

PACIFIC VALLEY SCHOOL -BIG SUR ROUNDUP ARTICLE FOR APRIL 2018 ISSUE

The recent field trip to see the organist Cameron Carpenter at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo "was nothing short of astounding", to put it in the words of teacher Gail Chambers who led the trip. She exclaimed that "His prowess on both the organ he designed and the Cal Poly pipe organ was amazing". Cameron's self-designed-and-built organ is a complex assemblage of FOUR stacked rows of keyboards with a massive set of pedals below his feet. On both sides of the keyboards is an endless array of knobs, stops, and switches, which makes his instrument look like a futuristic spacecraft pilot's control panel. "Often he was playing on 3 or 4 keyboards at once with thumbs on one, fingers on another and feet on a third while he also pulled out and pushed in the organ stops and worked the pedals", Gail related. "We were all stunned--there just weren't the words to describe it! We attended his pre-concert lecture and were also blown away by his knowledge of mathematics, physics and all the possibilities organs can offer the composer and performer." Following such a rare experience, "WOW!" and "INCREDIBLE!!" were among the students' comments. Well, it now seems that Math and Physics when applied to music can produce some real magic!

A number of our students have become interested and skilled in singing, and look forward to participating in the Wholehearted Children's Choir, a program started this year by choir leader, Lisa Littlebird. So, the practicing and rehearsing has begun, both at Pacific Valley School and in Monterey at Littlebird's studio with the full children's and adult choir groups (weekly, weather and road conditions permitting). We plan to have both students and teachers performing in the upcoming choir concerts at the end of April including the concert event scheduled for April 27 at 7:00pm at the Big Sur Grange. You are invited to come to enjoy the performance!

The remoteness of Pacific Valley School combined with the effects of the capricious winter weather causing sudden landslides and abrupt road closures can require the resilience and adaptability for which our community is well known. One such recent event demonstrated the resourcefulness and determination of one of our teachers, the students and families, and the local business of Lucia Lodge. On the morning of Tuesday, March 13, teacher Gael Cunningham was driving down Highway 1 on his way to school when he discovered the road was to be closed by a major rockslide just south of Lucia. Along with him, five of our students were also cut off from access to school. So, Gael used a bit of ingenious adaptability. He immediately arranged with Lucia Lodge to allow him to utilize their restaurant facility as a classroom! Thus, those five students received their day of learning. We thank both Gael for his quick response, and Lucia Lodge for graciously providing a classroom venue at their business. Bravo! But that is not all! The next day, the road was closed again. Therefore, Gael performed a second day of teaching to the stranded students, this time at a parent's home. Hats off to all who took part in the "rescue" of two school days.