



DANCING SHOES - Evergreen Elementary School danced its way to a Happy Thanksgiving holiday on Wednesday, Nov. 26. Making good on a promise she made previously to students if they raised \$4,000 during a math-athon, Principal Lise Van Brunt (right) dressed up in her pajamas and declared it pajama day and danced the cha-cha on stage in front of the entire school. Some students accompanied her, playing various instruments. The students — many of whom were also in their pajamas — then joined in on the fun (above), 'cha-cha'ing up their own storm.

(Photos by Steve Fairchild)



Many options exist for preserving family history

This year, as your relatives gather, linger around the dinner table and ask some of the older family members to tell a tale or two, be sure to switch on a tape recorder or video camera before the stories spill out.

Holiday gatherings are natural settings for sharing family stories. And it's important to tell those sto-

ries, because extended families have become increasingly scattered. The opportunities for informally sharing family stories are few -- but the enthusiasm for hearing those family tales, and preserving them for future generations, has been steadily growing.

If you want to get your family to share stories this

holiday, pick a time when people are relaxed. For some, an activity like cooking provides a relaxed setting and the trigger for stories. Children learn to make "Grandma's Date Pudding" and at the same time, learn what life was like for grandma when she was young.

Older people are eager to tell their stories, and children are interested -- if the storyteller has a gift for spinning a tale. If you are concerned that the kids might be bored, coach your storytellers to match the tale to the age and attention span of the children present.

Tell short, active stories about the things you did, or that your parents were doing, when you were the age your children are now. You may be pleasantly surprised at the intensity of their interest. Children are quick to understand that these stories are part of who they are.

Begin now -- this holiday season -- to collect your family's past in formats that can be shared with future generations.

"The stories of our lives are the best gift we can give to others," said Julie Zander, founder of Chapters of Life, a company serving Washington and Oregon that is dedicated to helping others write, record and archive their personal and family histories.

The former newspaper reporter and editor captured the life stories of her own parents, in-laws and other relatives before deciding to provide the service to others, so they can share precious stories from their lives with their children, grandchildren and generations yet to come.

"Capturing the stories of those people in our lives whom we value creates a

lasting link between generations, letting grandchildren know their grandparents in all stages of their lives," Zander said. "A book or tape creates an irreplaceable sense of kinship, belonging and continuity. In this very personal way, grandparents can pass on to future generations the family values, traditions and knowledge that otherwise would be lost."

Talking about memories can be very enjoyable for older people. "What great memories for me to recall," said Nora McDonald, a retired school nurse in Vancouver, Wash. "My grandchildren were each given a copy of the book. Each book had on the front page a picture of the grandchild receiving that book. It was very special for them. Now all my children want a copy of the book for themselves."

The captured memories preserved in books or videos also provide a treas-

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From the E-mail Bag

A philosophy professor stood before his class and had some items in front of him on a table. When the class began, he wordlessly picked up a large, empty mayonnaise jar and filled it with rocks, each approximately 2 inches in diameter.

He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was.

So the professor picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar, which he shook lightly. The pebbles, of course, rolled into the open areas between the rocks.

He then again asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The professor picked up a bag of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up what appeared to be the rest of the space.

He then asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous, "Yes!"

Then the professor brought out two cans of beer from under the table and poured both into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.

"Now," said the professor, as the laughter subsided, "I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The rocks are the important things --

your family, your partner, your health and your children -- things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full.

"The pebbles," he said, "are the other things that matter; like your job, your house, your car. The sand is everything else; the small stuff."

"If you put the sand into the jar first, there is no room for the pebbles or the rocks. The same goes for your life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you."

"Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness," continued the instructor. "Play with your children. Take time for medical checkups. Take your partner on dates. There will always be time to go to work, clean the house, give a dinner party and fix the disposal."

"Take care of the rocks first -- the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is sand."

One student raised her hand and asked what the beer represented.

The professor smiled. "I'm glad you asked," he said. "It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of beers."



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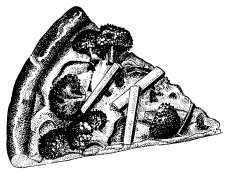
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