th & 7th Grades
- Oct 7 Back-to-School Night for 8th & 9th Grades
- Oct 16 Parent Town Meeting for 8th & 9th Grades
- Oct 20 - Oct 25 Fall Trip
- Oct 25 Homecoming
- Oct 27 Recuperation Day (no school)

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## Steveo from pg 1

road. We hope to inject enthusiasm and confidence into all of our charges.

Recently, the NAIS (National Association of Independent Schools) approved SBMS for full membership in this prestigious organization of over 1,300 U.S. schools. The NAIS vision “foresees a future where independent school graduates will make good choices for themselves, their communities, and the world, capitalizing upon those values and skills that won’t change and acquiring those new skills and values a 21st Century marketplace and global commons will demand.”

SBMS is now accredited by 3 major educational organizations - the CAIS (California Association of Independent Schools), the AEE (Association for Experiential Education), and the aforementioned NAIS.

Needless to say we are very proud of our school and very proud of our students, past and present. We are off to an exceptional start!

## Rwanda from pg 1

“muraho” or “mwaramutze,” you shatter their previous thoughts about muzungus. It’s just another way to say, “I’m not just here for me; I’m here for you.” Children previously asking for “agachupas” (water bottles), “bon-bons” (sweets), and “amafaranga” (money), start smiling, laughing, waving, and often pushing you to the top of the next hill. This is what I love about biking in Rwanda, the smiling faces, and the faces filled with surprise, excitement, and joy.

For more information, please visit <http://www.projectrwanda.org>.



## Changing the Way We Feed Our Children

At SBMS, we strive to raise our students’ awareness about the connection between food, health and the environment. By providing healthy food choices, we help to nourish the minds and bodies of our students while hoping to teach them about the benefits of whole foods.

With our Free Finger Foods program, parent volunteers generously provide FREE organic seasonal produce on a daily basis.

We also serve mostly organic lunches, healthy drinks and snacks, and serve food in biodegradable containers.