PACIFIC VALLEY SCHOOL
BIG SUR ROUNDUP, JANUARY 2019

 Because of the bad weather or the road closures along the South Coast, you may have had to miss the Wholehearted Choir's concerts held at the Big Sur Grange on November 30th and at the Hidden Valley Music Center in Carmel Valley on December 2nd. The singing events, aptly titled, "Fly Like an Eagle" provided truly joyous evenings of sharing music and harmony with one another. The choir, which included some of our students and staff at Pacific Valley School, sang forth with songs from many traditions and in several languages. The audience joined in with singing and clapping along to the lively beat. The children's choir had created and enthusiastically sang a very relevant song of their own called "If I Were President of the World". In this special song, their lyrics and voices rang out sage advice for all of us, to take care of our community, our environment and our world. In another amazing vocal presentation, "Abre La Puerta", the choir invited everyone to join in with all of their hearts and together receive their gifts of peace and joy. The enchanted audience responded with standing ovations at both concerts. Everyone sang their hearts out and had a fantastic time!

On the evening of 12/12/2018, our school hosted one of our most intense and wondrous events of the year as a special gift for all in our community to come and partake. The Annual Winter Show! Before the show was to begin, there was offered to all, a scrumptious culinary treat: a free lasagna dinner featuring Bunny Gries’ famed tomato sauce, made from scratch. After dining on the out-of-this-world supper, everyone proceeded up the hill to the school's Community Room, and took their seats, looking forward to a stellar show. For this evening of celebration and entertainment, the students had prepared a grand presentation of songs and a theatrical play, with all the fanfare of the Holiday Season. The curtains opened to a charming song, "You Are My Sunshine", sung by our TK students...It doesn't get much cuter than our 3 TK's dressed in their Christmas best, holding up giant happy face suns they had artistically created, as they sang. "You Are My Sunshine"! Following that song came an instrumental round of chiming melodies on the xylophones played by our 2nd Grade students. Then came an absolutely hilarious 2-act play, titled "True Magic", a rollicking operatic farce which kept the audience "in stitches"! It was loosely based on "A Christmas Carol", filled with all sorts of magical characters, including enchanting elves, a "Tinkerbell" fairy, three otherworldly spirits, Santa Claus, and even Peter Pan characters woven into (or disrupting) the story about a blessed family who got to experience it all and find out what magic truly was! There were numerous funny puns (such as Tinkerbell, who was going to "wing" it as she "waited in the wings"), allusions to old shows like Dragnet ("...just the facts, ma'am!"), Star Trek ("Boldly go where no one has gone before."), a Court Jester ("Get it? Got it? Good!"), and lots of further merriment, especially for those of us old enough to catch the allusions. Most of the lines were sung theatrically to the tunes of various Christmas carols: Mr. Pelf sang to his money and the three spirits erupted into: "Hoo-hah three spirits of Christmas are we!", every time someone asked them who they were. One of the spirits was a 60's surfer dude and Santa Claus was a she, who came out dressed in a green sweater with a sheep on it which read "Fleece Navidad". Between the two acts was Intermission, with a full smorgasbord of delicious goodies created and cooked-up by parents and staff members for our PTO Bake Sale. After everyone had the chance to eat their fill of sweet baked goods, we all reassembled to enjoy Act II of "True Magic" in all its enchantment. As the show came to an end with all the students singing there was the sound of jingle bells to be heard outside. Then, for a "Grand Finale", the door busted open, and there stood Santa Claus, loaded up with presents for all the kids! "Ho! Ho! Ho!" Thanks to a "special arrangement" mastered by our jade-famed community member, Ken Comello, Santa had indeed been convinced to take this special "detour" to the remote "Wild Coast" of Big Sur. There were smiles on faces everywhere as we headed home for the night.

Yes, the Winter Show was a real "magical evening" for all who attended. The students chose the play, edited it, directed it and did an awesome performance! The audience was "blown away" by how good they were. Several comments were heard about how we ought to start a drama club because the kids just seemed to be such naturals. The entertaining and exciting action on the stage was not all of the show. Equally deserving recognition was the teamwork of students "behind stage". Most notable was the skilled and unassisted mastery of the lighting and sound systems by High School student, Rio Sleeth, who, by the way, also deftly performed a cameo role in the play! Also, three other high school students, Stella Lutz, Koya Sleeth, and Dajhalyn Sanchez worked as co-directors and did a fantastic job. And we give special thanks to professional, Makiah Epstein, for her gentle and expert assistance with the students in developing the performances in the show. Makiah's professional expertise comes from years spent working with the Big Sur "Stage Kids" Productions. The fine work of the Winter Show, so skillfully and creatively, managed and executed by the students themselves, deserves a resounding "CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL"!

~ David Allan