

OUT & ABOUT



Petlow joins Fiesta board

Stephanie Petlow has been elected vice president of celebrations of the board of Old Spanish Days. She has been involved with numerous Fiesta events since joining the board, including chairing or co-chairing La Penitencia, Desobediencia de los Dignatarios, Fiesta Pasajera and the Spirit of Fiesta Auditions. Ms. Petlow is an executive assistant at Artistry Consultants. Born on Horns Island, she has lived in Santa Barbara with her husband Brian since 1988. They have a son, Michael, and three daughters, Stefan, Louanne and Michelle.

—Charlotte Boeschler

OUR TOWN
Autry Museum excursion

The Carpinteria Valley Historical Society has planned a visit to the Autry Museum of the American West on April 12. Two special exhibits will be on view: "The Art of Native American Basketry: A Living Tradition" and "Horse Lore: How Women Made the West." The trip will leave from the Carpinteria Valley Museum of History on a deluxe motor coach, with restroom, at 8:30 a.m. and return by 4:30 p.m. The cost for historical society members is \$33 and includes bus, entrance admission, and snacks and refreshments aboard the bus; the cost for nonmembers is \$49. For reservations or more information, call David at 694-8112 or e-mail david@carpinteriavalleyhistoricalsociety.org.

—Marilyn McMahon

ON STAGE

PCPA Theaterfest to raise 'Curtains'

PCPA Theaterfest will perform "Curtains," a musical murder mystery, Thursday through May 9 at Allan Hancock College, Marian Theatre, 800 S. College Drive, Santa Maria, and June 17-July 5 at Solving Festival Theatre, 400 Second St., Solvang. Show times in Santa Maria are 7 p.m. this Thursday, Fridays, Saturdays and Sun. 8, and 5 p.m. Wednesdays, Saturdays (except this weekend) and Sundays. In Solvang the curtain rises at 6 p.m. Wednesdays through Sundays. Tickets for adults are \$28.25 to \$38.25 in Santa Maria and \$31 to \$41 in Solvang. There are discounts for children, students and seniors, as well as for all seats at premiere shows on Thursday, Friday and June 17 and 18. To purchase, call the box office at 835-0310 or go to www.pcpa.org.

—Dave Mason

Performances for Out & About, Our Town or On Stage items should be submitted at least two weeks before the event in Life Section, P.O. Box 1330, Santa Barbara, CA 93103. If you are unable to submit items to newspress.com

Philanthropy: A new dimension

Students learn how to give without money

By MARILYN McMAHON
NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

MENTION the word philanthropist and many people envision wealthy individuals like Oprah Winfrey or Bill Gates sending checks for millions of dollars to worthy causes.

Tina Panzuchi is on a quest to change that perception in Santa Barbara with a unique project called "Learning to Give."

Her definition of philanthropy is the "giving of time, talent or treasure"—starting with kindergarten and teaching the concept all the way through 12th grade.

"I found that giving back to your community, either with your time, talent or treasure, creates feelings of empowerment, goodwill and self-worth. Everybody should be given the opportunity to give back, regardless of economic, social or educational level," said Ms. Panzuchi, who has been volunteering as a facilitator to make the resource known to local educators and to "bring community causes, businesses and volunteers together to help support the teachers in this project."

"By freshening up the definition of philanthropy to include time and talent, not just treasure, students are able to expand their contributions beyond the monetary. We need to train the next generation. The majority of wealth is being transferred to the next generation in the next 25 years. Learning how to give wisely takes learning, and the classroom is a wonderful place for that," she said.

The idea for the concept "began brewing" during the 10 years Ms. Panzuchi, 47, was director of the Santa Barbara Education Foundation and the three years she served with the Downtown History Charitable Foundation Board.

"I was also an active volunteer for many local nonprofits. I spent a lot of time at various sites, mainly schools, and I came in contact with donors, consulting with them about their portfolios," she said.

As her thoughts began to crystallize, Ms. Panzuchi realized that:

- Many people believe that the only way to make a valuable contribution to the community is with money — "a lot of money."
- Nonprofits do not have arrangements in place for community members to help "pay it forward."
- Lifelong philanthropic involvement is more likely if modeled by parents and/or authority figures.
- Learning to give wisely, either with time, talent or treasure, takes education.
- The classroom is the ideal place to teach about philanthropy.

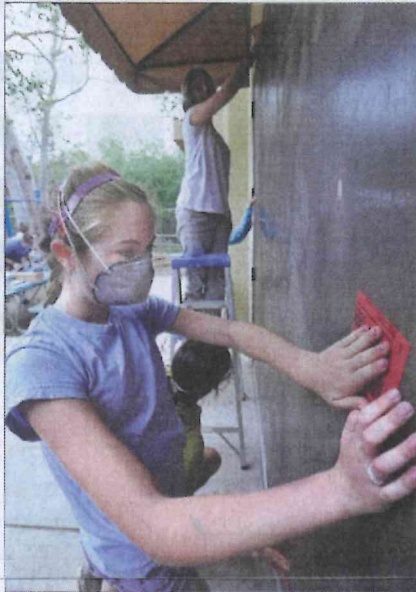
Ms. Panzuchi decided to leave her job with the Santa Barbara Education Foundation in March 2008 to devote herself full time to scaling her concept of philanthropy globally.

Through her research, she discovered a Web site for "Learning to Give," which is www.learningtogive.org. She found that classrooms across the nation are integrating L2G, a nationwide nonprofit, into their core curriculums.

"More than 267 campuses are participating with over 50,000 students around the country," Ms. Panzuchi said. "Teachers simply go to the free Web site, where they select their state, grade and subject to find complete lesson plans with handouts."

Emilio Hendall, principal at McKinley Elementary School, was the first to invite Ms. Panzuchi into his school on Loma Alta Drive on the Mesa. A "pre-job" began in September 2009 in Mrs. Joan Swanson's fifth-grade classroom, where 90 percent of the students are recipients of services from the Santa Barbara community.

"When I first began researching this program, there was a concern that these students might not be able to give," Ms. Panzuchi said. "I came



Chloe Brown sands a wall for painting.

from a different school of thought, and the McKinley students proved I was right. When Mrs. Swanson began blending the "Learning to Give" (philanthropic curriculum) into her core subjects, the students loved the lesson plans and wanted to start giving back right away.

"All agreed Halloween would be a great start," she said. "They decided they would give all their Halloween candy to a worthy organization, and they occupied the entire campus to do the same thing."

"To help the students decide which organization, Ms. Panzuchi arranged for representatives from three nonprofits to make presentations to the class. Students asked questions afterward.

"In this way, they were learning how to vet future requests," she said.

After the students checked their donations would go to Transition House, a homeless shelter for families with children, they brought their candy to the classroom and Mrs. Swanson incorporated lessons about math as they sorted it, weighed it, counted it and posted it.

"Over 8,000 pieces — 89 pounds — were collected for Transition House," Ms. Panzuchi said. "The students also researched their

experiences on video."

For Christmas, Mrs. Swanson's class wanted to raise \$200 for the Teddy Bear Cancer Foundation after listening to a representative from the organization, a past recipient and winning a video.

This time, Ms. Panzuchi called Handy Weas, community relations vice president at Santa Barbara Bank & Trust, to show her



Old wire from a chain link fence is removed by Myles Adams.

representatives give back to the community.

"Hardly did the children get if they raised \$200, the bank would give them \$500, teaching them how challenge grants work," she said. "They received their goal by doing extra chores and asking for money instead of presents."

Please see PROJECT on D8

Kids relate to this girl

American Girl author to come to StoryFaire

By DAVE MASON
NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

It's not easy keeping track of the American Girl throughout time.

"Sometimes I have three countries on my desk at the same time," said Valerie Tripp, one of several authors of the American Girl Collection book series, which is tied in with American Girl dolls.

"I have to be careful not to give an 18th-century girl a cell phone," said the author with a laugh by phone from her home in Silver Spring, Md. She has written the books since the mid-1980s.

Some qualities about girls transcend time and that's why readers can relate to the American Girl. Ms. Tripp said. But the 58-year-old Mount Kisco, N.Y., native repeatedly stressed that it's the young girls

who read her books and she, who deserve the credit for keeping past time and traditions to bond with the characters.

She looks forward to meeting her young readers when she appears as the headliner at StoryFaire, a free festival featuring several authors 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. April 24 at De la Guerra Plaza. The event is co-hosted by StoryFaire Children's Center and Child Abuse Listening & Mediation.

Ms. Tripp was called Santa Barbara before, but this is her first appearance at StoryFaire. She came at the request of Elizabeth Newcom-Smith, a former Harbor student and third-grade teacher at Monto Vista Elementary School.

"I said, 'Absolutely,'" Ms. Newcom-Smith lived in the Washington, D.C. area in 1998-07, and she and her sister, Anne Smith of Silver Spring, are friends with

Ms. Tripp. Ms. Newcom-Smith said her friend, Meredith Scott, sits on the CALM board and that Ms. Newcom-Smith's students have raised \$1,000 over two years for StoryFaire Children's Center by selling pumpkin pies made by the Harbor Restaurant.

The teacher said Ms. Tripp will speak to her class April 23. "The kids were screaming when they heard she was coming," she said, noting the girls in the classroom are big fans of the American Girl series.

The feeling's mutual. Ms. Tripp is looking forward to meeting her young fans.

Newcom-Smith said she'll meet the person who has read what you've written. It completes the circle of communication you've started," Ms. Tripp explained.

She doesn't plan to visit about from her



Valerie Tripp, author of the American Girl Collection books, including "Meet Kit" and "Really True Ruthie," is participating in the StoryFaire, set for April 24 at De la Guerra Plaza.

Tales steeped in history draw readers

■ STORY

Continued from Page D1

books at StoryFaire because of their length. "Usually, I speak to the children about creativity in all its forms, whether the children are interested in singing, acting or design."

"My readers range in age from 6 to 12," said Ms. Tripp, who earned a master's degree in education in 1981 at Harvard University but focused on writing instead of teaching. "The characters are 9 going on 10; that's the age when the world is opening up to them. Before 9, you see yourself as part of a family or bunch of friends. But at 9 or 10, you start to wonder, 'Who am I? What sports do I like? Am I a curious kid or a shy kid?'"

"The girls who read the books are close to the age of the girls in the books. I always write historical fiction or a story with an emotional component to it."

The American Girl in the series varies in ethnicity, time period and geography, she said. "Some (of the girls) are rich, some are middle class, some are poor."

The books are about 9-year-old girls in various historical periods and show how they solve difficult dilemmas and help others, Ms. Tripp said.

"The most frequent question from children is, 'Where do ideas come from?' In my case, because my stories are historical fiction, it originates with a period of history," she said. "One character (Felicity) is from the 18th century, at the time of the American Revolution in colonial Williamsburg (Va.). Another (Samantha) is at the turn of the century in 1904 outside New York City. One girl (Kit) lived during the Depression; another (Molly) during World War II."

Josefina, one of the American Girls, lives near Santa Fe, N.M., in 1824.

Ms. Tripp said she has written approximately 35 books involving each of those girls.

"The character personifies a period of history," she said. "That's the meat of it. The deessert is the characters are engaging."

"I try to make the character goofy, fun, real girls, so readers will become friends with her," she said.

Then when good or bad things happen to the character, she added, the reader cares.

"Molly's father is away for two years during World War II, and we don't know if he's safe or not," Ms. Tripp said.

The author said she began writing the books after she got a phone call from her friend, Pleasant Rowland, who created the American Girl collection of books and dolls.

The stories have progressed to the small and big screens. Three of Ms. Tripp's characters — Felicity, Samantha and Molly — have been featured in their own TV movies under the American Girl brand. A fourth one, Kit, is the spotlight of "Kit Kittredge: An American Girl" (2008), a theatrical movie starring Abigail Breslin in the title role.

Ms. Tripp talked about how she develops the historical characters for her modern readers. "I don't like to make them sassy. They have to be true to the period. You can't put 21st-century sensibilities on a character who lived in New Mexico



COURTESY PHOTO

in 1824.

"I do believe every girl is the heroine in her own story," she said. "Every girl is trying to define herself. Every girl is learning how to use her talents and abilities to help each other."

There's one other common thread in the American Girl stories. The girls are smart.

"Of course they are," Ms. Tripp said, chuckling. "That's not to say they're not mistaken or stubborn at times."

Stubbornness isn't necessarily a negative quality, Ms. Tripp added, noting it can depict intelligence. "I was growing up when women were starting to define themselves as independent. I'm proud to be a feminist. One thing girls have to be able to do is assert themselves."

Despite the differences in time and space, readers relate to the American Girl, Ms. Tripp said. "They realize, 'Kit makes mistakes just like I do. She's finding out things about herself just as I do.' The girls who read the book are close to the age of the girl in the book."

"Sometimes they say they know how Molly feels or how Josefina feels. Josefina's mother has died; her aunt comes to the home. They (the readers) say, 'I have a stepmother, and I know how (Josefina) feels.' You love your stepmother, but you don't want to feel disloyal to your mother."

"Girls will say, 'My grandfather died; I know how Felicity feels.'"

The author said she does her research for the books by going to libraries, but also picks up information during casual conversations at parties or by traveling to a city that inspires a story. She went to New Mexico before writing about Josefina, for example.

She added she gets a lot of help from her husband, Michael Petty, a history teacher.

Ms. Tripp said she's been interested in history since she was just a little older than Felicity, Kit, Molly and Josefina.

"When I was 11, I became fascinated with Eleanor Roosevelt. When I wrote about Kit, I already knew a lot about (the Depression)," she said.

She didn't take any actual events from the life of her own daughter, Katherine Petty, who was a young girl when she started writing the American Girl books. But she said she has used what she has learned as a parent for the stories. (Today, Ms. Petty is a graduate of the University of Chicago.)

Ms. Tripp said she's working on a proposal for a new American Girl

IF YOU GO

StoryFaire will take place 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. April 24 at De la Guerra Plaza, between State and Anacapa streets. Eighteen children's authors, including headliner Valarie Tripp of the American Girl book series, will appear. The festival also will feature arts and crafts, refreshments and music.

Authors and illustrators at the event, many of them local, will be Jim Buckley, Joe Cepeda, Rene Coltao, Siri Weber Feene, Mary Ann Fraser, Joan Graham, Bruce Hale, Dan Hanna, Carol Heyer, Barb Jean Hicks, Valerie Hobbs, Marnie McGee, Lynn Montgomery, Dan Santat, Sherry Shahan, Jody Shapiro and Greg Tina. All authors will be available to sign books.

Performers at StoryFaire will include Oscar the Storyteller, Cinderella (courtesy of Tea in Tiaras), musician Putnam Lee, Kindermusik, English Country Dancers, Ritual of the Connecting Swords and former Broadway singer Kerri Sanford.

Kids will also get to create projects coordinated by Art From Scrap and KidzArt.

Every child at the festival will be given a book, said Cecilia Rodriguez, executive director of Child Abuse Listening & Mediation, which is co-sponsoring StoryFaire with Storyteller Children's Center. Donations of new books for the kids at the event can be brought to CALM, 1236 Chapala St.

Chaucer's Books in Santa Barbara will have titles for sale at the event and will donate a percentage of the sales to CALM and Storyteller Children's Center.

It's the first year CALM has participated in StoryFaire, but a collaboration with Storyteller Children's Center seemed natural, Ms. Rodriguez said. "Our mission is the prevention and treatment of child abuse. We want to support families in having the best positive relationship."

CALM staff members have worked at the Storyteller Children's Center's day-care facilities at 2115 State St. and 2121 De la Vina St., Ms. Rodriguez said.

Storyteller Children's Center serves children ages 18 months to 5 years old, and is geared for at-risk and homeless families, executive director Terri Allison said.

Ms. Rodriguez said she encourages parents to read with their children to promote literacy and create a bond.

For more about Storyteller Children's Center, call the State Street facility at 682-9585 or the De la Vina Street site at 667-4540. You can also go to www.storytellercenter.org. For more about CALM, call 965-2376 or go to www.calm4kids.org. And for more on American Girl, visit www.americangirl.com.

book. "I can't tell you what it's about," she teased.

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